

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

To: Agencies and Interested Parties

From: Central Valley Flood Protection Board

Date: August 15, 2022

Subject: Notice of Preparation and Scoping Meetings for the Yolo Bypass Cache Slough Partnership - Master Plan Program Environmental Impact Report

Notice is hereby given that the Central Valley Flood Protection Board (CVFPB), as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), will prepare a Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the Yolo Bypass Cache Slough Partnership Multibenefit Master Plan ("Master Plan" or "proposed program"). The CVFPB is the Non-Federal Sponsor to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for the State Plan of Flood Control through the California Water Code, including §§8617 and 12657. The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) is preparing the Master Plan in coordination with other agencies in the Yolo Bypass Cache Slough Partnership (consisting of 15 Federal, State, and local agencies¹).

USACE, Sacramento District is the Federal lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as the proposed program would alter the Sacramento River Flood Control Project, necessitating permission from USACE under Section 14 of the Rivers and Harbors Act (Section 408) and would also affect waters of the United States requiring a Department of the Army permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. USACE has not yet determined the type of document that will be prepared to comply with NEPA requirements and is participating in the public scoping process and meeting alongside CVFPB as early scoping under NEPA.

CVFPB invites each responsible and trustee agency, and each federal agency, including potential NEPA cooperating agencies, that may be involved in approving or funding one or more projects of the Master Plan, to provide input as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to the agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed program. CVFPB also is accepting comments from members of the public and Native American Tribes on the scope and content of the PEIR, including suggested alternatives to the proposed program that may be considered in the PEIR.

Scoping meetings will be held to receive comments on the scope and content of the PEIR. See below for more information.

¹ U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, National Marine Fisheries Service, USACE, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Natural Resources Agency, California Department of Water Resources, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, CVFPB, California State Water Resources Control Board, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, Yolo and Solano Counties, Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency, Solano County Water Agency, and Reclamation District 2068

INTRODUCTION

CEQA specifies that a public agency must prepare an EIR on any project or program that it proposes to carry out or approve that may have a potentially significant direct, indirect, or cumulative effect on the physical environment. The Yolo Bypass Cache Slough Partnership is proposing to implement a program to coordinate numerous related projects in the Yolo Bypass over the next 25 years to provide essential flood conveyance capacity in the Yolo Bypass while improving its resiliency, reliability, and adaptability to climate change; enhancing aquatic and terrestrial species habitats; and preserving agricultural land and economic values (see Table 1 for the preliminary list of projects).

California Senate Bill 369 Flood Control “Yolo Bypass Cache Slough Partnership Multibenefit Program” was signed by Governor Newsom and filed on September 23, 2021. This bill formally establishes the Yolo Bypass Cache Slough Partnership Multibenefit Program to support the development and implementation of projects within the Yolo Bypass and Cache Slough region. The bill defines “Yolo Bypass Cache Slough Partnership” to mean the multiagency partnership established pursuant to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed in May 2016 by a total of 15 participating Federal, State, and local agencies. The bill requires the participating State agencies, including the Natural Resources Agency, DWR, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, CVFPB, the State Water Resources Control Board, and the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, to work in collaboration with the participating federal and local agencies, and to advance specified objectives in the Yolo Bypass and Cache Slough region.

Key portions of the bill state that together, the Yolo Bypass and Cache Slough region presents unparalleled opportunities for multibenefit projects that improve flood protection, fisheries and wildlife habitat, water supply and water quality, agricultural sustainability, and recreational opportunities. As such, the Yolo Bypass and Cache Slough region is the focus of an increasing number of federal, state, and locally developed projects intended to collectively improve these multiple public values. The numerous interests in this complex and important region present an opportunity and an imperative for governmental agencies at the federal, state, and local levels to collaboratively align planning efforts and project implementation. The 2016 MOU outlines principles necessary to achieve a common vision for the Yolo Bypass and Cache Slough region. The resulting Yolo Bypass Cache Slough Partnership serves as a model for public agency cooperation and achievement.

