

Oct 2025

Advancing Social Science Integration in the Delta: A Five-Year Review

October 29, 2025
State of the Estuary



Delta
Science
Program

DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

Hollis Jones, PhD



Delta Stewardship Council

A CALIFORNIA STATE AGENCY



Water supply
reliability



Ecosystem
resilience



Delta
as place



**What is
social science?**



**What is
social science?**

The study of people



**Why
social science?**



Why social science?

**People are a central part
of the system**



“Sparse and sporadic” –Delta ISB, 2017



Social Science Task Force 2020 Report



A Social Science Strategy for the
Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta

- Finding 1: There is a lack of social science **capacity and investment**

1. Invest in studies
2. Build external network
3. Capacity

- Finding 2: Research activities are ongoing, but there is no **long-term vision** for social science integration

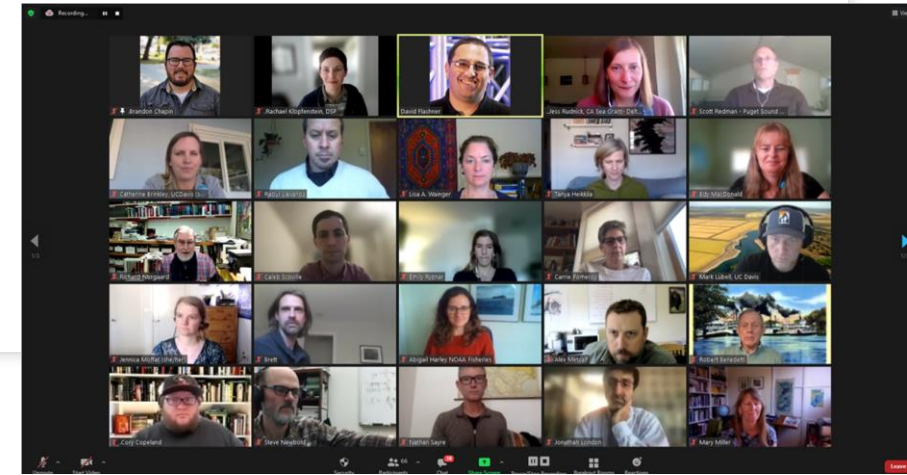
4. Conceptual framework
5. Social indicators
6. Integrate social and biophysical science

- Finding 3: The **adaptive management process is not informed** by the social sciences

7. Evaluate barriers
8. Reduce barriers to integrate new knowledge

Building Capacity

- Social Science Extension Specialist (SSES)
- The Bay-Delta Social Science Community of Practice (CoP)
- The Social Science Integration Team (SSIT)



CoP group photo



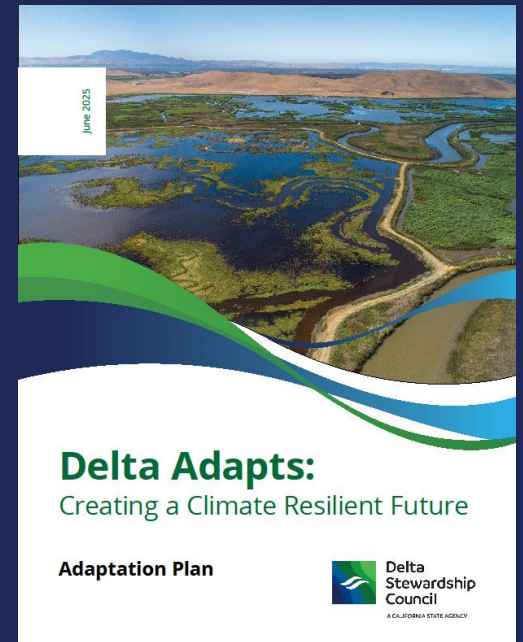
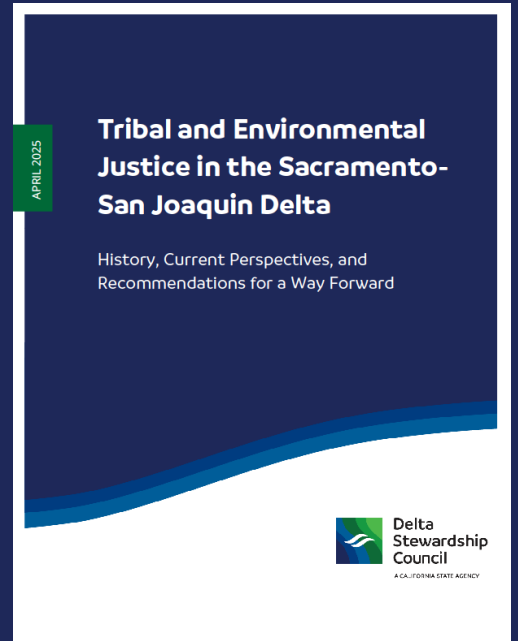
Dr. Tara Pozzi
(Current SSES)



