



# South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project



## December 2007

Welcome to the sixteenth issue of the quarterly electronic newsletter of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project (SBSP). The restoration process is being managed collaboratively by the [California State Coastal Conservancy](#), the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#), and the [California Department of Fish and Game](#). The purpose of this newsletter is to provide you with a brief update on our effort to restore more than 15,000 acres of former commercial salt ponds in the South Bay which were purchased by state and federal agencies in March of 2003. For more detailed information about the restoration project (or to unsubscribe from this publication) please visit our web site at [www.southbayrestoration.org](http://www.southbayrestoration.org).

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### 1. Stakeholder Forum to Meet December 14<sup>th</sup>

On Friday afternoon, December 14<sup>th</sup>, the 30-member Stakeholder Forum will meet to take a look at the first phase of restoration in 2008 and to celebrate the completion of the four-year restoration planning process for the South Bay Salt Ponds. The planning process culminates this month with the release of the Final EIS/R on December 12<sup>th</sup>.

The Stakeholder Forum represents a wide array of interests including environmental groups, local homeowners, business representatives, elected officials and other community leaders. Over the past three years, comments, questions and insights from Forum members have been critical to the development of the recreation, habitat and flood control components of the restoration plan. This year, the Forum and other members of the public are working in smaller, geographic-based Working Groups, digging into the implementation details of each of the three pond complexes. Forum members will continue to meet in the Working Groups as we move into Phase One of the restoration in 2008, making this one of the few times (this year or next) that the Forum will meet as a

full group.

To view the agenda and directions for this, and for future public meetings, please visit the [Events and Meetings section](#) of the project web site. Below is a brief schedule of upcoming Forum and Working Group meetings. As always, the public is welcomed and encouraged to attend.

<b>Meeting Type</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>Stakeholder Forum</b>	December 14, 2007	1:00 to 4:00 pm	Moffet Field (Eagle Room) Mountain View
<b>Ravenswood Working Group</b>	January 17, 2008	1:00 to 4:00 pm	100 Terminal Avenue Menlo Park
<b>Alviso Working Group</b>	February 7, 2008	1:00 to 4:00 pm	700 Los Esteros Road San Jose
<b>Eden Landing Working Group</b>	February 28, 2008	1:00 to 4:00 pm	4901 Breakwater Ave. Hayward



## 2. Restoration Begins in 2008: What to Expect

After years of planning the restoration and working to reverse the salt making process at the ponds, we are now poised to launch the first phase of restoration in 2008. Next year should be particularly exciting as we plan to commence work on Pond SF2 and open the segment of Bay Trail adjacent to Moffett Field.

It will take several decades to complete all of the restoration and public amenities planned for the ponds but here is a summary of what we expect to accomplish in 2008-2010 as we implement Phase One of the restoration. The summary below is organized by geographic area. To view [a detailed map of Phase One restoration](#) activities for each of the three pond complexes please visit the project web site.

<b>Eden Landing Pond Complex</b>	<b>Alviso Pond Complex</b>	<b>Ravenswood Pond Complex</b>
630 acres of tidal habitat restoration	360 acres of tidal habitat restoration and 570 acres of muted tidal restoration	240 acres of enhanced shorebird and snowy plover habitat
230 acres of enhanced shorebird habitat	240 acres of enhanced shorebird habitat	1.4 miles of improved trail
3.8 new miles of new trails	2.5 miles of new trail in the Bay Trail system	Viewing areas of new habitat and historic salt marsh
Viewing areas of new habitat and historic salt making facilities		



### **3. Faces of the Restoration: Clyde Morris Retires**

It's hard to think of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge without picturing Clyde Morris in the field with his binoculars, gesturing to a crowd on a tour of the salt ponds or hammering out the fine points of Refuge management during a public meeting. A true *Face of the Restoration*, Clyde has worked at the Refuge since 1998. As Refuge Manger, Clyde skillfully weaves together a deep knowledge and interest in the natural habitats and species of the South Bay with an unwavering commitment to public engagement and dialogue. After nine years at the Refuge, Clyde will retire in January for new adventures on the east coast. We caught up with Clyde earlier this month.

