

Summary of Physical Habitat Restoration Conservation Measures Development

The following describes the major steps undertaken in the development of physical habitat restoration conservation measures.

1. In December 2007, the BDCP Steering Committee established the Habitat Restoration Program Technical Team (HRPTT) charged with development of physical habitat restoration conservation measures.

2. The HRPTT divided the Planning Area and Suisun Marsh into 11 zones based on hydrologic characteristics and conducted a screening-level evaluation of each zone to assess opportunities for restoring or enhancing seasonally inundated floodplain and restoring tidal marsh and channel margin habitats. This evaluation was based primarily on suitability of land surface elevations for habitat restoration, extent of existing and potential future habitat values for covered fish species with restoration, and potential land use constraints on habitat restoration.

3. Based on the outcome of item 2, the HRPTT designated eight Restoration Opportunity Areas (ROAs) within the Planning Area and Suisun Marsh within which BDCP habitat restoration conservation measures would be developed. The HRPTT then identified the total extent of seasonally inundated floodplain and tidal marsh habitat that could potentially be restored within each of the ROAs based on application of a range of implementable criteria (e.g., land ownership, land use, effects on infrastructure).¹

4. Based on the outcome of item 3, a subset of the HRPTT and BDCP participants developed draft targets for the extent of each habitat type to be restored under BDCP. Draft targets were handed out at the last BDCP Steering Committee meeting.

5. Next Steps

Based on the Steering Committee's concurrence with the draft habitat restoration targets;

a. Develop criteria to identify specific sites within Restoration Opportunity Areas that would be available for habitat restoration in the near-term (e.g., lands owned by public entities or conservancies) and could be designed in more detail within the BDCP Conservation Strategy.

b. Clarify how "contingent" maximums are handled within the habitat restoration conservation measures and Plan.

¹ The HRPTT did not conduct this level of analysis for identifying restoration opportunities for channel margin and riparian habitats because opportunities for restoration of these habitats are much less constrained than for floodplain and tidal marsh.