Dr. Jessica Rudnick
(Previous SSES)

Progress

- Social Science **criteria** in research funding solicitations
- Council adoption of:
 - April 2025: Tribal and Environmental Justice (**TEJ**) in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Issue Paper
 - June 2025: **Delta Adapts**: Creating a Climate Resilient Future Adaptation Plan
- Draft 2026 **Delta Science Plan**
 - 3 draft actions
 - Resource: Making Science Whole: Embedding Social Science in Natural Science Workflows

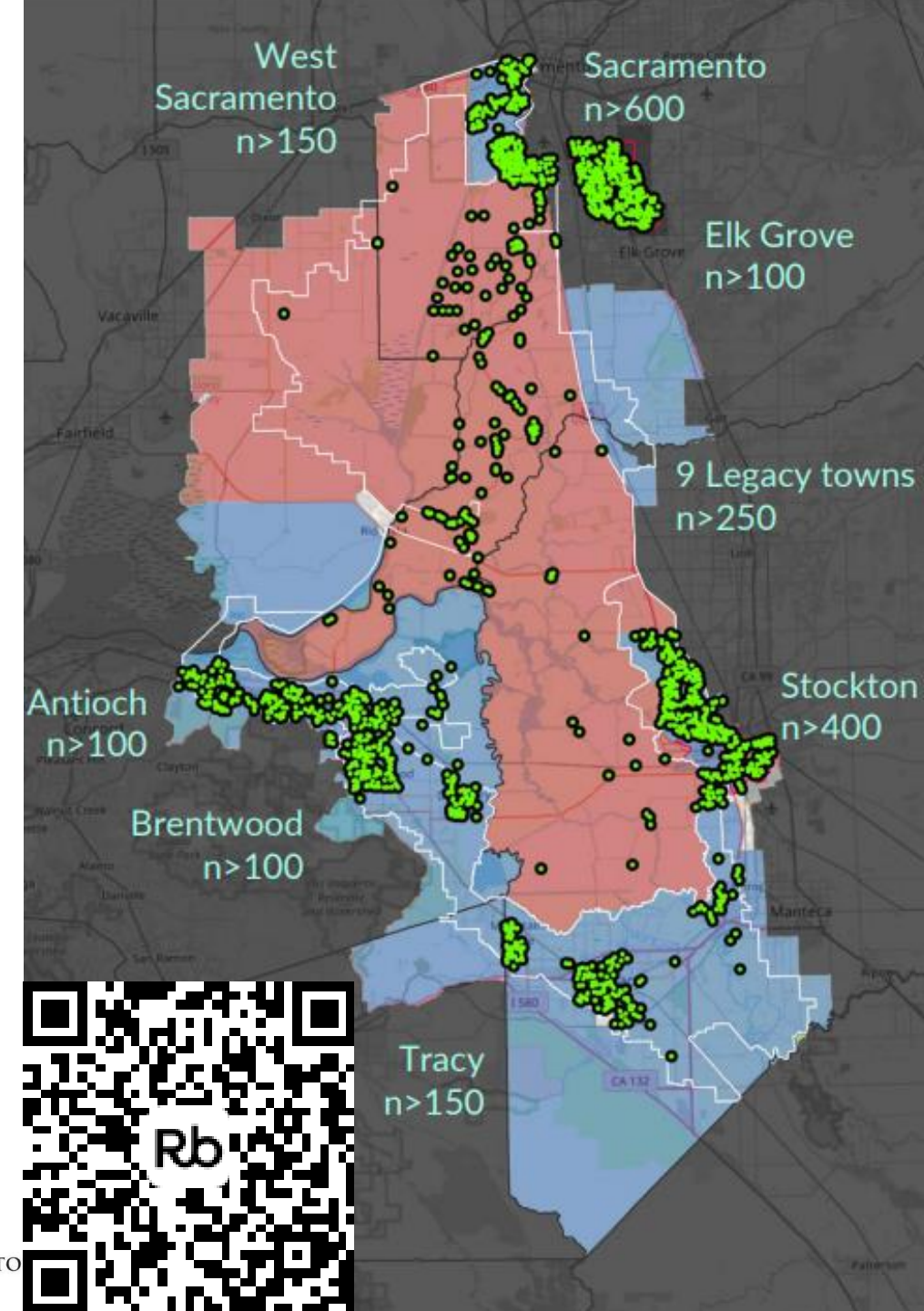


The Value of Social Science: Case Studies



Delta Residents Survey (DRS)

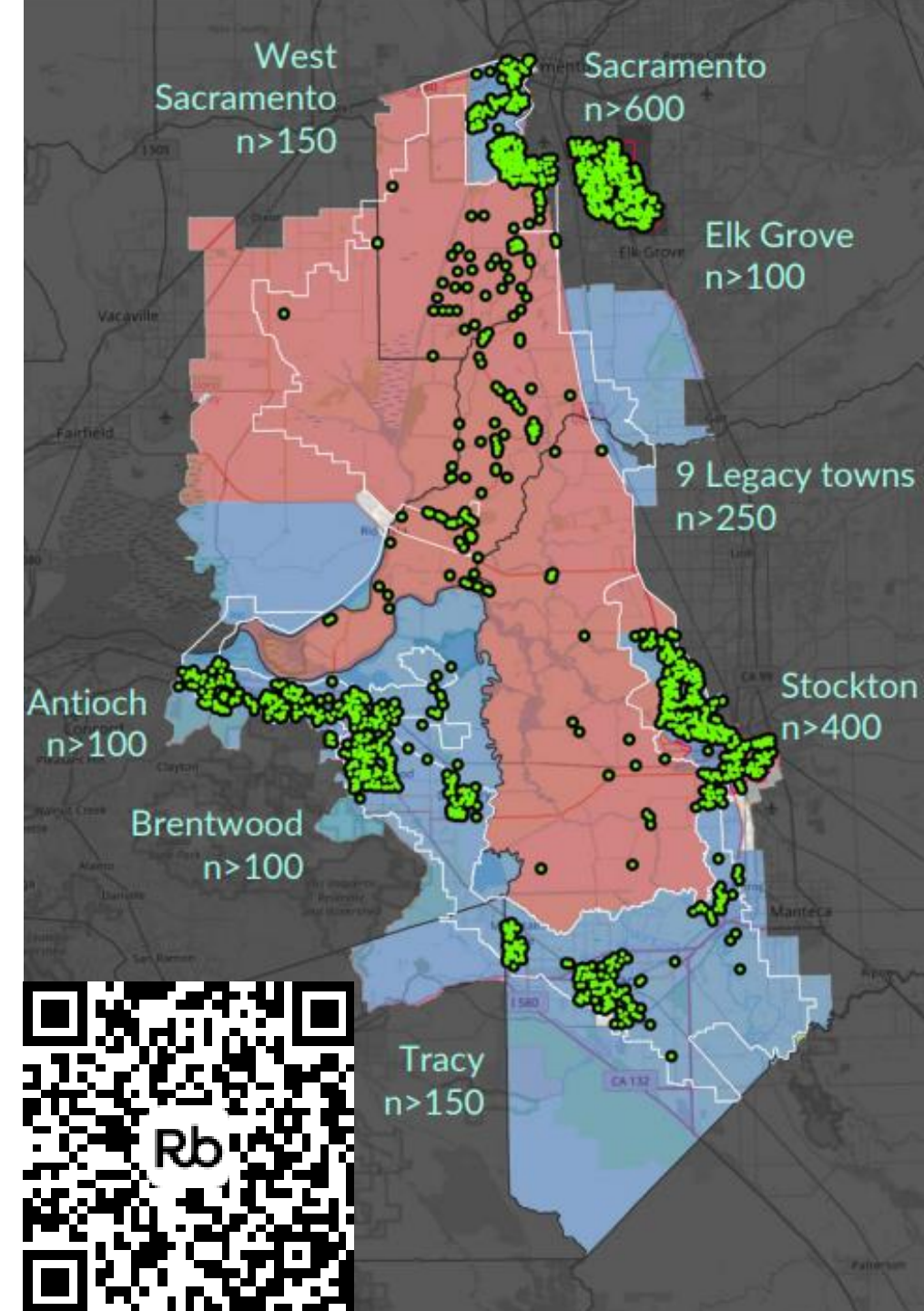
Project Lead: Dr. Jessica Rudnick



Delta Residents Survey (DRS)

