



Fact Sheet: A Nature-Based Solution __

Multi-Benefit Landscape Restoration on Webb Tract

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is the heart of California's water delivery system and is vital to our economy, a diverse ecosystem and quality of life for millions of Californians. Metropolitan-owned lands in the Delta – Webb Tract, Bacon Island, Bouldin Island and Holland Tract – allow us to explore ways to help improve the Delta's declining ecosystem and promote water reliability. We now have a new opportunity to transform Webb Tract from conventional agricultural use to wetlands and rice farming.

This shift would promote sustainable agriculture, reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change and restore critical habitat for local species. To support this effort, Metropolitan is applying for a \$20.9 million grant through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy's Nature Based Solutions: Wetland Restoration Grant Program.

Benefits at a Glance

- Slowing, stopping and/or reversing subsidence
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Studying carbon sequestration benefits from rice and wetlands
- Supporting sustainable agriculture
- Creating habitat to support the local ecosystem

Webb Tract in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta

Project Goals

Subsidence Control

Subsidence in the Delta began in the 19th century when the native wetlands were drained for agriculture. Conventional farming practices throughout much of the Delta region, including during harvesting and tilling activities, expose the peat soil and release carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide into the atmosphere as greenhouse gas emissions. As the soil oxidizes, land elevations decrease, adding stress on man-made levees that protect the islands, increasing the risk of flooding. As a result of subsidence over the last century, Metropolitan's islands are at as much as 12-25 feet below sea level. Developing wetlands or rice fields could stop or slow subsidence and may help trap carbon dioxide, reducing greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

Agricultural Sustainability

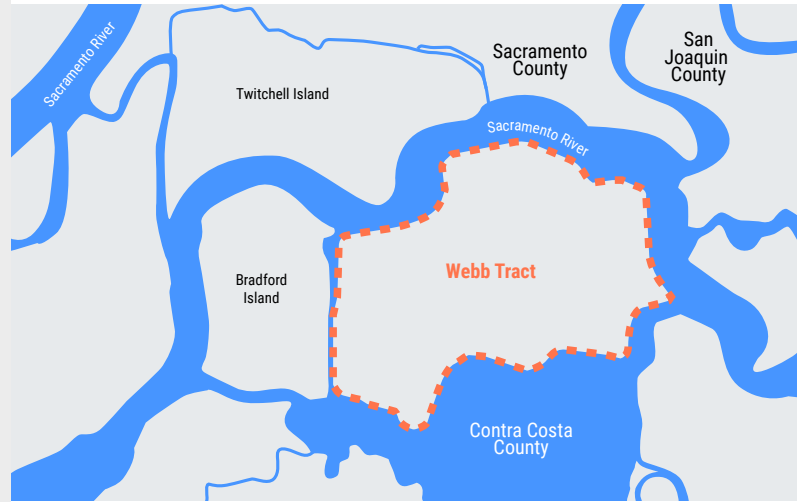
The Delta is one of the most fertile and active agricultural regions in the state. However, traditional farming on the Delta's peat soils is increasingly unsustainable due to land subsidence from soil degradation. This project will provide an opportunity to explore how growing rice on deeply subsided islands can help address subsidence, sequester carbon, provide food web benefits, and provide an opportunity to explore water management strategies.

Ecosystem Enhancement

Formed by the confluence of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers, the Delta was once home to about 80 percent of California's fishery species. The West Coast's largest estuary, it is also part of the Pacific Flyway for migratory water birds. But the original habitat that supported native species looks significantly different than its current natural state due to agricultural reclamation, non-native species introduction, water diversions and subsidence. As a result, many fish populations are in decline. Converting some of the lands on Webb Tract to wetlands would restore much needed habitat and could potentially play a crucial role in food web production for the local ecosystem.

Local Outreach

Metropolitan will continue to engage local Delta interests, environmental organizations, tribal and indigenous people and solicit input through public workshops and community engagement sessions.



Project Details

The \$20.9 million grant will fund design, environmental documentation, permitting and construction of wetlands, rice fields and associated improvements on Webb Tract over a three-year period. The grant will also fund quantification of greenhouse gas emissions before and after construction to calculate greenhouse gas reductions realized from the project. Metropolitan anticipates providing about \$3 million of in-kind staff services to match the grant award. The project will incorporate vegetation management to encourage establishment of native vegetation and will include adaptive management strategies to enhance ecosystem benefits. While the project supports the conservation goals established by the State's 30x30 Initiative, the project will not provide mitigation for existing and proposed projects, including the Delta Conveyance Project.

Project Milestones

MAY 2023

Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy to consider funding Metropolitan's Webb Tract grant application

FALL 2023

Begin planning, public outreach, design and environmental documentation

SPRING 2025

Grant award and start of construction

About Metropolitan

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a state-established cooperative of 26 member agencies – cities and public water agencies – that serve 19 million people in six counties. Metropolitan imports water from the Colorado River and Northern California to supplement local supplies and helps its members develop increased water conservation, recycling, storage and other resource management programs.