

Meeting Summary

Public Workshop for Cache Slough Public Access Recreation Action Plan

November 3, 2022 | 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Rio Vista Veterans Memorial Building
610 St. Francis Way, Rio Vista, CA 94571

Overview

The Cache Slough Public Access Recreation Action Plan is a planning effort convened through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Partnership by Solano County, the California Department of Water Resources, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (MOU Partners). The purpose of the Public Workshop, the second in a series of three public meetings, is to provide an overview of public access and recreation planning efforts in the Cache Slough region of the Delta, share findings from discussions with interested parties to date, as well as identify recreation demand types, develop project concepts and planning considerations.

The presentation slides and a full recording of the meeting are available on the project website [here](#).

Welcome, Agenda Review and Introductions

Ben Gettleman, Kearns & West (K&W) Facilitator, welcomed participants to the Public Workshop for the Cache Slough Public Access Recreation Action Plan. Ben reviewed the meeting objectives, agenda, and discussion guidelines.

Then the MOU Partners introduced themselves, followed by introduction of meeting attendees.

A list of workshop attendees and project team members is included in **Appendix A**.

Action Plan Background and Purpose

Charlotte Biggs, Program Manager at the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), provided background on the recreation planning happening in the Cache Slough region and explained the purpose of developing the Action Plan. The planning effort aims for better and safer public access to recreation opportunities in the area and is driven by land use changes and an increase in demand for outdoor recreational activities due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Charlotte emphasized the advantages of the collaboration between DWR, CDFW, and Solano County, which together set common goals and priorities, and supports greater access to resources as a result of the partnership.

Erin Chappell, Bay Delta Regional Manager with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), explained the engagement process and timeline for the planning effort. The MOU Partners want to engage and hear from all interested parties on public access opportunities and concerns. The planning effort is intended to understand current and future potential uses of the area. As such, early input will help the MOU Partners to explore and develop solutions to minimize impacts to landowners in the Cache Slough region. The goal of the planning process is to finalize the Action Plan in early 2023.

Charlotte and Erin clarified that this planning effort is not a regulatory process, and that the Action Plan is a starting point for future planning.

Questions and Responses

Ben then invited workshop participants to ask any clarifying questions. Detailed descriptions of questions and responses are listed below. These are intended as reference, rather than verbatim.

Comment (C): To say “maximize use and minimize effort” is a contradiction of terms. Dixon will add 4,500 people within 12 miles of the Cache Slough, so I don’t understand how we’re going to maximize use but minimize impact. The water around the Dixon Boat Club is difficult to access without use of the private boat launch. If we opened up this area for easy access, it will ruin the area. Downstream from the Dixon Boat Club is a natural wildlife area, which is not suitable for public boating because it will have to be dredged continuously. This dredging would then extend out about four miles [if this part of the slough near the Boat Club opened up]. At the end of Brown Road could be one public access point, which has been abandoned since the 1940’s. It has been turned into a pasture, but it still floods – this is the “Dixon drain.” If you were to go in there, you’d have to dredge a lot of my property. There’s no place to put the dredges. I can’t believe Fish and Game would allow anyone to touch that [area]. I own land on both sides of the Solano Levee, property on either side of the slough. My question would be how to keep the campers out? This is a concern. Also, I don’t want you to look at parts of the slough that would have to be dredged every year at the taxpayers’ expense.

- **Response (R):** While boat access is one part of recreating in Cache Slough, there are other opportunities out there that we need to identify. We need to figure out what’s suitable for the different parts of the Delta. The breakout exercise will be an opportunity to identify your suggestions. We are not suggesting to take privately owned property. We want to look at the area and see what recreation opportunities exist there already, and where we might be able to incorporate more access, but we want to maximize the land that is already state-owned. The information you are providing is what we’re looking to get.
- **Question (Q):** How many different types of access are there?
 - **R:** This is the questions we’re trying to answer. The COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions have increased the demand for access to outdoor activities. So the question is: are there places in this area where we can make investments to accommodate the demand for places for people to enjoy outdoor activity safely? For example, boat launches, restrooms, fishing piers, parking lots, etc. We’re trying to figure out what are the options. Then, after getting buy-in from interested parties, we can pursue a specific project.
- **C:** We are here to dispel rumors. I was given a map that had spots already identified on it [where projects would be happening], but I can think of other places that would be more suited for a recreation project.

