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S.F. Bay water quality, wetlands to be improved with \$5M EPA grants

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, April 23, 2014 -- Nearly \$5 million in grants provided by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have been designated to restore water quality and wetlands throughout the [San Francisco Bay](#) watershed.

EPA Regional Administrator Jared Blumenfeld announced the decision at a ceremony held at Breuner Marsh (Richmond, Calif.) -- one of the sites to receive federal restoration grant funding -- where Representative George Miller, senior officials from the East Bay Regional Park District, and representatives from various state and federal elected officials attended.

The grants range from \$500,000 to \$1.5 million and will support five projects that restore rivers and tidal marshes, and address legacy [mercury contamination](#) as well as the increasing concern over [nutrients](#). The projects are funded under EPA's San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund (SFBWQIF) that has invested over \$32 million in 53 projects across the Bay region since 2008. Since inception, SFBWQIF investments have been matched with another \$105 million from 71 partner agencies and organizations.

"A healthy San Francisco Bay -- the largest [estuary](#) in the country -- supports the livelihood of over seven million Bay residents, sustains hundreds of native wildlife species, and aids in shielding the region from the effects of climate change," said Blumenfeld. "Work by grant awardees and partner state agencies makes certain the Bay continues to provide for many years to come."

The project summaries, partner agencies/organizations, and funding amounts are:

- **Removing Mercury in the Guadalupe River Watershed** (\$800,000, in partnership with San Francisco Estuary Partnership and the Association of Bay Area Governments): Reductions in mercury entering the watershed and San Francisco Bay will be achieved by removing three miles of mercury-laden road material and by planning for the cleanup of the last two high-priority mine waste sites in Almaden Quicksilver County Park in Santa Clara County.
- **Breuner Marsh Restoration** (\$1.5 million, in partnership with East Bay Regional Park District): Creation and restoration of 164 acres of wetland and upland habitat at Breuner Marsh along the Point Pinole Regional Shoreline in Richmond. The project will create a self-sustaining wetland complex that will filter polluted runoff, support native plant and animal species, and protect against projected [sea level rise](#) in the next century.
- **Napa River Restoration- Oakville to Oak Knoll** (approximately \$1.2 million, in partnership with Napa County): This project continues the public-private partnership (PPP) efforts in the Napa River watershed to reduce sediment from bank erosion and improve water quality and salmonid habitat.
- **Reducing Nutrients to SF Bay through Wastewater Treatment** (approximately \$500,000, in partnership with East Bay Municipal Utilities District): To address concerns over the Bay's ability to handle excessive nutrients, several wastewater treatment plants will test best-available treatment technology to find cost-effective ways of reducing nutrients reaching the Bay through [wastewater effluent](#).
- **South Bay Salt Ponds Tidal Restoration Planning** (approximately \$850,000, in partnership with California State Coastal Conservancy): This project continues the long-term investment in designing and implementing the 50-year habitat restoration plan for the South Bay Salt Ponds -- the largest restoration project on the West Coast. This funding will enable the Conservancy to plan and permit restoration for over 1,000 acres of tidal wetlands.

EPA began accepting for potential projects to be funded by this program for next year's grant cycle on March 17, 2014, and will continue to accept proposals through April 30, 2014. Awards will range from \$800,000 to \$2,000,000, and applicants must provide a minimum 50 percent non-federal match. In addition, EPA is asking for public input on the rule recently proposed to clarify protection under the Clean Water Act for streams and wetlands. To view the proposed rule, and for more information on submitting public comments, visit: www.epa.gov/uswaters.

See also:

"EPA announces \$5M in San Francisco Bay watershed restoration grants available"

"Water quality and wetlands in San Francisco Bay improved by EPA grants"

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