



**June 2006**

Welcome to the eleventh 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 please visit our web site at [www.southbayrestoration.org](http://www.southbayrestoration.org). If you would like to unsubscribe from this quarterly update please contact [tcorrigan@scc.ca.gov](mailto:tcorrigan@scc.ca.gov).



### **1. Senator Feinstein Visits South Bay to Celebrate Third Anniversary of Acquisition; Island Ponds Restored**

In March, Senator Feinstein joined Deputy Interior Secretary Lynne Scarlett and CA Resources Secretary Mike Chrisman for a tour and public briefing about the progress of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration planning effort. They were joined by

Santa Clara Valley Water District Director Richard Santos, David Lewis, Executive Director of Save the Bay and Paul Brest, President of the Hewlett Foundation. Senator Feinstein's visit coincided with the three-year anniversary of the purchase of the ponds from Cargill in 2003. Her visit was also timed to coincide with the restoration of the Island Ponds. This Spring, through a series of carefully executed levee openings, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and its partner the Santa Clara Valley Water District, began reintroducing bay water to a series of ponds near Alviso known as the Island Ponds. This is the first time tidal waters have been able to circulate into this section of the Bay in sixty years. You can view video press coverage of Feinstein's visit and dramatic footage of the levee breach on the project web site at <http://www.southbayrestoration.org/videoaudio.html>.

The Island pond restoration marks the third phase of the Initial Stewardship Plan (ISP). Under the ISP, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and CA Department of Fish and Game managers have been working to manage the ponds for water birds and to prevent unwanted salinity increases while preparing the 15,100 acre site for long-term restoration which begins in 2008.



## **2. Snowy Plovers Nesting In the Project Area**

In other Initial Stewardship Plan news, project managers have been working to lower the water level in many of the managed ponds as part of the annual shift to a spring and summer water regime. Shallower ponds benefit migrating shorebirds and provide important habitat to snowy plovers that are currently threatened with extinction. To our delight, these rare birds are once again nesting at both the Eden Landing

and the Alviso portion of the project. Plover chicks will hatch and fledge in June and July. As summer approaches and temperatures rise, managers are also preparing for changes in the level of dissolved oxygen in the ponds. Similar to last year, the project is working closely with the Regional Water Control Board to anticipate and mitigate the challenge of low dissolved oxygen in some of the shallower ponds.

## **3. Science Symposium Scheduled for June 6**

If you've ever wondered how sediment movement in the South Bay could affect the restoration or what kinds of factors affect the health of phytoplankton, or what we know about mercury contamination in the South Bay, you're encouraged to attend a one day Science Symposium for the South Bay Salt Pond Project on June 6 at San Jose State University. During the Symposium researchers currently studying the physical and biological features of the South Bay will present their findings and provide analysis relevant to the restoration. The daylong event will include a series of plenary presentations about important science findings related to the restoration. The end of the day will also include a wine and cheese reception and poster session. The event is free and the public is welcome to attend. For a detailed agenda and directions to the meeting, please visit the project web site at <http://www.southbayrestoration.org/Events-symposium.html>.

On a related note regarding the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Science Team, kudos to Science Team Leader, Dr. Lynne Trulio for earning a full professorship at San Jose State University. We thank Lynne for her work thus far to ground the project in the best available science and we look forward to her continued involvement with the project's adaptive management and applied studies program.



## **4. Stakeholder Forum Meeting Scheduled for July 13, in Fremont**

The Stakeholder Forum will hold its next meeting on the afternoon of July 13 in Fremont. The 29 member Forum represents a broad array of stakeholders and has been working for the past two and a half years to help guide the development of the long-term restoration plan. This Spring the Forum added several new members to replace those who

had to leave and to expand the group's representation. We welcome new Forum members: Sharim Asiong (Senator Dianne Feinstein's Office) John Gurley (Audubon, California) John Howe (City of Sunnyvale) and Yoriko Kishimoto, (City of Palo Alto). You can find a complete list of current Stakeholder Forum members at [http://www.southbayrestoration.org/structure/Stakeholder\\_Members.html](http://www.southbayrestoration.org/structure/Stakeholder_Members.html)!

