



To: South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project Team

From: Center for Collaborative Policy

Re: Outcomes from the February 28, 2008 Eden Landing Working Group Meeting

Background: The South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project held the second meeting of the Eden Landing Working Group (Working Group) on Thursday, February 28, 2008 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Hayward Shoreline Interpretive Center in Hayward. The Working Group convenes as a subcommittee of the Project's Stakeholder Forum and as the Lower Alameda Creek Stewardship Committee of the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. It was convened to provide ongoing input and advice to the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project Management Team (PM Team) on Phase 1 restoration and public access implementation, as well as flood protection planning, in the Eden Landing area.

Meeting Attendance: Attachment 1 lists meeting participants.

Meeting Materials: In advance of the meeting, Working Group members were provided a meeting agenda. At the meeting, the Working Group charter, handouts on Phase 1 actions and applied studies were available, as well as a printout of the meeting slides, a South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project brochure and FAQ document. Most presentations are available on the SBSP Project website (www.southbayrestoration.org). Attachment 2 is the meeting's flip chart notes.

Substantive Meeting Outcomes:

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

John Krause, Manager of the California Department of Fish and Game's Eden Landing Ecological Reserve, welcomed everyone, reviewed the agenda and led a round of self-introductions.

2. Work Group Charter

Lead Facilitator Mary Selkirk of the Center for Collaborative Policy reviewed the Working Group charter, which was revised in response to feedback provided by Working Group members at the last meeting. The working group is not a decision-making body, but provides vital feedback to the Project and to the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. Selkirk noted that copies of the executive summary of the Final EIS/R, containing a CD of the entire document, were available for those interested.

3. Review of Changes in Final EIS/EIR

Executive Project Manager Steve Ritchie gave an overview of the Final EIS/EIR. The basic elements, including the project approach, Alternatives B and C and Phase 1 implementation, remain unchanged or received only minor changes. Managers propose to proceed with adaptive management and progress over time from ponds to tidal habitat. The 50-50 split of Alternative B and the 90-10 split of Alternative C represent two bookends that would both achieve the goals of the Project.

There were a total of 114 commenters on the Draft EIS/R. Major comment areas include:

- Relationship to the South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Study, a separate project that covers the same geographic area
- Scope of the EIS/R – commenters said the document should take account of a larger area
- A Preferred Alternative – commenters stated a preference for one
- Adaptive Management Plan funding – commenters raised concerns about the Project's ability to find financing, as funding basic research can be difficult. The final document emphasizes that the Project will have to obtain sufficient funding, and if that doesn't happen, managers will need to stop and take an entirely different approach.
- Aircraft bird strikes at Moffett Field
- Public access and impacts to wildlife
- Wildlife impact significance thresholds
- Flooding – managers need to make sure they don't increase flooding and actually reduce the risk of flooding in the project area
- Sea level rise – commenters questioned if climate change would make all of the work pointless. In response, managers stated that they believe if tidal marsh can start to be established, it will keep pace with sea level rise.
- Hunting – hunters want to make sure this use continues, and that will be the direction of the project
- Invasive Spartina and other invasive species

As for changes in the Final EIS/R, the Army Corps will no longer be a co-lead agency, as its Shoreline Study process didn't get far enough in its work product to contribute to the analysis. Another change is the addition of an adaptive management staircase diagram for public access, which sets out the process the Project will follow in assessing impacts to wildlife from public access. As public access is added, it will be studied for its potential effects on wildlife, and its use by the public. If there is no effect and there is additional demand, managers will look at adding more public access. If adverse effects are observed, managers will consider making changes to the public access in an effort to fix or eliminate the problems. Then, managers will work through the adaptive management loop again, until the amount of public access is at the bounds of the EIS/R.

Another change is the addition of a figure displaying the authorized expansion boundary of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Within this boundary, established in 1990, the Refuge is authorized to acquire parcels from willing sellers.