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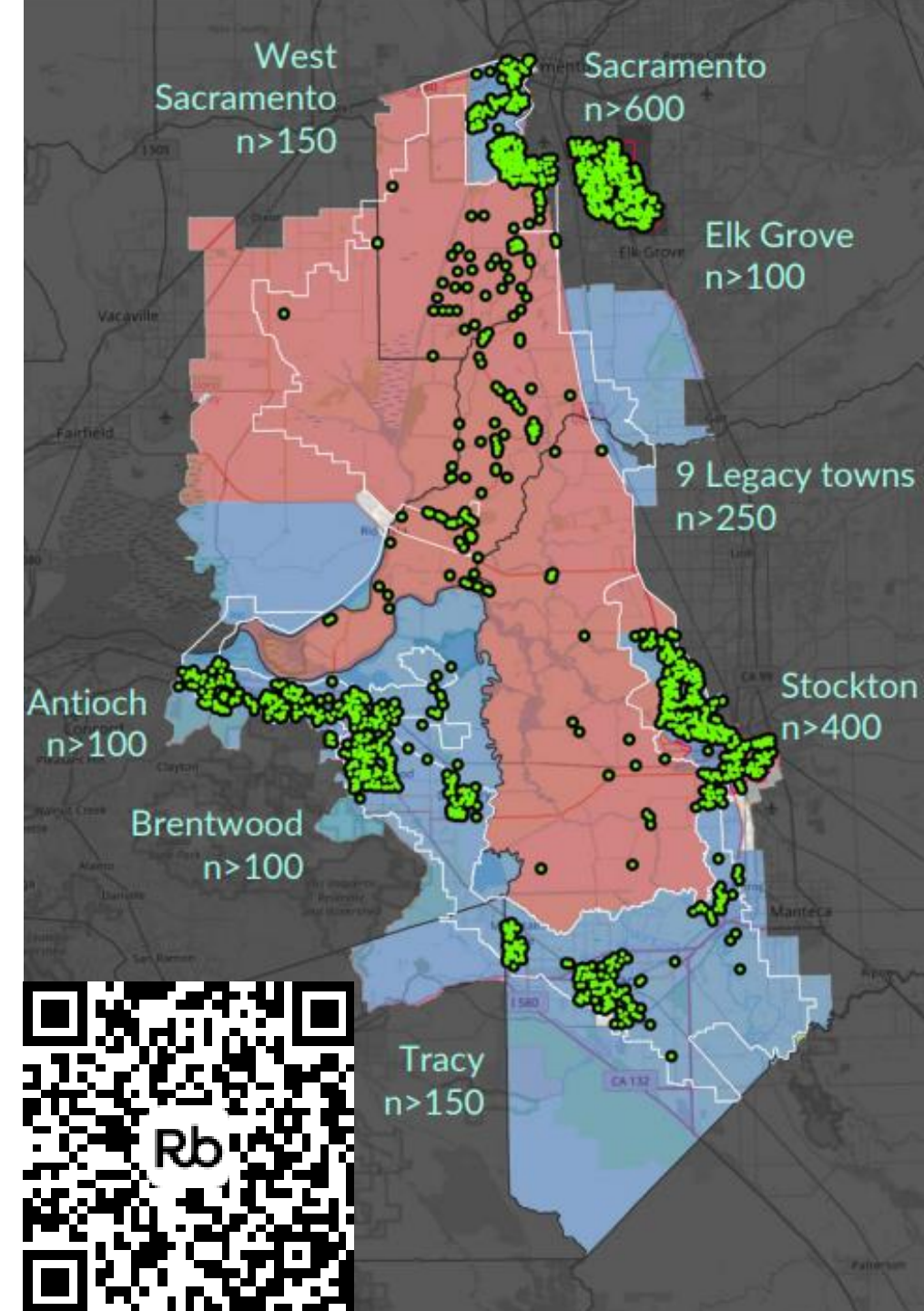
- Objectives:
 1. Assess Delta residents subjective well-being
 2. Pilot-test survey approach for social indicator monitoring
 3. Develop capacity and partnerships for monitoring human well-being and social change over time