CVFPB has determined that the proposed program may result in potentially significant and significant effects on the physical environment. Therefore, CVFPB will prepare a PEIR that evaluates the potential significant environmental effects of the proposed program at a more general, programmatic level of analysis. Additional project-level CEQA documentation beyond this PEIR will be necessary prior to implementing Master Plan projects that may have a significant impact on the environment.

PROGRAM LOCATION

The Master Plan includes improvements to the Yolo Bypass and Cache Slough, located in Yolo and Solano Counties (Figures 1 and 2). The Yolo Bypass, approximately 41 miles long and up to 3 miles wide, conveys most of the flood waters from the Sacramento River around the cities of Sacramento and West Sacramento and into the Sacramento-San Joaquin River

Delta (Delta). Cache Slough includes additional areas at the southern end of the Yolo Bypass, north of the city of Rio Vista.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The YBCS Master Plan will present a vision of the future YBCS region (Figure 1) and serve as a programmatic framework that outlines an integrated approach to implementing multi-benefit activities across a shared landscape. The purpose of the Yolo Bypass Cache Slough Master Plan is to support implementation of a suite of related projects that collectively provide essential flood conveyance capacity while improving resilience, reliability, and adaptability to climate change; enhance aquatic and terrestrial species habitats; and preserve agricultural land and economic values.

The Master Plan will guide project planning and implementation in a manner that supports and aligns with the six priorities of the Partnership:

Flood Risk Management

- Expand the flood conveyance capacity of the Yolo Bypass Cache Slough (YBCS) system, including investments in measures to meet existing flood risk management standards.
- Establish a regulatory and funding framework to enable effective, affordable, and sustainable long-term operations and maintenance of this flood risk management system that accommodates other partnership goals.

Water Supply Assurances

- Preserve continued access to cost effective and resilient water supplies in YBCS for local agriculture and regional municipal users.
- Develop multibenefit projects that protect regional water supply resilience investments.

Habitat Enhancement

- Improve habitat quality and quantity to achieve multiple benefits for ecosystems.
- Align ecological improvements and environmental sustainability with existing and future land uses.
- Improve permitting efficiency of multi-benefit projects.

Agriculture Sustainability

- Actively engage agricultural and land use agencies in the full lifecycle of projects.
 - Develop good neighbor policies and incorporate measures that promote agricultural sustainability into project planning and implementation.
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- Establish regulatory protection for existing agricultural irrigation diversions.

Water Quality Enhancement

- Minimize discharge and production of toxic contaminants into the YBCS, starting with methyl mercury.
- Reduce impact of increased organic carbon and bromide and submerged aquatic vegetation near drinking water intakes in the Cache Slough Complex.

Recreation

- Increase opportunities for recreation, outdoor education, outreach, and access in the YBCS.

The Master Plan will describe a range of projects currently being implemented or proposed for implementation in the YBCS region, identified in Table 1. These projects will be organized into three categories based on the anticipated pathway that the project will take to implementation: Programmatic, Non-programmatic, and Undefined.

- Programmatic projects are those being considered for implementation as part of a program that will be defined in the YBCS Master Plan and coordinated through the YBCS Partnership.
- Non-programmatic projects are those that have been or will likely be implemented independently but could include coordination with the YBCS Partnership.
- Undefined projects are those that are currently in a stage of development that is too early to define the anticipated implementation pathway.

Only programmatic projects will fall under the purview of the programmatic environmental documents, permits, consultations, and permissions supporting the Master Plan, although non-programmatic and undefined projects may be considered in the cumulative analysis. For more information on the potential projects, please refer to the project list on Table 1 and the planning and project areas map in Figure 2. Project areas depicted on the planning and project areas map represent the approximate location of the projects. The Master Plan identifies phasing to guide development and implementation of these projects and performance metrics for hydraulic and ecosystem improvements.

These types of projects and related policies implemented collectively over time will help the Yolo Bypass Cache Slough Partnership achieve its purpose and objectives through increased flood system capacity in the Yolo Bypass; improved and streamlined flood-related operations, maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, and replacement activities; increased habitat restoration, sustainable agriculture, increased recreational opportunities and access; and sustainable water quality and supplies.