Other changes in the EIS/R include additional language stating that any PG&E facility modifications needed would be incorporated into the Project, as managers didn't want a situation where there would be a risk of electrical outages. In addition, the document has identified a preferred alternative, Alternative C. In reality, Project managers believe both B and C would meet the project objectives and will be utilizing adaptive management to progress. Lastly, the project will incorporate invasive Spartina best practices to prevent the spread of the species. One example is, if there is a risk, the Project won't go forward with a tidal breach until control activities have been exhausted or Spartina has been eliminated.

Since the Final EIS/R has been published, six comment letters have been received. The Project is not required to provide responses, but managers are looking at the letters in order to incorporate the thinking into the Project as it goes forward.

Questions:

One questioner asked who will monitor public access to see if birds are affected. In response, Ritchie said that Cheryl Strong, biologist for the Project, will be responsible for that. Strong said she will set up a working group, starting in March, which will be considering the best way to set up applied studies to answer the questions, and interested individuals can attend.

Another member asked what happens if invasive Spartina control doesn't work, and whether the EIS/R would need to be redone. Ritchie said his opinion was that it would not have to be redone. The best information now indicates that after two solid seasons of control, the results will be about as good as can be achieved. Krause added that the BMPs are not a regulatory framework.

One questioner asked about the East Bay Dischargers and jet fuel pipelines. Ritchie and Krause said they are fairly comfortable with the Dischargers pipeline, and the jet fuel pipeline is not within the project area. The issue is the ability of pipeline owners to maintain the pipeline once the area is repopulated with endangered species.

4. Phase 1 in Eden Landing

John Krause, with the aid of PowerPoint slides and handouts, presented the latest designs of Phase 1 actions and applied studies in Eden Landing.

He began the presentation by describing the context of previously planned restoration and public access improvements that are still under way as the South Bay Salt Pond Project Phase 1 actions are starting to go forward. These Eden Landing Ecological Reserve improvements are taking place in ponds that were not part of the South Bay Salt Pond acquisition in 2003, but they were incorporated into the Eden Landing Salt Ponds Project because they have the same goals of habitat and public access. The original Eden Landing restoration project, which developed tidal wetlands and connected Eden Creek and Old Alameda Creek through North Creek, is about half done, and awaits one final levee breach. A second project, undertaken with the East Bay Regional Park District to extend a Bay Trail spur along Eden Landing to the Eden Shores community, has

encountered a number of delays in receiving Caltrans funding, but is expected to be built this year.

Ponds E8A, E9, E8X Restoration Actions:
Figure 2-9 in the FEIS/R

DFG will be working with Alameda County in this 600-acre project as Old Alameda Creek, which runs at the south end of Pond E8A, has a potential for flooding and needs dredging. Managers will breach the levee between the creek and the pond, and between E8A and E9, to bring the tidal marsh habitat back and also improve flood conveyance by scouring out the creek. Historic channels in the marsh will be recaptured and the slough areas restored. Small ponds called pannes will be re-created. There may need to be gypsum pretreatment of the ponds. The levee between ponds E9 and E14 will be rebuilt as a 1:10 or 1:20 slope to provide a transition zone and upland ecotone. Krause and Ralph Johnson of the Alameda County Flood Control District said this is a smaller-scale pilot project that managers hope to learn from. There could eventually be a 2400-acre future phase.

Mary Selkirk noted that there are handouts on the applied studies for each project.

Questions:

One governmental attendee asked if there would be any launching points for airboats. Krause said the kayak launch includes an area for staff to launch motorized boats for maintenance work and such.

One questioner asked if the clapper rails in old Alameda Creek will be impacted by the scouring. Krause said yes, but the impact should be negligible given that there will be more than 630 acres of adjacent marshland that the population will be able to expand into.

One questioner asked Krause to explain gypsum pretreatment. Krause said gypsum falls out early in the salt making process and creates a hard surface. The question is whether the pretreatment will be necessary, or whether sufficient sediment will build up on top of it to support marsh plants. In pretreatment, workers use farming equipment such as deep rippers to break the hard surface. In adaptive management, managers will treat some areas but not others and look at the results.

One attendee said there are 534 homes very close to the wetlands. Residents are concerned that the water will be very close to them and want to make sure that there will be some levees there. Krause said levees are planned. In addition, substantial fill was imported to raise the level of that neighborhood. The resident also raised the specter of global warming.