Delta Residents Survey (DRS)

Project Lead: Dr. Jessica Rudnick

- 2,208 usable responses from residents across the Delta (2.9% response rate) in 2023
- Delta holds different meanings to different communities
- Priorities, concerns, needs, and resources are varied; requiring targeted policy response



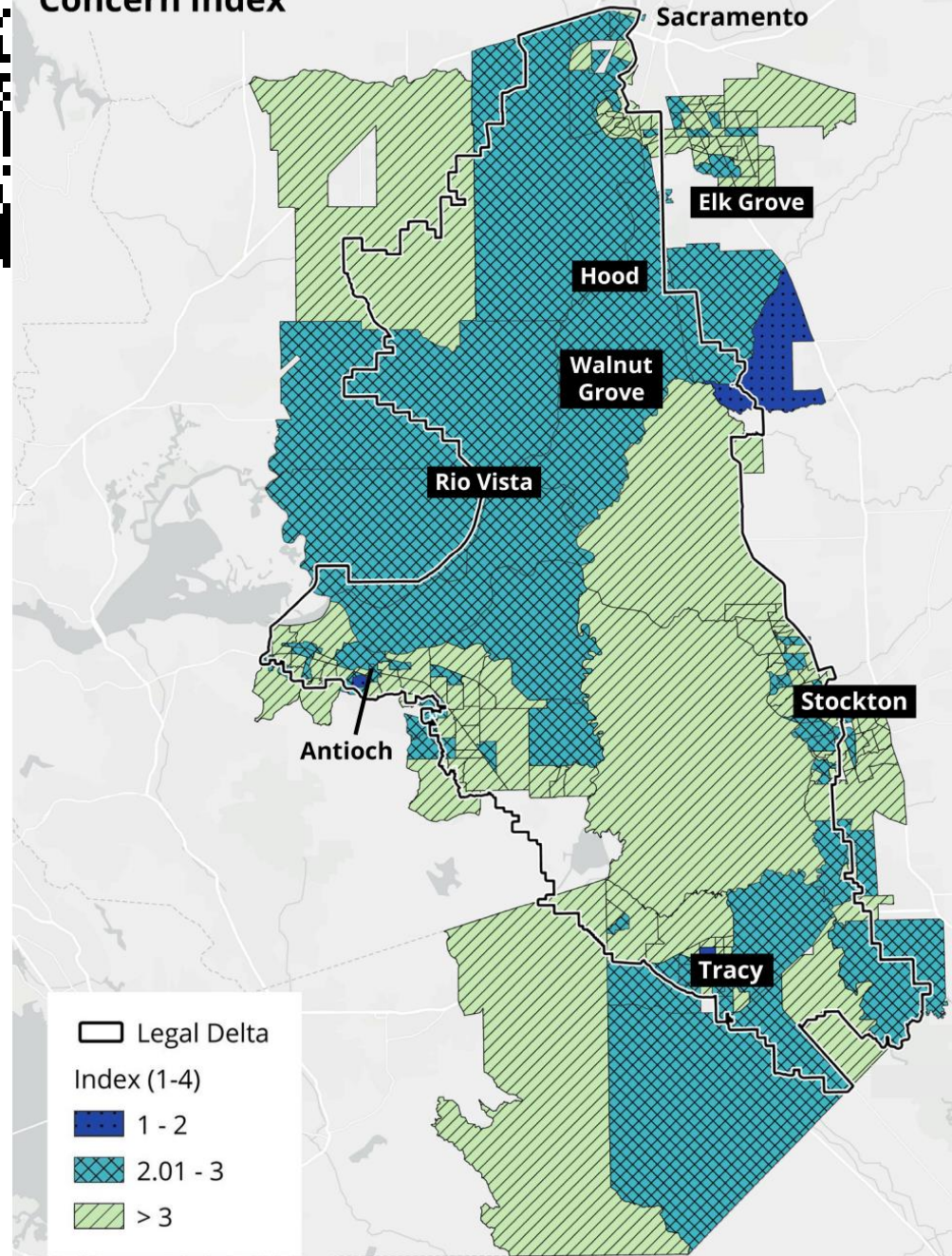
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Overall Level of Climate Concern Index



