

## » The South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project

The largest wetlands restoration on the U.S. West Coast, the Project encompasses 15,100 acres of former salt ponds located around the south edge of San Francisco Bay bordering Silicon Valley. Its mission is to restore and enhance wetlands in South San Francisco Bay as habitat for federally endangered species and migratory birds while providing for flood management and wildlife-oriented public access and recreation.

## Thanks to Project Supporters

Our progress is due to the efforts of a broad array of supporters and partners, from those who have volunteered their labor to plant natives or give tours, to those who given funds or other contributions.

In 2014, construction work, Shoreline Study planning, and scientific efforts were funded by:

- California Wildlife Conservation Board
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- State Coastal Conservancy
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- U.S. Geological Survey
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Santa Clara Valley Water District
- Alameda County Flood Control District

To find out more about us: [www.southbayrestoration.org](http://www.southbayrestoration.org)  
[www.facebook.com/southbayrestoration](https://www.facebook.com/southbayrestoration)  
[www.twitter.com/SouthBayRestore](https://www.twitter.com/SouthBayRestore)



### South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project Partners:



# 2014 Annual Report

# South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project

A yearly snapshot of Project milestones and assessment of progress toward meeting restoration, public access and flood management goals



### » DEAR FRIEND OF THE SOUTH BAY SALT POND RESTORATION,



**JOHN BOURGEOIS**  
State Coastal Conservancy,  
South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project Executive Project Manager

This past year granted us a welcome indication that our hard work to create habitat for salt marsh species is yielding results: we scored the first sighting of an endangered marsh bird on our restored acreage.

A reclusive bird called a Ridgway's rail (formerly the California clapper rail) was seen at the Island Ponds, which we opened to Bay waters in 2006. It took several years after our actions for enough mud to accumulate and pickleweed to grow to attract animals.

We are thankful for such successes, but feel an increasing sense of urgency to make more widespread on-the-ground change in preparation for sea level rise.

Marshes need a head start to withstand rising waters, so they have a greater chance of surviving to shelter animals, filter waters and protect urban shorelines from storms and flooding.

We are adapting our wetlands vision to best cope with the rising sea: adding habitat islands and gentle sloping edges to our marshes—to buffer flood protection levees, allow future salt marsh to grow up these slopes, and give animals a place to escape from storms.

In 2014, a part of that new vision was formalized for Alviso in the draft Shoreline Study plan for levees and restored salt marshes with slopes. We also began working with the Port of Redwood City to look at using their clean dredged mud for future Eden Landing wetland work. And we readied Phase 2 draft plans for restoration at Alviso and Ravenswood.

Our new vision of sea level rise-minded restoration was highlighted on national television by PBS NewsHour.

Thanks to our many partners, to donors large and small, and to the public that supports what we do—our accomplishments are your accomplishments.

See inside for a map and charts that lay out this year's key milestones. To learn more or help, you can check out: [www.southbayrestoration.org](http://www.southbayrestoration.org); to receive timely updates, you can like us at: <https://www.facebook.com/southbayrestoration>, or follow us at: <https://twitter.com/SouthBayRestore>.

Sincerely,  
**JOHN BOURGEOIS**

*Anticipating the rise of the sea*

# 2014 Year in Review



## » Milestones

A first suite of construction projects, launched in 2009, is now nearly complete. Modeling and environmental analysis of our Phase 2 plans are underway. Scientific studies to refine our work and evaluate impacts are ongoing. 2014 milestones include:

### Enhanced Ponds

1 Workers installed pipes, earthen berms and a pump for a nine-cell pond system at ponds E12 & E13 designed to attract shorebirds by offering a variety of salinity levels and prey. Scientific research led the project to include islands and mounds in new shapes and textures designed to be more bird-attracting. Workers brought in 13 truckloads of oyster shells to spread on a dry pond, to provide camouflage and protection to eggs and chicks of the endangered snowy plover. The \$3 million construction project also includes new recreational features. The work, funded by the state Wildlife Conservation Board, was 80% complete by year's end.

2 To entice terns and plovers to nest, the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge began resurfacing islands in two Alviso and Ravenswood ponds. The gravel surfaces are attractive to birds and stop mud from cracking and forming crevices that threaten scampering chicks.

### Tidal Marsh Restoration

3 A draft plan to restore 3,000 acres of Refuge lands to salt marsh, including adding sloping habitat from salt marshes to uplands, was circulated to the public as part of the Shoreline Study (see Item 3 under Flood Protection below).