Input Received to Date

Grace Person, Director at K&W, summarized feedback received during the Public Kickoff Meeting on September 14th, 2022 and results from the online survey, which was open from September 14th to October 21st. Key information from this portion of the presentation includes the following:

- Current recreation available in Cache Slough includes fishing by boat (motorized), waterfowl hunting, paddling (kayaking, stand up paddle boarding, etc.), shoreline fishing, birdwatching, and hiking/walking.
- Recreation that is not yet available is public access shoreline fishing, hiking and biking on designated trails, picnic sites and day-use sites, access for wildlife viewing and school trips, and alternative access to Calhoun Cut besides by boat.
- Recreation ideas would be those that can be easily accessible by car, as boating-only recreation can be a barrier for people without boats.

The data from the online survey responses are in the Public Workshop Presentation, which can be found on the project's website [here](#).

Overview of Planning Considerations

Chris Drake, Park Services Manager at Solano County, provided an overview of planning considerations. The process for identifying project concepts begins by engaging with local interests and hearing suggestions from the public and users of the Cache Slough. The MOU Partners will review all suggestions and select feasible options by carefully evaluating them through a qualitative ranking process. Examples of planning considerations for this ranking process include prioritizing projects which are accessible from existing public roads, are compatible with surrounding land uses, emphasize water access. Additionally, potential projects will include considerations of public safety, facility siting feasibility and maintenance, and site monitoring and enforcement.

Questions and Responses

Ben invited workshop participants to ask clarifying questions. Detailed descriptions of questions and responses are listed below. These are intended as reference, rather than verbatim.

- **C:** There are subsets of these considerations. The number of people that are going to be accessing this part of the Delta need to be regulated, but we want to avoid a reservation system. Some of the boats that come up Cache Slough underestimate how difficult it is. [My desire for a planning consideration would be to have recreation activities that allow] management of the number of people who access the slough.
- **C:** In Rio Vista, there's Sandy Beach, Brown Island, RV Resort, Vieira's Resort on the Sacramento River, all of these places are in big, safe water areas of the Delta. The navigable waterways are open to the public, but hopefully whichever new access point is placed out there is in the deep water and not in the "boonies." [My desire for a planning consideration would be to have recreation activities that] prioritize boating safety. We have self-policing among the Dixon Boat Club members, but even that is difficult. Recently, the Coast Guard lost their way when they had to respond to an accident back deep in the Cache Slough channel. While kayaking is acceptable,

other boating access needs to be in wide channel areas. There is also the consideration of not wanting to inundate the people who live out there in the slough.

- **R:** One thing we want to think about when dealing with this exact situation is getting someone's information so they know which sloughs lead to private property or lead to deeper water. We would like to give folks quick-link information, like QR codes on signs, where they can pull up information about how to navigate that area. One strategy is to front-load information so that people have the information to make the right and safe decisions for recreating.
- **Q:** I live around Liberty Island, but where is the conversation about managing the conflicting interests like boating and fishing and bird watching and hunting over there?
 - **R:** While we are always thinking about compatibility and multi-uses, we recognize there might be conflicts in some locations and use that to inform the development of an access point. Trail systems are a consideration, for example, no hiking trails or bird watching trails for hunting areas, and there needs to be signage.
- **C:** Restoration that is taking place is taking away recreation opportunities that are currently available, like the Liberty Island project. It does not make sense to use public money for projects that prevent public access, like Liberty Island.
 - **R:** There will be a non-motorized boat launch that will be going there. Since we can't maintain access to Liberty Island at Lookout Slough, we want to use the Cache Slough project as an alternative. We want to focus on safe, legal access which is the intention of this Cache Slough recreation planning project.
 - **R:** While we recognize that what is happening with Liberty Island will remove some recreation opportunities, our agency [DWR] is thinking about the impacts and other possible solutions in Cache Slough, and will always consider ways to offer solutions to the public in the future.
- **C:** There is a group of UC Davis researchers who study the Delta habitat, and who come to our boat club meetings once a year to share an update on the condition of the habitat. The State should talk to the UC Davis researchers to understand what's happening to the fish. The UC Davis research team are a great source of information.
 - **R:** Yes, we are partnered with UC Davis. Our best available science is telling us where we need to make restoration efforts for the fish. We are trying to reduce future loss of other species of fish besides the Delta Smelt. We recognize there are tradeoffs we make when we make land changes. Just because we are doing this restoration project today does not mean there are no possibilities for other bridges, like the one to Liberty Island, elsewhere.

Small Group Activity

For the activity portion of the meeting, the workshop participants were invited to have small group discussions at tables around the room. Each table had a map of the Cache Slough region of the Delta with pens, markers, and sticky notes to provide comments and suggestions about recreation opportunities, needed facilities and infrastructure, directly on the map.