Collective Action for *Phragmites* Control

Project Lead: Dr. John Takekawa

- **Project title:** Integrating social and ecological research to control invasive species: fostering collective action among private and public stakeholders



SUISUN
RESOURCE
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT



Collective Action for *Phragmites* Control

Project Lead: Dr. John Takekawa

- *Phragmites australis*—a nonnative invasive plant—spread threatens wetland function
- Management requires collective action across property boundaries



Collective Action for *Phragmites* Control

Project Lead: Dr. John Takekawa

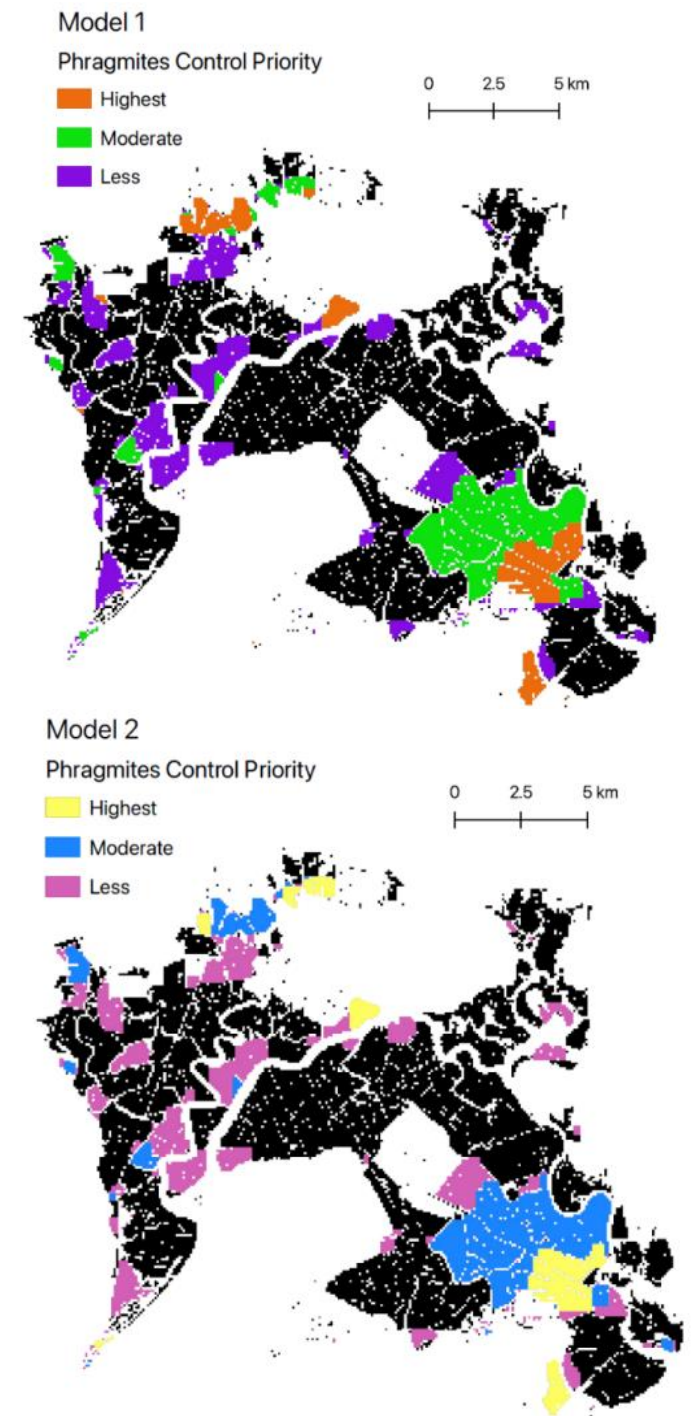
- Natural sciences:
 - Remote sensing to map spread
 - Field & greenhouse revegetation experiments
 - Retrospective analysis of herbicide treatments
- Social sciences:
 - Semi-structured interview
 - Landowner survey
 - Spatial prioritization model



Collective Action for *Phragmites* Control

Project Lead: Dr. John Takekawa

- Spatial prioritization model identifying high-value zones for *Phragmites* control
- Invasive species control in Suisun Marsh cannot succeed without addressing the social dimensions of land management



Efforts Outside of the Council

Update
SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN DELTA
Socioeconomic Indicators



DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION
March 2025

**JUST TRANSITIONS
IN THE DELTA**



SF ESTUARY
Wetlands
Regional
Monitoring
Program

People and Wetlands Work Group

COEQWAL
COLLABORATORY FOR EQUITY IN WATER ALLOCATION



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Stay Engaged!