Input:

- One attendee said ditch blocks used in restoration on the Napa River didn't last very long. Krause thanked the speaker.

Ponds E12 & E13 Restoration Actions:
Figure 2-10 in the FEIS/R

Krause said the two ponds, which are essentially one large pond which is now dry in the summer, will be reconfigured into smaller managed ponds in order to experiment with a range of salinity levels to identify how that factor influences bird use. Bay water will be brought in and nesting islands will be constructed. The ponds also contain the historic salt works that will be part of a public access project. Water from the ponds will be discharged to a mixing basin so less saline water will result, that can be discharged to the Bay.

Questions:

One questioner expressed concern that a culvert between the two ponds could cause deterioration in the historic saltworks. The culvert would bring bay water into the saltworks, which could leach out the salt in the old structures that has helped preserve them. Krause said it is not shown on the drawings, but managers will install an outtake culvert to bring the water out. He said the drawings would be revised to include this feature.

Another questioner asked how vandalism would be controlled. Krause said managers hope to have adequate staffing or to make arrangements with the Park District or other partners. He did say there will be vandalism that will occur, and there will have to be funding to repair or to address it. Fencing tends to keep honest people honest rather than keep out vandals. He hopes it won't be a big issue, that there will be enough of a public presence at the site that it would deter vandalism.

One attendee asked if volunteers could help control vandalism. Krause said there had been discussion of that. Selkirk noted that the sign in sheets for the day included a column to check off if attendees are interested in volunteering.

In response to a question, Krause said these ponds will remain managed, even under the 90/10 plan.

Phase 1 Public Access Actions Overview

Public access will include a Bay Trail spine along Mount Eden Creek to a historic saltworks and the Bay. In addition, there will be a seasonal loop trail around ponds E12 and E13. A kayak launch would be built at Mount Eden Creek, a viewing platform at the saltworks, a second viewing area at another historic site of Archimedes screws, and lastly, a third viewing area at the shoreline.

Ann Buell of the State Coastal Conservancy said the Conservancy will be hiring a design firm to develop the next stage of public access design. If members of the audience have seen public access facilities they like, she would be interested in talking to them.

Bay Trail Spine Connection to Mount Eden Creek and Loop Trail

The year-round ADA-compliant trail will run along Mount Eden Creek, past the Oliver Saltworks, a historic wind-driven salt making plant from the late 1800s, where there will be an opportunity for historic and cultural interpretation. The trail will continue to the shoreline, where there will be a breach. Initially, the trail to the breach site will be non-ADA. The loop trail is seasonal in order to protect wildlife in certain seasons. It may be that once there is more information, it will be possible to have public access features without adverse effects to wildlife.

Cheryl Strong, Salt Ponds biologist, said the Project will be looking at all of the public access/wildlife applied study areas together, including ponds SF2 and A16. SF2 will happen first, she said, so that will provide some initial information.

Questions:

One questioner asked if there would be phasing of public access in order to monitor the impacts on wildlife. Krause said managers will do the major levee work and then conduct a baseline study on conditions prior to public access. The public will be introduced, and that impact will be monitored and studied. Habitat features will be there for one to two years before the introduction of public access.

The speaker raised a concern about the number of variables, including the higher salinity ponds being closer to public access. Krause said that the designs at this stage are very general; nesting islands will not necessarily be placed where they are shown on the drawings. He said current salinity at the ponds ranges from moderate to high. The DFG has done monitoring since acquiring the ponds from Cargill.

One questioner asked if there would be a viewing area near Eden Shores where members of the public would bring their pets. Krause said there is no viewing area close to that community, and the access is designed for people, not pets.

Kayak Launch

The launch on Mount Eden Creek would connect to the planned San Francisco Bay Water Trail. It would include a drive and turn around so that boaters could drop off their boats, as well as a ramp leading to a floating dock for kayaks and other non-motorized boats. There would also be a ramp for service motorized boats. The project would also include an overlook and interpretive station. There would also be benches.

Questions:

One questioner asked what would keep people from parking at the turnaround. Krause said there would be a no parking sign and the potential for tow trucks.

