



TULE CANAL CHARRETTE OUTCOMES

FULL REPORT

DATES: JANUARY 28 - 29, 2021

**WE ENVISION A TRANSFORMED TULE
CANAL AS AN INTEGRATED CORRIDOR
THAT ENGAGES PEOPLE, SUSTAINS
FARMERS, PROTECTS PROPERTY, AND
PROVIDES DIVERSE WILDLIFE HABITAT**

WE ENVISION A TRANSFORMED TULE CANAL AS AN INTEGRATED CORRIDOR THAT ENGAGES PEOPLE, SUSTAINS FARMERS, PROTECTS PROPERTY, AND PROVIDES DIVERSE WILDLIFE HABITAT

Yolo County, located in North California with 200,000 people, is a region with some of the most important biodiversity and agricultural lands in the nation. A few statistics: 4 small cities, 57,000-acre Yolo Bypass (including the 16,000-acre Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area), an important segment of the Pacific Flyway, the Sacramento River (the longest river in California) as a border, and critical habitat for endangered and threatened species. During flood events, the Yolo Bypass transports five times the average flow of the Sacramento River to protect the Sacramento region. All water drains west to east to the Tule Canal, which turns into the Toe Drain in the southern part of the Bypass and eventually empties out into the Cache Slough Complex, eventually reaching the Pacific Ocean. The Tule Canal is a diverse and varied waterway with a diverse and varied set of stakeholder priorities.

Our aim through the Tule Canal Charrette in January 2021 was to bring stakeholders together to come closer to a shared vision for this complex environment which stretches the entire length of the 40-mile Yolo Bypass on the eastern side.

Our process began in 2012, when the County initiated the first Yolo Bypass Drainage and Water Infrastructure Improvement Study. In 2014, the final study identified 12 projects, a number of which are now completed and others of which are in progress. In December 2020, an update to that study was completed - identifying a new suite of projects to improve drainage and water supply infrastructure in the Yolo Bypass. Like these projects before it, the Charrette's work began with talking to landowners, land managers, and other stakeholders. Listening to those who know the Tule Canal and Toe Drain best, and recognizing this knowledge and grassroots process, is critical to a successful outcome.

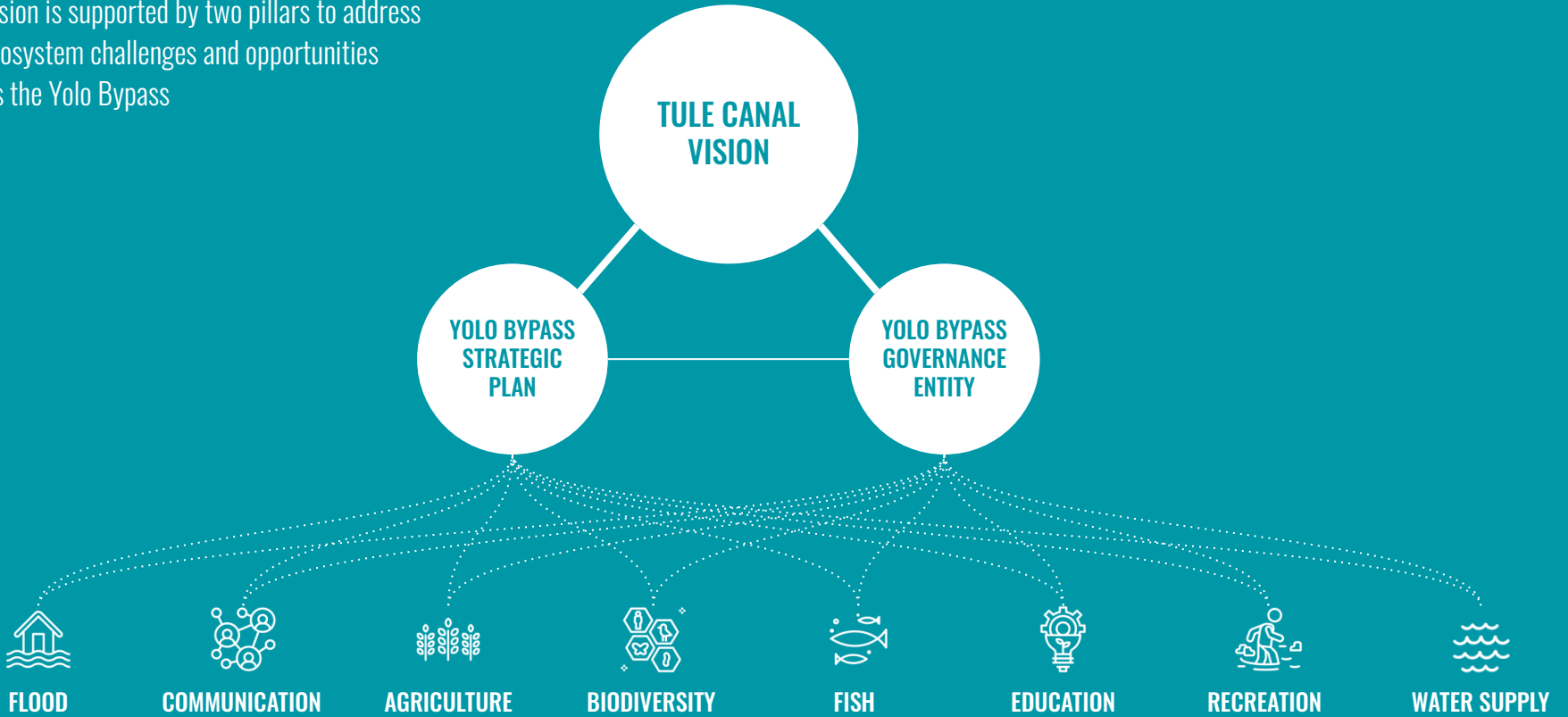
Our priorities included the protection of wildlife habitat, improvement of flood control, preservation of sustainable agriculture, and expansion of recreation and environmental education opportunities.

Our outcomes are three actions – a multi-functional Tule Canal, a Yolo Bypass Strategic Plan, and a Yolo Bypass Governance Entity - all in service of a multi-benefit Yolo Bypass vision.



OUR FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Our vision is supported by two pillars to address the ecosystem challenges and opportunities across the Yolo Bypass



TULE CANAL VISION

We envision a transformed Tule Canal as an integrated corridor that engages people, sustains farmers, protects property, and provides diverse wildlife habitat



AGRICULTURE

- Enhance wildlife-friendly agriculture
- Preserve the majority of agricultural land
- Ensure growers can reliably plant and harvest



BIODIVERSITY

- Create a sinuous, meandering, braided channel
- Set back levees to allow additional hydraulic roughness
- Improve connectivity to the Sacramento River
- Convert unproductive agricultural land to habitat
- Create bench to provide additional fish habitat
- Remove fish passage barriers
- Create riparian woodland and scrub, wetland and pollinator habitat



COMMUNICATION

- Develop videos, habitat StoryMaps, and art
- Create multi-benefit "strike team"
- Develop information hub
- Streamline permitting
- Create landowner committee



EDUCATION

- Implement a new educational curriculum which integrates art and technology
- Create an event program, including tours and conferences
- Develop a web site, interpretative signs, and other coordinated educational material



RECREATION

- Develop a recreational corridor integrated with habitat and recreation goals
- Increase public access while maintaining high habitat values
- Improve signage consistent with educational curriculum
- Implement a recreation partnership with local agencies and nonprofits
- Create new recreation opportunities tied to educational curriculum



WATER

- Increase flood conveyance capacity
- Reduce in-channel vegetation and sedimentation
- Screen intakes + operate intakes in real time
- Improve pumps, crossings, and other water-related infrastructure
- Increase groundwater recharge



YOLO BYPASS STRATEGIC PLAN

Develop a strategic plan to create a mission, objectives and actions to sustain and improve the multi-benefit uses of the Yolo Bypass, including the transformed Tule Canal Corridor

THE PLAN WILL ENVISION THE STEPS NECESSARY TO CREATE:

- Project priorities
- Governance structure
- Planning process to ensure all future projects integrate multiple benefits early in the design process
- Data management program and a data-sharing portal
- Adaptive management program
- Operation and maintenance structure
- Realistic long-term funding plan
- Innovative, dynamic communication platform
- Problem-solving culture among stakeholders that builds trust and minimizes conflict
- Opportunities to innovate operations through adoption of new technologies
- Streamlined, programmatic permitting process
- Strategy to maximize use of water, including potentially shared water rights, staggered operations, and consolidated diversions
- Centralized hub for all Yolo Bypass information



YOLO BYPASS GOVERNANCE ENTITY

Create a new Yolo Bypass governance entity to implement the Strategic Plan: the entity will construct habitat and recreation projects, streamline permitting and administrative processes, implement a Bypass-wide operation and maintenance program, expand education programs, secure and manage funding, and ensure robust communication among stakeholders.

CONSTRUCT HABITAT AND RECREATION PROJECTS

- Create a multi-benefit project strike team to facilitate project implementation
- Ensure recreation opportunities and public access points are identified early in project planning process
- Develop signage

EXPAND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- Develop digital tour experiences
- Organize event program
- Develop curriculum
- Develop educational partnerships between nonprofits

SECURE AND MANAGE FUNDING

- Manage finances
- Identify long-term, stable funding sources
- Apply for grants
- Explore fees and taxes

ENSURE ROBUST COMMUNICATION AMONG STAKEHOLDERS

- Create and constantly improve information hub
- Develop branding
- Ensure equitable outreach to all stakeholders
- Create a landowner council to amplify agricultural voices

IMPLEMENT OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

- Maintain lands and waterways for flood conveyance and drainage
- Implement adaptive management program
- Partner with state agencies to increase enforcement of regulations as needed
- Assist with levee maintenance, similar to a local maintaining agency (LMA)

● STREAMLINE PERMITTING AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES

- Continuously update the Yolo Bypass Strategic Plan
- Advocate for streamlined permitting
- Create Yolo Bypass Keeper position