In addition to analyzing a range of potential projects, the Master Plan addresses operations and maintenance of flood facilities throughout the Yolo Bypass region.

PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The environmental analysis will focus on examining the potential environmental impacts associated with the improvements implemented as part of the proposed program and identifying feasible mitigation measures and alternatives that can be implemented to avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, or compensate for any identified significant impacts. The environmental analysis will be at a broad programmatic level of analysis and, therefore, will not focus on impacts at a project level. Rather, the analysis will focus on the collective impacts of all the projects, as well as cumulative impacts with other related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

On the basis of environmental impact analyses of similar projects in the region, the Master Plan could have the following direct, indirect, and/or cumulative environmental effects:

- **Aesthetics.** Temporary, short-term changes in scenic views or visual character and changes to viewshed from State- and County-designated scenic highways from construction-related impacts or long-term changes from new levees, levee modifications, or habitat restoration.
 - **Agriculture and Forest Resources.** Short- and long-term conversion of farmland for Yolo Bypass improvements, use of borrow material, or habitat-based mitigation or enhancements.
 - **Air Quality.** Temporary and short-term increases in pollutant emissions associated with construction activities of numerous projects over an extended time period.
 - **Biological Resources – Aquatic.** Short- and long-term effects on special-status fish species and their habitats from short-term construction and long-term operations and maintenance of the proposed program.
 - **Biological Resources – Terrestrial.** Short- and long-term effects to habitats and special-status terrestrial species, including wetlands, from short-term construction and long-term operations and maintenance of proposed program.
 - **Cultural Resources.** Potential disturbance or destruction of known or unknown historic or archaeological resources during construction or operations and maintenance.
 - **Climate Change.** Temporary and short-term increases in greenhouse gas emissions associated with construction activities of all projects, and long-term increases in greenhouse gas emissions associated with operations and maintenance, in conjunction with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects.
 - **Energy.** Potential increased energy demand during construction or operations and maintenance that is wasteful, inefficient, or an unnecessary consumption of energy.
 - **Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources.** Temporary and short-term increases in erosion during construction; potential disturbance or destruction of known or unknown paleontological resources during construction.
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- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials.** Potential introduction of contaminants into water courses and exposure of construction workers to hazardous materials as a result of construction activities, including potential hazards related to Cortese-listed sites.
- **Hydrology and Water Quality.** Potential short- and long-term transport of sediments and other pollutants into water courses, mercury methylation and export, downstream hydraulic effects on the Yolo Bypass and Sacramento River, flood risks including redirected impacts from levee improvements, and effects on groundwater movements and availability for irrigation.
- **Land Use and Planning.** Potential conflicts with land use plans and zoning designations.
- **Mineral Resources.** Potential long-term loss of access to regionally or locally important deposits of mineral resources.
- **Noise.** Temporary and short-term increases in noise levels near sensitive receptors during construction.
- **Recreation.** Temporary and short-term disturbance of land- and water-based recreational activities in areas adjacent to construction sites and long-term impacts to regional or local recreation and recreational facilities.
- **Socioeconomics.** Potential short- and long-term effects related to environmental justice, population, housing, economics, and growth-inducement.
- **Transportation and Circulation.** Temporary and short-term disruption of traffic circulation, rail transportation, and emergency access during construction.
- **Tribal Cultural Resources.** Potential disturbance or destruction of known or unknown Tribal cultural resources during construction or operations and maintenance
- **Public Services and Utilities and Service Systems.** Potential disruption of service during construction, need for the permanent relocation of utilities within the proposed program construction footprint, or need for altered water treatment facilities.

ALTERNATIVES

Several alternatives to the proposed program, including the No-Project (No-Program) Alternative, will be evaluated in the PEIR in accordance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. Alternatives have not yet been formulated and input is being sought from agencies and the public during the scoping period.

SCOPING MEETINGS

The objective of the meetings is to brief interested parties about the proposed program, and obtain the views of agency representatives, interested parties, Native American Tribes, and the public on the scope and content of the PEIR, including the alternatives to be addressed and potentially significant environmental impacts. The public scoping meetings will be held to meet

CEQA public scoping meeting requirements and jointly with USACE as part of early scoping activities under NEPA.