Another attendee asked how the launching of motorized boats would be prevented. Krause said it would be illegal, and Steve Ritchie said there will be a gate at the top of the ramp.

Another questioner asked if there would be a porta potty at the launch. Krause said no, but there will be one at the trailhead.

One attendee asked about the timing of the public access. Krause said construction will be coming in late 2008 to 2010. It will take a couple years for the infrastructure to be built and some of the applied studies to be undertaken. Ritchie said designs won't be complete until early 2009.

Input:

- One attendee expressed concern that the guardrail pilings were not flush with the platform and would impede kayaks. The average kayak is 16 feet long, while the pilings were 8 or 6 feet apart. Kayakers want to put their boats parallel when launching, but the pilings would be in the way. Ritchie said the design was based on one at the Palo Alto yacht harbor, but managers are open to designing it differently. The commenter was asked to submit specific written comments, so managers could consider the input in more detail than the meeting context allowed for.
- Another attendee said if pilings are on the outboard secured by a strap, they won't be in the way.

Saltworks Viewing Platform

This project would include a boardwalk to a perpendicular platform. One side of the platform would be wheelchair accessible. The other side would be raised with steps, so it would not be wheelchair accessible. The platform would have benches and a shade structure.

Questions:

One attendee said this is a heavily used shorebird area and thousands of birds use the old pilings, and asked why the platform would be placed in this area where the birds could be harassed. Krause said this is a large area and shorebirds are much less likely to flush than ducks. There have to be some compromises, and managers want the public to have the opportunity to see the shorebirds. There will be some impact, but they do not believe that it's of the scale that it would be detrimental.

A questioner asked if the platform would be wood or composite. Krause said the pilings would be wood, but probably not the decking.

Another questioner asked if there would be fishing here. Krause said there would not, but it's possible the kayak launch could be used for fishing. This is something that could be incorporated in the future.

Input:

- One attendee suggested that managers check with staff at the Everglades, who have a lot of experience with composites. They warp in the sun.
- A concern was raised about the steps and the lack of ADA accessibility on a portion of the platform. It was requested that solutions be developed that would make the entire platform accessible.

Archimedes Screw Viewing Area

This year-round on-grade viewing area would look out at the screws on Pond E14. It would include benches and interpretive signage. The design would be able to accommodate heavy equipment needed on the levee.

Shoreline Viewing Area

The viewing area would include a bench and interpretive signage, and would look across the Whale's Tail Marsh to Mount Eden Creek and the Bay.

6. Update on Related Alameda County Activities

Vince Geronimo of hydrology consultants Phil Williams & Associates (PWA) presented information on flood control work the firm is doing for the Alameda County Flood Control District, including analysis of potential improvements to the Alameda Creek Flood Control Channel that would use some Eden Landing ponds for flood storage. He also discussed some conceptual designs for the planned Eden Landing flood control levee.

Geronimo presented a hydrodynamic computer model of what would happen to the Alameda Creek Flood Control Channel under various alternatives under study to reduce flood hazards and improve capacity of the Channel, which has been reduced by sedimentation. PWA is looking at breaches that would allow the South Bay Salt Ponds to become tidal and to connect with channels. Three alternative breaching scenarios being considered include: 1) Opening levees of Old Alameda Creek and the Alameda Creek Flood Control Channel; 2) a breach much further upstream from Pond E4C near Ardenwood Boulevard and a new levee to protect urban areas; 3) a similar breach moved downstream to Pond E3C (owned by Cargill) and a levee.

In response to a question, Geronimo said breaches higher upstream allow more flow into the upper ponds and thereby allow the channels to scour out every day.

He presented a video of the model results under baseline conditions and under the various alternatives in an extreme flood. Under baseline conditions, the levees would be overtopped in an extreme 500-year flood. Under the alternatives, with breaches, all the water is contained within the flood control channel. Ritchie said in the alternatives, the water stays in the ponds or the channel, but not in the neighborhoods. Geronimo said water levels are reduced in urban areas upstream.

Questions:

In response to a question, Geronimo said the model didn't look at what the differences in circulation in the marshes were in the three alternatives.