### Public Access

3 A smartphone audio tour app is now available for portions of the Bay Trail, including a 4.5-mile stretch at the Alviso ponds. Information and links to download the app are at: <http://www.baytrail.org/audiotour.html>.

1 Construction neared completion on a boardwalk and kayak launch in Eden Landing (see Item 1 under Enhanced Ponds).

### Flood Protection

3 A draft plan for a 15.2-foot levee north of Alviso to protect against high tides and sea level rise was released in December by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the State Coastal Conservancy and the Santa Clara Valley Water District, as part of the Congressionally authorized South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Study. If finalized and approved by Congress, it could be constructed in 2017. The Shoreline Study plan also includes new trails and significant habitat restoration.

4 Managers investigated options for coupling Eden Landing salt marsh restoration with an innovative sloped and vegetated flood barrier along the Bay. To build the slopes, managers are considering partnering with the Port of Redwood City to use Port dredged mud.

### Science and Adaptive Management

5 The Project recorded the first siting of an endangered species in our restored salt marshes, a California Ridgway's rail (previously named California clapper rail).

6 Scientists launched a study to tag and track threatened steelhead trout in the Guadalupe River watershed. Preliminary results were encouraging, with no juvenile fish found trapped in our nearby Pond A8 complex. Steelhead and mercury studies guided a decision by regulators and managers to open more Pond A8 gates. Further study could help pave the way for fully opening Pond A8 gates.

## SOUTH BAY SALT POND RESTORATION PROJECT



### Project Attention

- The Restoration was featured in a national television newscast on PBS NewsHour, viewable at: <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/san-francisco-salt-marshes/>
- The Project received a Conservation Achievement Award from the California-Nevada Chapter of the American Fisheries Society for outstanding contributions to fisheries conservation.
- Friends and supporters of Rep. Don Edwards donated thousands of dollars to the Project to honor his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- The Restoration was the subject of an episode of the Exploratorium's monthly web-based video program, at: <http://www.exploratorium.edu/tv/index.php?project=104&program=1529>

### Other News

- Judy Irving, our decade-long Project photographer until 2014 and known for her film The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill, premiered her new documentary, Pelican Dreams.

## » Progress Toward Our 3 Goals

### Goal 1: Restore & Enhance Habitat

#### 3040 Acres of Habitat Restored

To date, we have opened 3,040 acres of former industrial salt ponds to the Bay so nature can recreate wetlands. We are now planning our second phase of restoration work, which could include restoring thousands of additional acres to salt marsh. Our initial goal is to restore half of our land, 7,500 acres, to tidal marsh, with the other 50% in managed ponds.

3040 acres before 2014 | 2014: 0 acres

Goal: 7500 Acres

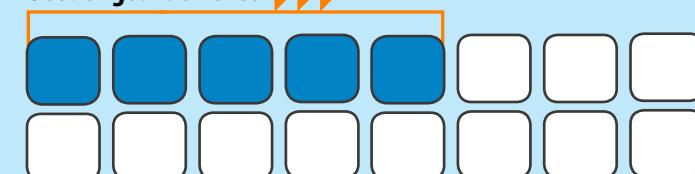
41% of goal achieved

#### Work Proceeds on 230-Acre Eden Landing

##### Bird Pond Multiplex

Project goals call for reconfiguring 1,600 acres of former salt ponds so they provide optimal habitat for a variety of shorebirds and waterbirds. The project has enhanced 477 pond acres. In 2014, we neared the end of construction on 230 additional acres in Eden Landing.

30% of goal achieved ►►



### Goal 2: Provide Public Access

#### Alviso: New Smartphone Audio Tour App Available

The Project's public access vision: establish an interrelated trail system; provide viewing and interpretation opportunities; create small watercraft launch points; and allow for waterfowl hunting. The project to date has created 2.9 trail miles. In 2014, a smartphone audio tour of a 4.5-mile Alviso section of the Bay Trail launched.



### Goal 3: Provide Flood Risk Management

#### Draft Plan for New Alviso Levees Released

A goal of the Project is to maintain or improve existing flood protection. Managers are committed to ensuring that flood hazards to nearby communities and infrastructure do not increase as a result of the restoration: restoring salt marsh in flood-critical parts of the Project area will not occur until flood protection is established. In 2014, a draft plan was released by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and local agencies for 15-foot-high Bay levees near Alviso and the San Jose water pollution plant. Project managers also studied ways to couple salt marsh restoration and new flood protection near Hayward.

Maintain ►►

Improve