Scoping meetings will include both a WebEx online meeting and an in-person meeting to receive comments on the scope and content of the PEIR.

Agenda: <http://cvfpb.ca.gov/meetings/>

August 31, 2022: 10:00 am

Join via Webex: <https://cadwr.webex.com/meet/CVFPB>

Or join via phone at: 1-844-517-1271 (access code: 1328038250)

August 31, 2022: 6:00 pm

West Sacramento Community Center
1075 West Capitol Avenue,
West Sacramento, CA 95691

WRITTEN COMMENTS

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) is being circulated to obtain suggestions and information from interested parties, including responsible and/or trustee agencies, Native American Tribes, and members of the public, on the content and scope of issues that may be addressed in the PEIR. Written comments from interested parties are invited to ensure that the full range of issues related to implementation of the proposed program is identified early in the CEQA process. Agencies organizations, Native American Tribes, and interested parties should provide a contact name and information in their letters. All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the official administrative record and may be made available to the public.

Written comments on the scope of the PEIR must be received by CVFPB no later than 5:00 PM on September 14, 2022. Written comments must be sent to:

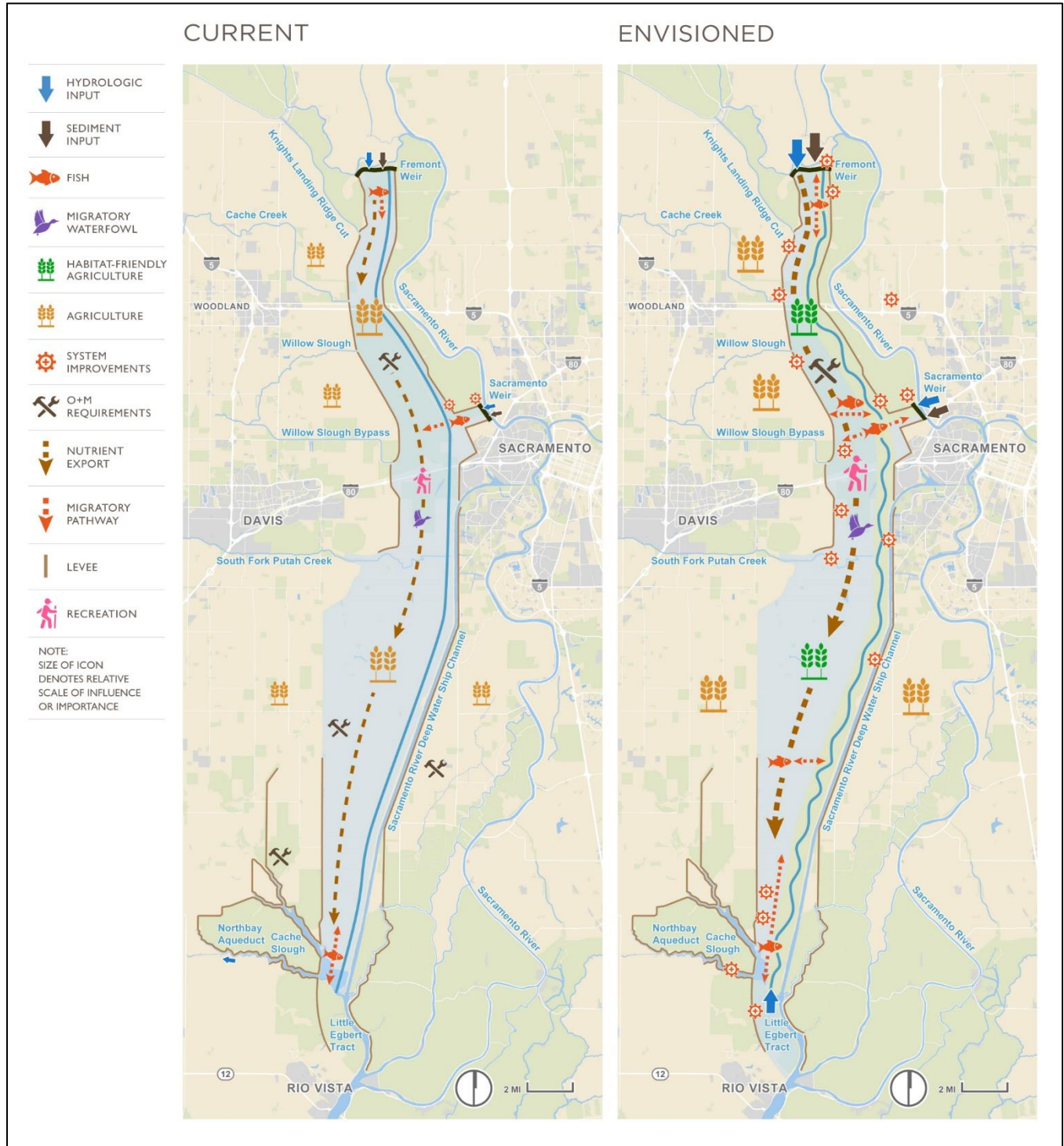
Megan Giglini
Central Valley Flood Protection Board
3310 El Camino Avenue, Suite 170
Sacramento, CA 95821