Eden Landing Perimeter Levee

Geronimo said PWA is looking at other projects in Eden Landing to develop criteria for the flood control levee. The consultants are looking at projects including the South Bay Salt Ponds, the Bay Trail, EBDA and the Shoreline Study to help define the alignment of

the levee. Consultants are trying to place the levee to maximize the amount of marsh restoration.

He also presented a conceptual levee transect design, which takes into account wind and wave action on the levees. In its next stages, the project will be looking at drainage from interior areas, will undertake a geotechnical study, and consider Corps of Engineers and FEMA guidelines.

Comments:

One attendee said the shown levee alignment would isolate a very fine wetland, the Weber property. Geronimo said everything will be examined during the assessment, and the visuals are very conceptual. He said he would look into the Weber issue.

8. Funding Opportunities

Steve Ritchie said there are a variety of funding efforts in play. There have been discussions with the Wildlife Conservation Board to fill in the package needed for Eden Landing Phase 1 actions. The Fish and Wildlife Service has awarded \$1 million. The Alameda County Flood Control District has applied for a NFWF grant. Alameda County is providing money for the design of E8-9 and the Alameda County Flood Control Channel. The Project will be applying for \$250,000 in Coastal Impact Assessment Program grants. And State Coastal Conservancy money may be put towards public access features. The latter will require legislation. Eden Landing funding is looking very positive. Ritchie told attendees to feel free to tell managers about any other potential opportunities.

9. SBSP Project Schedule and Upcoming Permit Activities

3. Overview of Project Schedule

Steve Ritchie said the Project went before the BCDC Design Review Board on December 10 and will have a second review on April 7. BCDC and Water Board permit hearings are expected in late spring. The Department of Fish and Game notice of determination is expected soon. Phase 1 designs are expected to be completed in 2008-09, and construction is expected to start after permitting in the summer of 2008. If the environmental review process for expected flood control projects gets under way, Phase 2 may begin within five years.

10. Next Steps

Mary Selkirk noted that a number of attendees are interested in the public access/wildlife issue, and Cheryl Strong will be organizing a meeting on the topic probably near the end of March or the start of April. Notice of the meeting will be sent out to everyone on the mailing lists for the three working groups. If anybody is interested in volunteering, volunteer opportunities are posted on the Project website at www.southbayrestoration.org.

The meeting was then adjourned.

**Attachment 1:
Eden Landing WG February 28, 2008 Meeting Attendance**

Name	Organization/Affiliation
Maria Adas	Eden Shores Community
David Asbury	CEMAR
Kwablah Attiogbe	ACFCD
Patrycja Bossak	SF Bay Trail/ABAG
Laurie Briden	DFG
Evelyn Cormier	HASPA/CCCR
Manny da Costa	Alameda Co Flood Control
Frank Delfino	CCCR
Janice Delfino	CCCR
Jason DelRio	Concerned citizen
Francesca Demgen	URS
Vince Geronimo	PWA
Carin High	CCCR
Lee Huo	SF Bay Trail/ABAG
Sally Liu	
Ned Lyke	HASPA-CAC
Jim McGrath	Port of Oakland (retired)
Brittany Montgomery	UC Berkeley
Roy Peek	Novo Nordisk
Leslie Perry	SF Regional Water Quality Control Board
Mark Ragatz	EBRPD
Caitlin Robinson	San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory
John Rusmisl	Alameda Co Mosquito Abatement Dist
Maryly Snow	Bay Area Sea Kayakers
Cheryl Strong	FWS
Katie Tague	Senator Ellen Corbett
Mark Taylor	EBRPD Hay. Reg. Shoreline
Caroline Warner	SFBJV
Matt Wickland	PWA
Carleton Wong	University of California

Attachment 2: Flip Chart Notes Eden Landing Working Group

The following are public comments captured at the Working Group's February 28, 2008 meeting.

Saltworks Viewing

Talk to folks @ Everglades

Concerns with composites: warping

ADA compliance? Ways to make entire ADA-compliant

Kayak Launch

Guard rail pilings should be flush to accommodate 16-foot kayaks

Can have floats or pilings on outboard

Gate across to prevent motorboats

Pond E8, E9, E8x

? ditch blocks longevity