Discussion Questions The workshop participants used the two sets of questions to spark conversation and generate ideas to add to the map.

Part 1: Existing Uses and Gaps

1. Where are you coming from?
2. Where are you currently recreating in Cache Slough (and what activities)?
3. What do you think is missing? What would make it easier for you to recreate?

Part 2: Suggestions for New Recreation

1. What recreation would you like to see added and where?
2. How does the proposed activity compare with the following planning considerations? How could the project be modified to better incorporate these considerations?
3. What amenities would you like to see and where?

Summary of Small Group Activity Input on Maps

The following are a summary of the comments, suggestions, and notes provided on the maps at the tables. Images of the comment maps are provided in **Appendix B**.

Suggested Planning Considerations

- Management of the number of people who access the slough
 - Find a solution that does not require a reservation system
- Boat safety
 - Kayak access is acceptable for the public deep in Cache Slough, but not motorized boat access in parts of the slough

Recreation Ideas

- More slough access in general
- Create paths and launches for kayak/paddle boarding access into the sloughs
 - Shag Slough
 - Lookout Slough
 - Calhoun Cut
 - Lindsey Slough
- Improve parking
 - Parking lots can be as far as half mile away from the kayak launch sites
 - Parking option somewhere south of Liberty Island Road
- Link potential hiking opportunities with the Great Delta Trail
 - Multi-day, bike out/back, dispersed camping, no cars
- Build cyclist bridges to enable access to planned Great Delta Trail
 - Utilize levees for bike trails on southeast end of the map area
 - Bike path from Rio Vista, across the river to cross Grand Island Road, along the sloughs to reach near Minor Slough Wildlife Area, can continue along the Deep-Water Ship Channel
- Open fishing opportunities in Shag Slough
- Public access fishing at Barker Slough

- Maintain and increase waterfowl hunting in Lookout Slough
- Provide targeted hunting rules at various locations, emphasize location and seasonal rules
 - E.g. types of guns allowed, types of species allowed to hunt
- Upland game hunting north of Liberty Island
- Waterfowl hunting (snipe hunting) in the Proposed Island Tidal Restoration zone (RD 1667)
 - Provide parking on north end near the Arrowhead Harbor Marinas, east of the Deep-Water Ship Channel and west of the slough
- Secure National Wildlife Refuge status in area north of Liberty Island, south of Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area
 - Opportunity for Federal funding for enforcement, cleanup, and security

Recommendations for Outreach

- Improve messaging to the populations that use the Cache Slough (e.g. Latino and Hispanic populations)
- Improve signage
- People are still accessing areas that are technically off-limits, can still provide signage/outreach in these areas (e.g. Shag Slough)
- Put up signs and flyers at local tackle and bait shops; focus on shops in Knights Landing, West Sacramento, and Rio Vista

Concerns

- Avoid putting public recreation access points near the Dixon Boat Club area
 - Security of private property and vehicles
- Flood zone drainage area at the northwestern edge of Cache Slough
- Speed and wake conflicts between motorboats and paddle boats in deep water
- Safety of boaters in narrow channels and sloughs, and difficulty of emergency response personnel finding boaters in distress.
- Shallow underwater hazards in the Lookout Slough restoration area

Adjourn

The workshop ended after small group discussions. Workshop participants were thanked for their time by the consultant staff and the MOU Partners.

A draft Action Plan will be developed for presentation at the next public meeting opportunity, which is currently scheduled for January of 2023.

The Project website also hosts more information about this effort and can be found at https://www.solanocounty.com/depts/rm/delta_and_water_programs/cache_slough_recreation.asp.