or via email to: Megan.Giglini@cvflood.ca.gov.

Interested parties may also provide written or oral comments on the proposed content and scope of the PEIR at the public scoping meeting listed above. If you submit comments, you will automatically be added to the distribution list for future notices and information about the environmental review process for the proposed program. If you do not wish to submit comments on the scope and content of the PEIR, but would like to be added to the mailing list, you can submit your contact information, including email address, with a request to be added to the mailing list to the contact above.

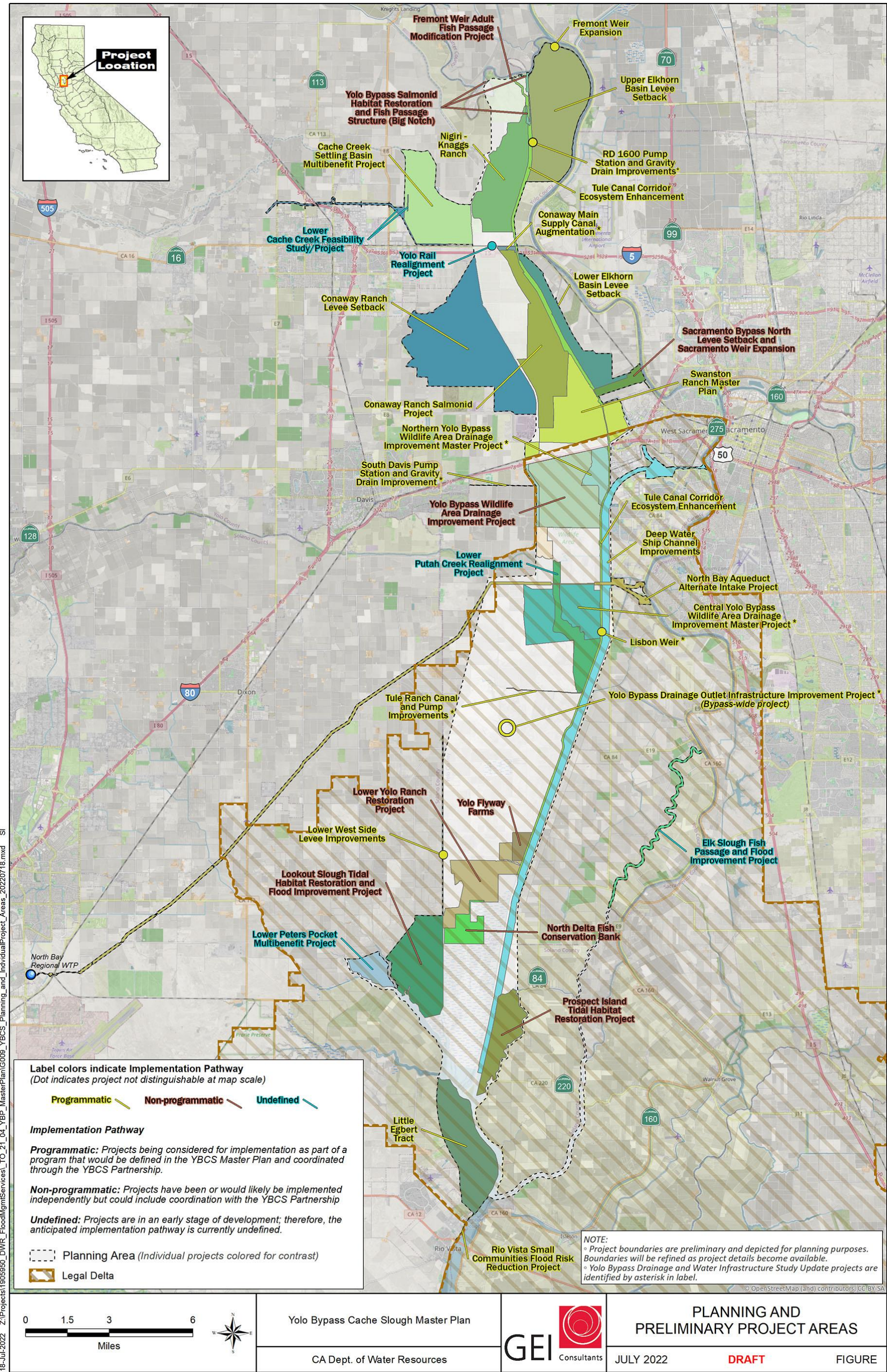
Additional information regarding the proposed program can be found on the Partnership website, <https://ybcspartnership.org/>.