SocialScience@deltacouncil.ca.gov



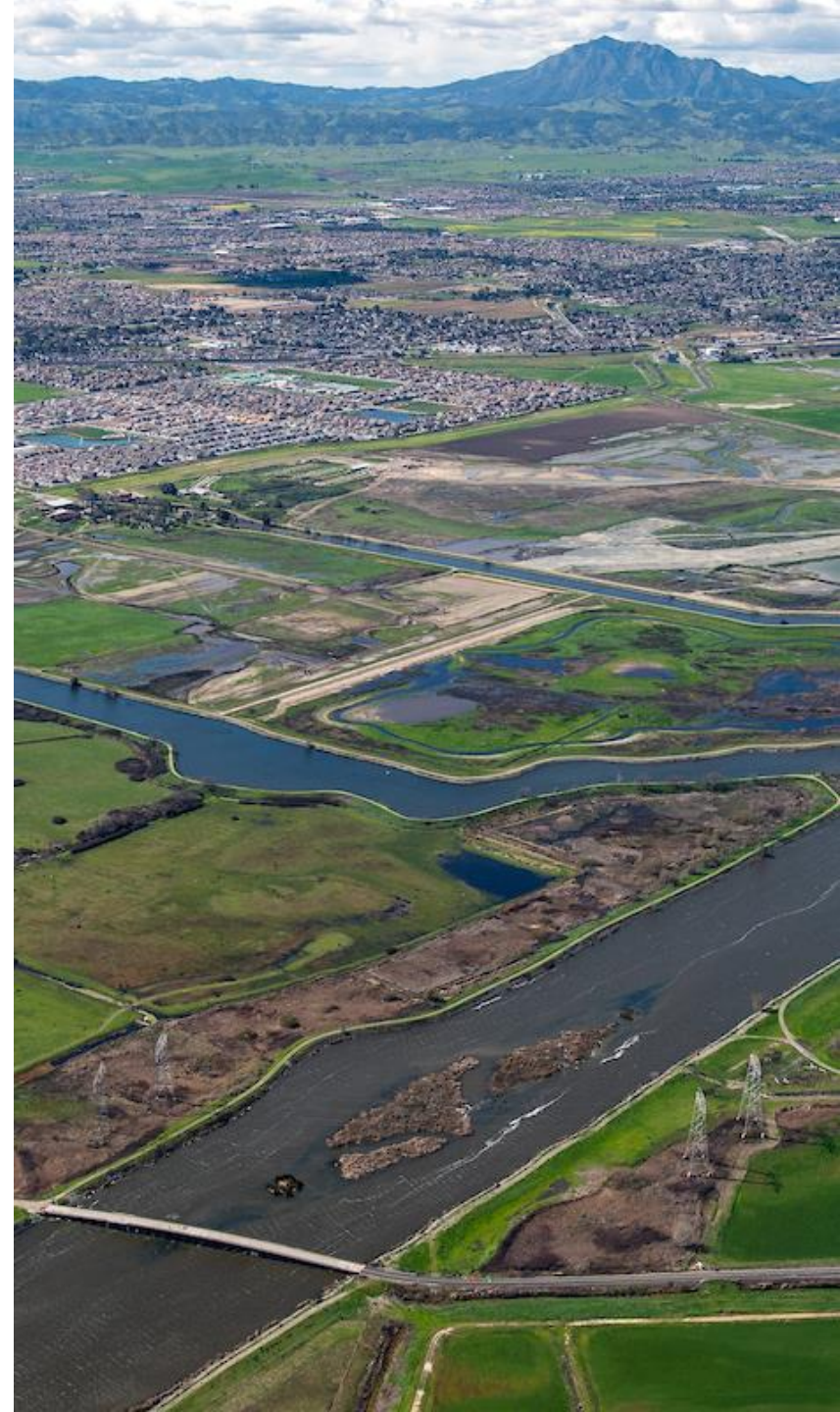
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Social Science Integration at the Council



<https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/social-science>

Looking Forward



Thank you

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Integration at the
Council

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