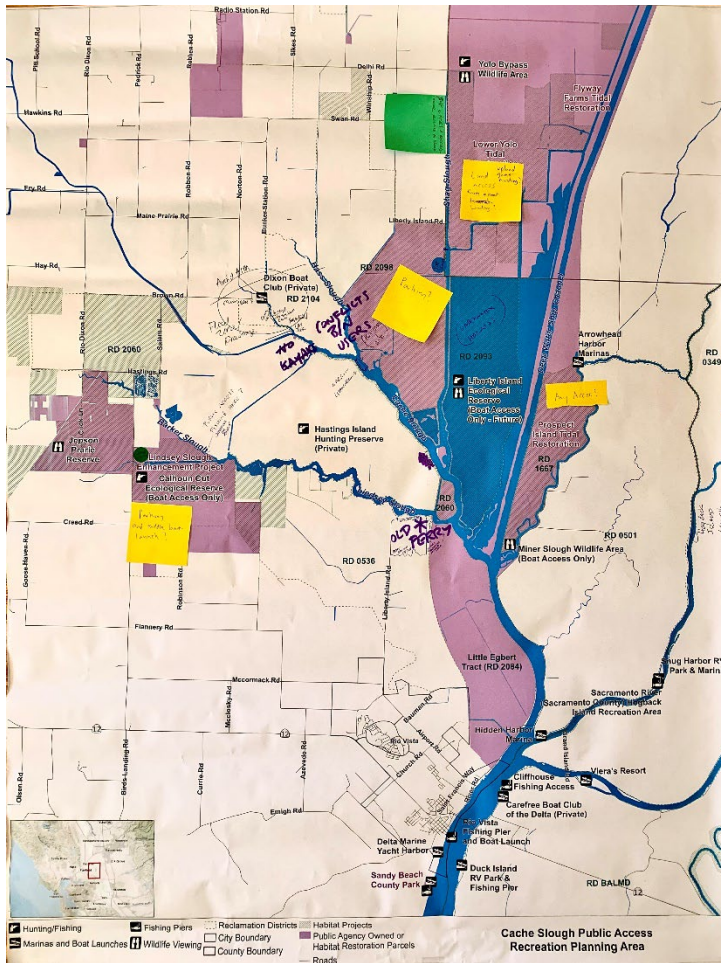
Appendix A Meeting Attendees

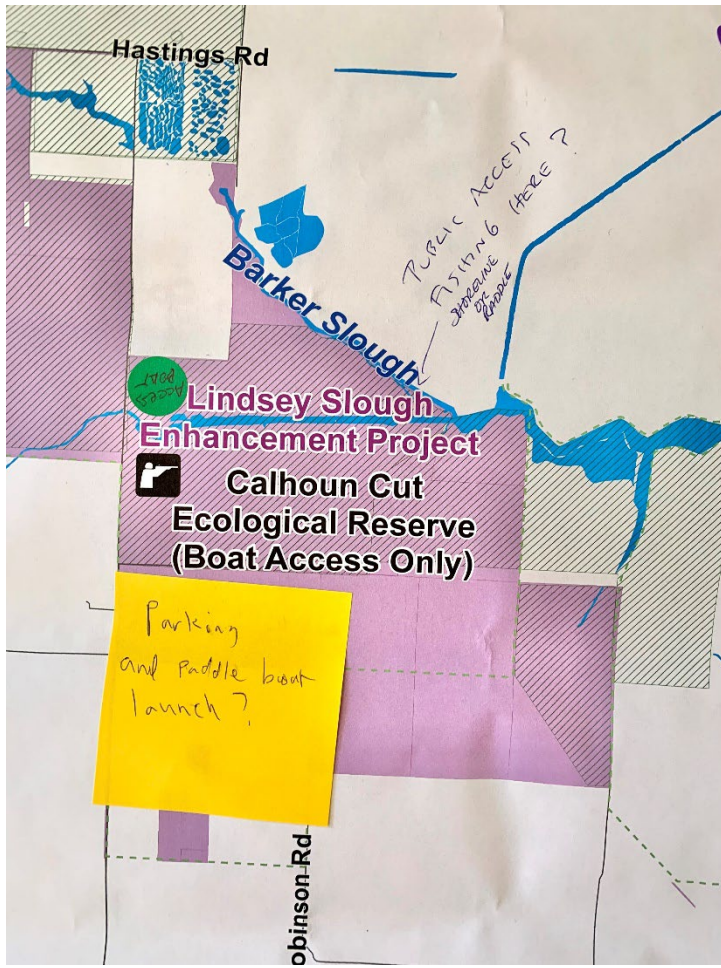
Name	Affiliation
Mark Triplet	Member of the Public
Bill Wentworth	Member of the Public
Rick O'Neil	Member of the Public
Terri Rice	Member of the Public
Steve Shaw	Member of the Public
Mike Hardesty	Member of the Public
Josh Restad	Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
Kristyne Van Skike	Yolo Bypass Cache Slough Partnership
Eva Bush	Delta Stewardship Council
David Pesavento	CA Department of Water Resources
Megan LeRoy	CA Department of Water Resources
Charlotte Biggs	CA Department of Water Resources
Mike Roberts	CA Department of Water Resources
Erin Chappell	CA Department of Fish and Wildlife
Dick Tzou	Solano County
Chris Drake	Solano County
Ben Gettleman	Kearns & West
Grace Person	Kearns & West
Marlys Jeane	Kearns & West
Katie Stone	Jacobs
Rebecca McNeil Freeman	Jacobs

