



PRESS RELEASE

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SEE ALSO: www.southbayrestoration.org
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CARGILL SALT WINS

OUTSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING AWARD

The re-engineering of 16,000 acres of salt ponds in the South San Francisco Bay – an initial step in the largest tidal wetland restoration project on the West Coast -- has won the Outstanding Environmental Engineering Project award given by the American Society of Civil Engineers, San Francisco Section.

"This project has such importance and long-lasting value that we created the Environmental Engineering Award just to honor Cargill's outstanding effort," said Tony Akel, one of the judges of the 5,500-member ASCE, SF that represents civil engineers from Fresno to the Oregon border.

"Although the other projects were quite impressive, many judges championed Cargill's Initial Stewardship Phase (ISP) project because of its profound and lasting benefits to the San Francisco Bay environment," said Akel.

"We had a huge opportunity to combine an industrial re-design with an extraordinary wetland restoration," said Robert Douglass, C.E., Property Manager for Cargill Salt. "This project showcases what civil engineers can do to improve the environment. Everyone at Cargill is very proud of this work and grateful for this recognition."

The ISP is the first step of the San Francisco Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project which “even now rivals the Florida Everglades restoration project in terms of national significance,” according to Marge T. Kolar, Manager of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex for the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Restoring much of the South Bay’s marshlands was made possible by Cargill’s sale and donation of 16,100 acres to the state and federal governments in March 2003. To date, the project has involved five years of planning and review, including four years of technical evaluations centered on state-of-the-art hydrodynamic modeling as well as wildlife monitoring.

“What the ISP actually does is introduce tidal action and the circulation of bay water to selected ponds under strict wildlife monitoring,” said Douglass. “It involves an innovative design-build approach that brought construction of 14 major water conveyance and related structures, valued at over \$4 million, on-time and on-budget. And it is just the beginning of what will be a decades-long restoration effort.”

“Cargill will continue to operate the 150-year-old salt industry in the South San Francisco Bay, by streamlining operations. But, at the same time, we are sculpting the landscape anew for the benefit of wildlife, the enjoyment generations to come, as well as the economic efficiency of the company.”

In conjunction with the award to Cargill Salt, Kirk Wheeler, P.E. a principal in Schaaf and Wheeler of Santa Clara, was named Outstanding Civil Engineering Mentor by the ASCE, SF for his pivotal role in modeling and re-designing the salt pond system while shepherding the project through a multi-tiered approval and permitting process that involved environmentalists, regulators, salt-makers, and other stakeholders.

Wheeler was nominated jointly by Cargill’s Douglass and Kolar of the Refuge, who credited “his support and guidance” in helping to negotiate “an extremely complex regulatory process.”

This year's overall Civil Engineering winner was the BART Extension to the San Francisco Airport -- a multi-billion dollar engineering and design feat. The awards were announced at the ASCE, SF annual dinner on Sept. 17.

Graphics

Maps at: <http://www.southbayrestoration.org/Maps.html>

**Photo**

Cutline: Terry Lewis, Pat Mapelli and Bob Douglass of Cargill Salt man the water gates that opened South San Francisco Bay salt ponds to the Bay in July 2004, launching restoration of the South Bay's shoreline. This award-winning civil engineering project was made possible by Cargill's sale and donation of 16,000 acres of salt ponds to the state and federal government.