Figure 1: Program Location and Features



Source: Yolo Bypass-Cache Slough Partnership 2022

Figure 2: Planning Area and Projects to be Evaluated in the Master Plan



Source: GEI Consultants, Inc. 2022.

Table 1: Preliminary List of Projects to be Evaluated in the Yolo Bypass Cache Slough Master Plan

Project Name	General Information	Programmatic ¹	Non-programmatic ²	Undefined ³
Fremont Weir Expansion	Expand Fremont Weir to allow more inflow into the Yolo Bypass.	●		
Fremont Weir Adult Fish Passage Modification Project	Construct a new fish passage structure in the Fremont Weir.		●	
Yolo Bypass Salmonid Habitat Restoration and Fish Passage Structure (Big Notch)	Install operable gates in the Fremont Weir to provide floodplain rearing habitat in the Yolo Bypass.		●	
Upper Elkhorn Basin Levee Setback	Move the east levee to the east to expand Yolo Bypass capacity.	●		
RD 1600 Pump Station and Gravity Drain Improvements ⁴	Improve or replace the pump station and gravity drain to accommodate increased flows in the Tule Canal.	●		
Nigiri - Knaggs Ranch	Create managed seasonal wetland habitat on agricultural lands for floodplain rearing of juvenile salmon.	●		
Lower Cache Creek Feasibility Study/Project	Construct levee improvements, weir, and drainage channels to reduce flood risk to the City of Woodland.			●
Cache Creek Settling Basin Multi-benefit Project	Upgrade the Cache Creek Settling Basin to restore sediment capture capacity and reduce methyl mercury transport.	●		
Yolo Rail Realignment Project	Relocate existing railroad to new western alignment and remove trestle.			●
Conaway Main Supply Canal Augmentation ⁴	Replace 3,500 linear feet of the existing Conaway Main Supply Canal with pipes.	●		
Tule Canal Corridor Ecosystem Enhancement	Conduct channel improvements and/or expand riparian corridor along the Tule Canal for ecosystem restoration.	●		
Lower Elkhorn Basin Levee Setback	Move the east levee to the east to expand Yolo Bypass capacity and create habitat.	●		
Conaway Ranch Salmonid Project	Create managed seasonal wetland habitat on agricultural lands for floodplain rearing of juvenile salmon.	●		
Conaway Ranch Levee Setback	Modify the west levee to expand Yolo Bypass capacity.	●		
Sacramento Bypass North Levee Setback and Sacramento Weir Expansion	Set back the Sacramento Bypass north levee and widen the Sacramento Weir to increase bypass capacity and create improved fish passage.		●	
Swanston Ranch Master Plan ⁴	Implement a combination of drainage and conveyance capacity improvements to enhance habitat and wildlife-friendly ag, address drainage challenges, and minimize impacts of increased flows in the Tule Canal.	●		
South Davis Pump Station and Gravity Drain Improvement ⁴	Rehabilitate the existing Sough Davis Drain Pump Station and co-locate a new gravity drain with the rehabilitated facility for improved functionality.	●		
Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Drainage Improvement Project	Improvements to roads, culverts, drainages, pumps to improve water management and access.		●	
Northern Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Drainage Improvement Master Project ⁴	Implement priority drainage and infrastructure improvements to holistically address drainage, canal, capacity, nuisance flooding, and access issues.	●		