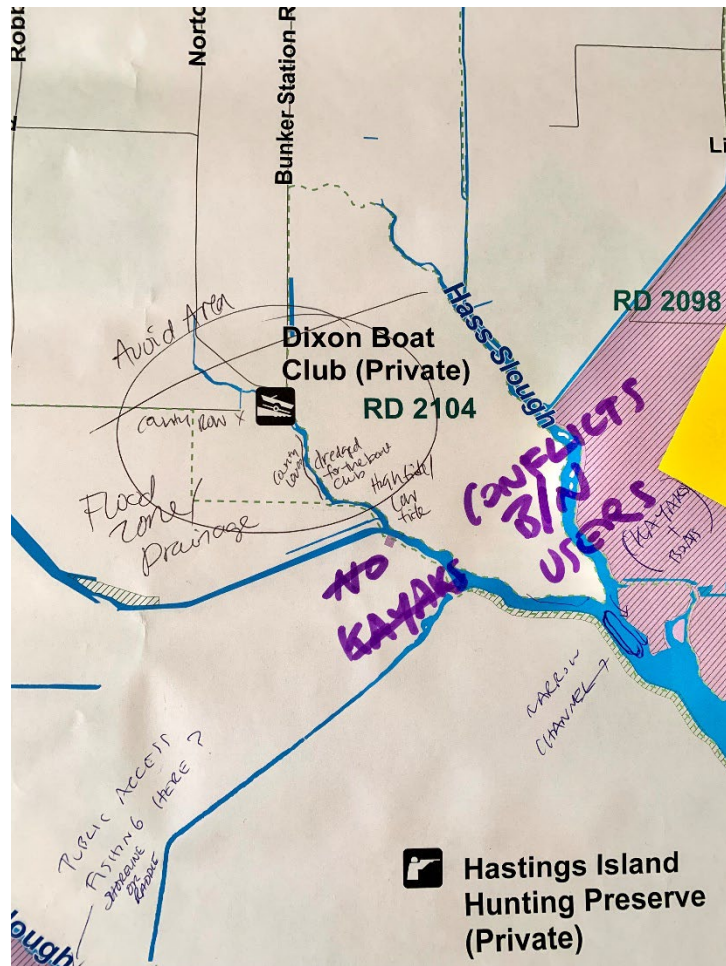
Appendix B

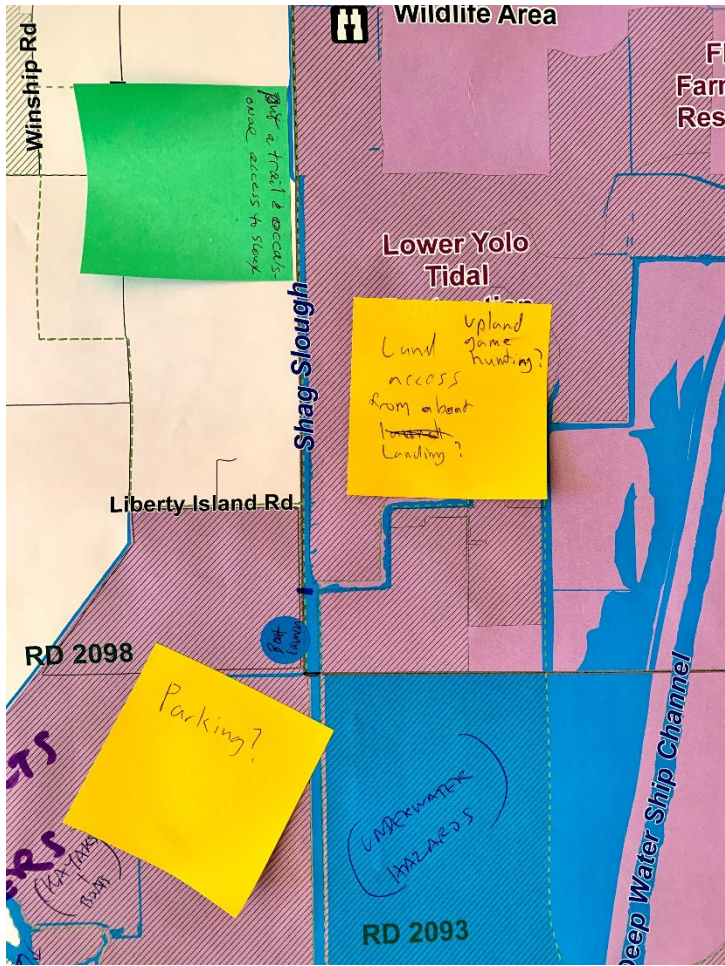
Images of Maps from Small Group Activity

Map from Table 1:









Map from Table 2:

