Attachment A. Good Neighbor Checklist

Westervelt Ecological Services (WES) prepared the following responses to the Delta Stewardship Council's Good Neighbor Checklist (Delta Plan 2022) to document coordination and consideration of neighboring properties, agriculture, infrastructure, and water resources to ensure that planned restoration on the Cache Slough Mitigation Bank is designed to avoid or reduce conflicts with existing neighboring land uses. avoid or reduce potential conflicts with planned restoration on the Cache Slough Mitigation Bank.

Sitting and Planning

1. **Is the project sited on public or conservation-entity owned lands, or where private property is required, has there been engagement to find willing sellers?**

   The project is being proposed by WES on WES-owned land.

2. **If there are existing agricultural or conservation easements, has thought been given to how to incorporate or avoid conflicts with them?**

   The property is not covered by any existing agricultural or conservation easements. Following approval of the mitigation bank, a conservation easement will be recorded over the restoration area.

3. **Is the project sited to avoid fragmenting existing farms?**

   The project site is located at the southern boundary of the Yolo Bypass abutting the Sacramento River. Wetland restoration at this location would not result in the fragmentation of existing farms.

4. **Have neighbors and stakeholders been included in the early planning stage?**

   WES owns lands to the north of the project site and lands to the west and southwest are owned by the Sacramento San Joaquin Drainage District (SSJDD). The project is located adjacent to the Mellin Levee, which is a state plan of flood control project. Stakeholders include Solano County Water Agency (SCWA as the Local Maintaining Agency for Mellin Levee), Central Valley Flood Protection Board (CVFPB as the land manager for SSJDD lands and flood easement holder), City of Rio Vista (as a governing body that receives flood protection from Mellin Levee), and Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E as a utility company that maintains two active electrical distribution lines through the property). WES has had several meetings with and continues to coordinates closely with each of these stakeholders to ensure that the project will not be in conflict with their independent interests.

5. **Will the project potentially disturb utilities, roads, bridges, or other infrastructure that serve local uses? If so, are those uses taken into account during project planning?**

The project includes construction of a low-water crossing structure (bridge) under Highway 84. This structure will conform to existing Caltrans standards and will not reduce vehicle capacity. The Project will necessitate a temporarily lane closure during bridge construction that could create short delays for travel on Highway 84 through the project site. These delays would only affect travel associated with access to the Real McCoy Ferry and to one resident (Paige Baldwin). The Project will prepare and implement a traffic control plan that will include one-way lane closures in accordance with Caltrans standard plans.

The project includes re-alignment of two sections of electrical power distribution poles owned by PG&E. WES is coordinating with PG&E to move the existing poles to higher ground. Currently the poles are located within existing wetland habitats that are not accessible by vehicle during the wet season. Moving the poles to established access roads will provide better access then current conditions.

6. **Is the project designed to avoid interfering with other beneficial water uses (e.g., existing water diversions, boating, fishing, and recreation)?**

The project has been designed to avoid altering the hydrology in Watson Hollow Slough and so will not have any impacts on water delivery to agricultural lands upstream of the project site. No public recreational sites are located in the immediate vicinity of the Project site; therefore, implementation of the project is not expected impair, degrade, or eliminate existing recreational opportunities. The project will not cause changes to Cache Slough or Sacramento River that would interfere with boating, fishing, or other recreational uses.

7. **Will the project design avoid or reduce damage to nearby drainage, irrigation, and flood control facilities (e.g., levees) during construction and operation and avoid conflicting management practices?**

The Project is being designed independent from Watson Hollow Slough and will not impact any drainage or irrigation facilities on the slough. Long-term management of the project will not interfere with management of this water control facility because current access will be maintained.

As discussed above under Item 4, the project is located adjacent to the Mellin Levee, a federal and state levee facility that provides flood protection to an approximately 250-acre area within the City of Rio Vista. The project has been designed to avoid conflict with the levee by constructing a berm around the perimeter of the proposed restoration area to buffer the levee from tidal waters. Hydraulic analysis conducted for the proposed project did not find any significant increases in water surface elevation and the project would not have any significant change in existing flood conditions on the Mellin Levee.

8. **Has the project considered buffers where restoration lands could potentially interfere with surrounding agricultural lands or where agricultural lands could potentially interfere with restoration lands?**

The Project site is separated from adjacent agricultural lands by an existing berm and water delivery canal (Watson Hollow Slough). The project is not expected to interfere with surrounding agricultural uses and no impacts on the restoration lands would occur as a result of adjacent agricultural practices.

9. **As a result of the project, are special status species on the project site expected to increase markedly in abundance, and potentially move from the site to neighboring lands or waterways? If so, has coordination on safe harbor or other protections for neighboring land and water uses been considered?**

The project has been designed to create additional habitat for special-status fish species that are known to be present in the Sacramento River. These species would be restricted to the site and do not have the potential to move onto neighboring properties. The potential increase in successful fish rearing would provide benefits to the public through increases in fish populations within the Delta. Other special-status terrestrial species that could benefit from habitat restoration on the site include giant garter snake and northwestern pond turtle. Both of these species are known to occur in Cache Slough and the adjacent Watson Hollow Slough represents suitable aquatic habitat for both species. The additional aquatic habitat created by the project will not significantly change existing constraints associated with these species because the existing habitat is currently considered potential upland habitat.

10. **Is the project designed so that any new public access is compatible with, would benefit, and would avoid or reduce conflict with, local businesses, landowners and residents?**

The project will be managed to preserve habitat values established by the mitigation bank and protected by a conservation easement. No public access will be permitted under the conservation easement. Therefore, the project will not introduce any new public access opportunities that could conflict with local businesses, landowners and residents.

Construction, Operation and Maintenance

11. **Is the project designed to avoid or reduce project dust, traffic, vibration, noise, and lighting impacts?**

The Project as proposed would not generate emissions that would exceed Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District thresholds. The project includes environmental commitments to limit offroad speeds and reduce fugitive dust during construction.

Based on Analysis in the IS/MND, a small increase in traffic would occur in the project area during the restoration/construction phase of the project from construction vehicles and construction workers accessing the site. However, these impacts would be short-term, occurring only during daylight hours during the construction period. No new traffic would be generated once project construction activities are completed.

Based on Analysis in the IS/MND, the closest vibration and noise-sensitive receivers are approximately 4,000 feet from the project site. Anticipated noise levels from project construction would be well below County standards and would not have a significant impact on nearby sensitive receptors. Additionally, vibration from construction of the project is not anticipated to result in any damage impacts on nearby structures.

Implementation of the project would not include new operational noise sources that would result in changes to the ambient noise environment associated with the project site.

Construction activities will be limited to daylight hours and no artificial lighting sources would be used.

12. **Is the project designed to minimize project traffic during commute and harvest periods?**

Highway 84 in the project area has very little commute traffic (only when ferry is open) and experiences limited harvest traffic associated with the Little Egbert Tract. Mostly outgoing trucks use Highway 84 since most ag operations are managed from the north end of the tract along Liberty Island Road.

13. **Has the project considered utilizing invasive species protection plans, including potential long-term commitments or funding to:**

    a. **Protect against proliferation of mosquitos to protect against arboviruses, which can lead to injury and mortality of wildlife and humans?**

The Project has been designed to maintain positive drainage and prevent large areas of standing water on the landscape that can provide breeding habitat for mosquitos and other vectors. Open water habitat restored onsite will be subject to daily tidal flows, which will minimize mosquito vectors.

b. Monitor and treat terrestrial and aquatic weeds and set specific triggers for action?

The project will implement a long term management plan and Invasive plant species management plan that prescribes methods for treating and managing terrestrial and aquatic weeds. Integrated pest management (IPM) will be used as appropriate and permitted to minimize the introduction and spread of invasive nonnative species through implementation of a combination of techniques. These IPM techniques include biological control, cultural control, manual control, mechanical control, and chemical control. All IPM measures used will adhere to the most current research and guidance as provided by the USDA National Invasive Species Center (USDA 2023).

14. Has the project considered monitoring and mitigating project-related changes to local water quality and quantity to:

a. Protect beneficial water uses from harmful algal blooms, nitrates, phosphorous, and methylmercury?

The project has been designed to allow full tidal exchange, which will reduce the potential for harmful agal blooms since increased flows are expected to reduce water temperatures and provide regular flushing out of nutrients and algae, reducing the likelihood of blooms. Tidal wetlands proposed by the project will help mitigate phosphorus and nitrate pollution within Sacramento River through phytoremediation (uptake, retention, and removal of nutrient, chemical, and heavy metal pollutants).

It is widely acknowledged that tidal wetlands can contribute to the formation of methylmercury (MeHg) and that water flows can release accumulated MeHg. A study conducted by DWR (Lee, P. and J. Manning 2020) reviewed data from four tidal wetland areas in the Delta and determined that they were not significant sources of MeHg to their adjacent waterbodies. Additionally, the concentrations of MeHg were not significantly higher leaving the wetlands than entering them. The study also found that the waters entering the wetlands did not meet the RWQCB's water quality criterion for MeHg, and there was no measurable annual increase in MeHg loads in the receiving waters due to the tidal wetlands. Westervelt has contributed to early studies related to the effects of tidal wetlands on the production and export of methylmercury into the Sacramento River Basin to mitigate for potential future project effects.

b. Avoid drainage, seepage or changes in the water table that impair neighboring agricultural or other activities?

The project is hydrologically separated from the neighboring agricultural lands to the north by a large drainage canal, Watson Hollow Slough. The Project will have no direct impacts on Watson Hollow Slough or affect water delivery or drainage patterns. Based on the analysis in the project's IS/MND (Section X. Hydrology and Water Quality), the proposed project would not significantly affect groundwater supplies, groundwater recharge, or impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin. Long-term operation of the project would also not would result in substantial change in regional salinity or dissolved organic carbon (DOC) levels and would not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements regional water intake facilities.

15. Does the project consider, as applicable, mitigation for conversion of productive agricultural land in the form of conservation easements, or other measures to enhance local agricultural productivity?

The project site is designated as Grazing Land. Establishment of a wetland preserve would not result in the conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to a non-agricultural use. The project site has supported cattle grazing for more than 30 years and grazing practices will continue as part of long-term vegetation management of the restored habitat within non-wetland areas. No mitigation is proposed.

16. Does the project have an operation and maintenance plan that includes, as applicable, the ability to maintain site security, prevent trespass, manage any publicly accessible areas, and control flooding and weeds?

The project is a mitigation bank that will be maintained and managed in perpetuity under a perpetual conservation easement that includes a long-term management plan that includes annual monitoring, vegetation and land management, site security, and restricted access to preserve the conservation values of the property and adjacent land uses. A third-party, non-profit entity will act as the conservation easement holder and is responsible for ensuring that the property is maintained according to the long-term management.

Accessible Community Interface

17. Does the project provide for an Ombudsman Office or other means to:

a. Facilitate stakeholders and affected landowners and local agency discussions regarding offsite impacts and options to address them?

Contact information for the Mitigation Bank sponsor, steward, bank manager, and conservation easement holder is publicly available through the U.S. Army Corps' Regulatory In-Lieu Fee and Bank Information System (RIBITS).

b. Provide a way to discuss resolution of disputes prior to resorting to the Government Claims Act or other legal claims processes?

Following approval of the mitigation bank, the interagency review team (IRT) is responsible for overseeing compliance with the mitigation bank development and long-term management plan, including the implementation of monitoring and reporting requirements, and any other conditions of approval. The IRT and the Conservation Easement holder can assist in resolving any potential future disputes related to land management activities or outcomes.

c. Provide regular project updates to the affected public?

An annual report that addresses all management and monitoring tasks completed and general site conditions will be submitted to the IRT by January 31 following each monitoring year, in perpetuity. The annual report will cover the Reporting Period from January 1 through December 31 of the previous monitoring year. Annual monitoring reports will be made available for public and agency review through USACE's Regulatory In-Lieu Fee and Bank Information Tracking System (RIBITS) within the mitigation bank's Cyber Repository.