#### **You've worked in government service for 30 years, where did you work before joining the Refuge staff?**

I was with the EPA wetlands protection program. Prior to that I worked for the Park Service as a backcountry ranger in Yosemite and in Redwood National Park. I also served in the Peace Corps.

#### **What did you do in the Peace Corps?**

I worked in Honduras to establish their first national park.

#### **What are your plans after you retire from the Refuge?**

My wife, Joelle has accepted a job at the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge in Virginia. So we are moving there next year. I'll have more time to focus on some of my hobbies including bird watching and wildlife photography. I might also run a marathon.

#### **How has the Refuge and the Bay changed during your tenure here?**

It has changed in exciting ways as we launch these large-scale restoration projects and really increase the amount of public access to the shoreline.

#### **You've spent a lot of time on and near the Bay, what rare species have you sighted during your time here?**

Just this year I spotted a brown booby. I think it must have flown off course from Mexico.

#### **What is the strangest thing you've seen on or near the Bay?**

One year, a hot tub floated into the Refuge marshes near Alviso.

#### **What aspects of the SBSP Restoration Project are you most excited about?**

I'm excited that millions of Bay Area residents will have the opportunity to gain greater access to the Bay and surrounding shoreline. There is, and there will be, so much more public access than when I was growing up here.

**What aspects of the SBSP Restoration Project have been the most challenging?**

I guess creating the proper balance of habitats for the variety of bird species that use the Bay.

**Is there a spot on the Bay that you like to return to again and again?**

I'd have to say the Island Ponds right now because they are the first ponds to be restored. I love watching the changes taking place there. I'm also really looking forward to the restoration work at Pond SF2 near the Dumbarton Bridge. We'll be creating nesting and foraging habitat for shorebirds and new public access features next year.

**So you'll come back to check it out?**

Absolutely!



**4. On the Ground: Bird migration and an oily threat**

If you ever wondered what the annual fall bird migration looks like over a period of months, recent water bird counts from the US Geological Survey help to tell the story. The following numbers were taken from bird surveys conducted at the Eden Landing pond complex this year. In June, approximately 1,700 birds were

observed. That number grew to 3,200 in July and then jumped to nearly 18,000 in August. In September and October peak migration brought 40,000 migrating birds to the Eden Landing ponds.

The same is true for the larger Alviso pond complex. From August through October, staff at the Refuge counted an average of 7,000 shorebirds per month (mostly western sandpipers and American avocets). Waterfowl began arriving in September with dabbling ducks (mostly northern shovelers) climbing to 27,000 in October and diving ducks (mostly ruddy ducks) numbering 11,000 that same month. For a more detailed visual display of bird count data on the Alviso section of the project see article #5 below.

This dramatic, seasonal, increase underscores the importance of San Francisco Bay as a stop along the Pacific Flyway that runs from Alaska to Argentina. Although some birds use the Bay as a temporary resting and feeding spot on their way south, other birds, including many ducks, spend the entire winter here. Fortunately, the SBSP restoration project will maintain a mixture of managed ponds and wetland habitats to accommodate the various resident and migrating bird species.

The seasonal pulse of birds migrating through the Bay Area exacerbated the danger posed by the Cosco Busan oil spill last month. As word of the spill spread, the Bay and slough intakes at Eden Landing were closed as a preventative measure in case oil moved into the South Bay. Staff also established an incident command center at the Refuge to survey the Bay and manage the spill. Fortunately, there was only one observation of oil moving into the South Bay– tar balls near the San Mateo Bridge. Subsequent aerial

observation confirmed that the tar had moved north on the outgoing tide. Both Fish and Game and the US Fish and Wildlife Service have been searching the project area for oiled birds that may have found their way to the South Bay. To date, fewer than one hundred oiled birds have been spotted in the South Bay.