Lower Putah Creek Realignment Project	Create a new channel across the bypass for fish passage and ecological restoration.			●
Central Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Drainage Improvement Master Project ⁴	Enhance capacity and reliability of primary drainage canals and establish connection with existing tidal channels.	●		
Lisbon Weir ⁴	Replace rock weir and tide gate structure with an operable variable height weir, improved flap gates and a fish passage ladder.	●		
North Bay Aqueduct Alternate Intake Project	Construct new Sacramento River intake with conveyance across Yolo Bypass.	●		
Deep Water Ship Channel Improvements	Construct new weir to allow release of Yolo Bypass flows into the Deep Water Ship Channel.	●		
Tule Ranch Canal and Pump Improvements ⁴	Deepen Tule Ranch Canal and upgrade lift pumps to address water delivery capacity limitations.	●		
Yolo Bypass Drainage Outlet Infrastructure Improvement Project ⁴	Bypass-wide project to install or upgrade drainage gate infrastructure on all uncontrolled or suboptimal drainage outlets directly impacted by backwatering during elevated flow conditions in Tule Canal.	●		
Elk Slough Fish Passage and Flood Improvement Project	Restore anadromous fish passage, enhance shaded riverine aquatic habitat, improve the slough’s water quality, and implement flood improvements for the legacy Delta community of Clarksburg.			●
Lower West Side Levee Improvements	Repair levees in various location in the lower west side Yolo Bypass.	●		
Yolo Flyway Farms ⁵	Restore 359 acres of sub-tidal, intertidal, and seasonal wetlands to benefit fish species.		●	
Lower Yolo Ranch Restoration Project ⁵	Restore tidal marsh habitat to provide salmonid rearing habitat and regional food web production export.		●	
North Delta Fish Conservation Bank Project	Remove levees, lower floodplain, and create subtidal channels to restore tidal marsh habitat for Delta native fish species.		●	
Lookout Slough Tidal Habitat Restoration and Flood Improvement Project	Multi-benefit project to enhance habitat for fish and wildlife and increase flood storage and conveyance by constructing a new setback levee.		●	
Lower Peters Pocket Multi-benefit Project	Restore riparian habitat, tidal wetlands, seasonal wetlands, and native grasslands.			●
Prospect Island Tidal Habitat Restoration Project	Restore freshwater and subtidal habitats to benefit native fish and improve aquatic ecosystem functions.		●	
Little Egbert Tract	Modify levees to improve flood conveyance through the lower Yolo Bypass and grade the tract to create habitat.	●		
Rio Vista Small Communities Flood Risk Reduction Project	Structural improvements to the Rio Vista flood wall and levee system upstream of Highway 84 to provide flood protection to Rio Vista.	●		

Notes:

¹ Projects being considered for implementation as part of a program that would be defined in the YBCS Master Plan and coordinated through the YBCS Partnership.

² Projects have been or would likely be implemented independently but could include coordination with the YBCS Partnership.

³ Projects are in an early stage of development; therefore, the anticipated implementation pathway is currently undefined.

⁴ Project included in the *Yolo Bypass Drainage and Water Infrastructure Study Update*.

⁵ Project has been constructed.

