



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** PC 19-021, **Version:** 1

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PUBLIC HEARING regarding establishing General Plan policies for Cache Slough. (Project Planner: Nedzlene Ferrario)

On February 26, 2019, the Board of Supervisors directed staff to initiate General Plan amendments to incorporate policy guidance regarding the potential conversion of agricultural lands in the unincorporated area of Cache Slough into ecosystem restoration. Planning staff intends to address the General Plan policy considerations in two phases. On May 16, 2019, staff will introduce the Delta topics of concern to the Planning Commission and recommends that the public hearing be continued to June 6, 2019, for specific General Plan policy proposals.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Cache Slough is the unincorporated area located on the southeastern portion of Solano County, adjacent to Yolo County and west of the Sacramento River. The nearby city is Rio Vista. Cache Slough is identified as an area for Prioritization and Habitat Restoration projects in the Delta Plan, administered by The Delta Stewardship Council, established in 2010, pursuant to the 2009 Delta Reform Act. Cache Slough is within the Primary Zone of the Delta Protection Commission's Land Use and Resource Management Plan and within the boundaries of the legal Delta pursuant to the Delta Protection Act of 1992. The legal Delta consists of five counties, Solano, Yolo, Sacramento, Contra Costa and San Joaquin.

Within Solano County's General Plan, Cache Slough is designated Agriculture with a Resource Conservation Overlay and a Priority Habitat Area in the General Plan. The area is approximately 65,586 acres or 102.5 square mile, and within the Exclusive Agriculture 80 acres and 160 acres (A-80 and A-160) zoning district. Existing land uses in the area are predominately cattle ranching or crop production. Several public and privately owned/funded restoration projects and a hunting preserve are located in the area. A majority of the lands are classified Prime Farmland according to the Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, and under Williamson Act contracts.

Cache Slough is an area of interest by the Department of Water Resources due to its appropriate topographical elevations for tidal wetlands restoration. The Department of Water Resources has been mandated to satisfy mitigation requirements of various State Water projects by creating habitat for endangered aquatic species such as the Delta and Longfin Smelt, Chinook Salmon and Green Sturgeon. The area is also of significant interest for flood risk reduction due to its location at the mouth of the Yolo Bypass and confluence of several tributaries that flow into the Sacramento River.

Several tidal wetland habitat restoration projects in the Cache Slough such as Prospect Island (1100 acres) and Lookout Slough (3400 acres), are currently in the environmental review phase of the permitting process, and Little Egbert (3500 acres) is anticipated to initiate the process in the near

future. The project locations are shown on Exhibit D. Project status will be provided at the meeting.

The landscape change from agriculture to habitat restoration or floodway raises numerous issues such as the protecting the economic viability of agriculture in Cache Slough, loss of Prime Farmland, lands use compatibility between wildlife and adjacent agriculture, nuisances, management and maintenance of the lands, impacts to the transportation network, water quality and supply, introduction of additional recreational usage such as fishing or boating and other water oriented uses, and property tax revenue implications due to the change from private landownership to public lands. These concerns will be discussed at the meeting.

#### Attachments

Exhibit A - Cache Slough Region within Solano County

Exhibit B - Priority Habitat Restoration Areas in the Delta Plan

Exhibit C - Cache Slough Region within the Legal Delta

Exhibit D - Tidal Wetland Project Locations in Cache Slough