## 5. New Bird Count Feature Added to Interactive Map

[The South Bay Salt Ponds Interactive Map](#) now features new information about bird counts in the South Bay. The map, which is housed on the project web site, contains a wealth of information about the project from the location of existing roads, trails and historic resources to the distribution of seal haul-out areas, threatened species habitats and invasive plants. Users can zoom in and out of specific areas and select from a range of themes or map layers.

The new data set contains information about dabbling duck populations in the Alviso portion of the project area. Depending on public interest in the information, we will continue to add additional bird/season combinations to the map over time.

If you haven't visited the Interactive Map in awhile, take a moment to check out the new information and tell us what you think. To find the bird dataset, [go to the map](#) and select *Wildlife* as the Theme and *Bird Monitoring* as the Sub-Theme. Select which of the three pond complexes you would like to look at by choosing from the pull down menu in the lower left hand corner. Or use the zoom tool at the bottom of the map to select a section of the project area. Once you zoom in close enough, you will be able to see the actual bird counts for that area. To watch an animated display of bird counts over the course of one year, click on the "animate" link in the legend. Once you have used the map, please take a moment to let us know what you think we should keep, change or add to the map by filling out a [comment form](#).

## 6. South Bay Shoreline Study Update

After languishing in Congress for more than six years, the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), which describes authorizations for water projects around the country, has finally become law. The passage of WRDA 2007 is critical to the [South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Study](#), which is being conducted in tandem with the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration project. The Shoreline Study is an inter-agency effort to develop a flood risk management and ecosystem restoration project in the South Bay suitable for Congressional authorization and funding. The Study will provide project-level recommendations for measures to provide flood protection for the South San Francisco Bay shoreline as well as restoration of the South San Francisco Bay salt ponds, and other related purposes. In WRDA, Congress directed that the Study be completed by and

presented to Congress within three years. This year's funding for the Shoreline Study is included in a separate bill that Congress has not yet passed for 2008.



## 7. How to Learn More and Get Involved

**a. Join A Restoration Work Day:** Save the Bay has scheduled a series of restoration work days at the Eden Landing Site this Winter and Spring. You can help put your shoulder to the wheel by volunteering a couple hours to help pull weeds, remove trash and generally prepare the salt ponds for tidal restoration. For more information please visit the [Events and Meetings](#)

[section](#) of the project web site.

**b. Watch the video:** In September, KQED TV broadcast an insightful piece about the restoration project on its science show, Quest. You can view this and other television coverage of the project online at the [Video and Audio page of the web site](#). The web site also includes a short film by award winning filmmaker Judy Irving about the project as well as a short time lapse study of the recently restored Island Ponds produced by Judy in 2007. [Click here to view the footage](#).

**c. Listen to the podcast:** The project has produced two short podcasts about the project that include interviews with Executive Project Manager Steve Ritchie and Refuge Manger Clyde Morris. [Click here](#) to listen to or download the podcasts. For additional podcasts about Bay restoration, visit the [Your Wetlands web site](#) which includes information about restoration projects around the Bay.

**c. Visit the interactive map:** If you can't make it to the South Bay, but would like to get a virtual sense of the project, visit our interactive map on the project web site. [The map](#) enables viewers to zoom out for a regional overview, or zoom in to inspect a particular pond, slough, or other feature. Detailed aerial photography is available as an optional backdrop.

**d. Attend a Stakeholder Forum or Working Group Meeting** The next Stakeholder Forum meeting will be held December 14<sup>th</sup>. And our Working Group meetings will start up again in January of 2008. All of these meetings are open to the public and you are welcomed and encouraged to attend. For details on the next Stakeholder Forum meeting or to read minutes from previous meetings please check the [Event and Meetings section](#) of the Project web site.

**Photo Credits:** Thank you to Rob Holt, Judy Irving, Steve Ritchie and Marilyn Latta.