In March the Forum approved a set of final alternatives for the project. The alternatives are currently being evaluated as part of the federal and state environmental review process, the results of which will be published in a Draft EIS/EIR in January of 2007. In the meantime, the Stakeholder Forum will turn its attention to current planning for Phase One actions and other issues related to the implementation and long-term management of the restoration. At the Forum meeting in July, project managers and consultants will present potential scenarios and designs for the public access features of the project including trails, viewing platforms and signage. They will also discuss proposals for the long-term governance of the project and the role the public could play during the implementation phase. For detailed information about the location and agenda for July's meeting please check the Events and Meetings Section of the web site <http://www.southbayrestoration.org/Events.html>.

### **5. Community Volunteers Help to Prepare Salt Ponds For Restoration**

On Earth Day in April, sixty volunteers removed more than 1,000 pounds of trash and eradicated a small patch of non-native iceplant at the Eden Landing portion of the Salt Pond Restoration Project. Their work is part of a new partnership between Save The Bay and the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to launch a series of hands-on stewardship opportunities with the public as part of the South Bay Salt Ponds Restoration Project.



The Eden Landing partnership involves student and adult volunteers who are helping to prepare a 600 acre salt pond site for restoration. The site will change dramatically this Fall when DFG managers breach a levee as part of the Initial Stewardship Plan for the project. In addition to the Earth Day clean-up, the partnership also rallied more than 75 volunteers last Fall to assist with large debris and small trash removal from the site. The crew managed to collect and remove more than a dumpster full of material from the project area, which has been off-limits to the public for decades. Save The Bay will be running Saturday volunteer days this summer to continue to clean up debris and prep the Eden Landing site for the Fall breach. After the breach is completed, volunteers will return to the site to plant 5,000 native seedlings, do invasive plant control, and conduct site monitoring. Saturday volunteer days run from 9:00 AM to 12:00 noon. They are

scheduled this Summer for June 24, July 8 and July 29. For more information about Saturday volunteer days at Eden Landing, check the project web site at <http://www.southbayrestoration.org/Events-Eden.html> and/ or contact Jocelyn Gretz, Save The Bay Community Programs Coordinator, at [jgretz@savesfbay.org](mailto:jgretz@savesfbay.org) if you would like to schedule a private group project this summer.



## **6. Wetland Restoration Partners Celebrate Napa- Sonoma Marsh Restoration in the North Bay**

In what many consider a precursor to the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project, the 10,000 acre Napa River Salt Marsh Restoration Project celebrated the launch of restoration activities last month at a ceremony on a salt pond levee off Highway 37. Resources Secretary Mike Chrisman, along with the directors of California Department of Fish and Game, State Coastal Conservancy, and Wildlife Conservation Board, and a host of other government and nonprofit partners, gathered near the site to enjoy the views of the Napa Sonoma Marsh Wildlife Area. Purchased from Cargill in 1994, this phase of work restores 3,000 acres of salt ponds along the

Napa River to tidal habitats to support a wide variety of species including the California clapper rail and Dungeness crab. The first phase of the project will also enhance 1,600 acres of existing ponds (Ponds 1/1A and 2) to improve habitat management capabilities for shorebirds and waterfowl. The ceremony ended with proclamations read by the Mayors of Novato and Vallejo declaring their cities the “Gateway to Your Wetlands”. Signs will be posted at each end of Highway 37 in the North Bay to celebrate the San Pablo Bay wetlands. They will also be linked to a series of audio tours that travelers can access before starting their drive along Highway 37. For more information please visit Your Wetlands <http://www.yourwetlands.org/> a project of the Bay Area Joint Venture.



## **7. What You Can Do**

Below are just a few of the ways that you can continue to learn more about the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project

**Participate in a Volunteer Work Day** Join Save The Bay and the CA Department of Fish and Game, and help clean up debris and remove non-native plants in preparation for a levee

breach this Fall. Learn about plans for the larger breach project, how it's connected to the South Bay Salt Ponds Restoration Project. School groups, corporate groups, and individual volunteers are all welcome. For a complete list of Saturday volunteer days, please visit the project web site at <http://www.southbayrestoration.org/Events-Eden.html>.

**Take a docent-led walking tour:** Wildlife Stewards and the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge continue to offer docent-led tours and slide presentations about the restoration project. Participants can view a thriving tidal marsh and visit a portion of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration site during a walking tour in Menlo Park. Tours are free to the public and suitable for ages 12 years and older. For A complete schedule of upcoming tours and presentations, please visit the project web site at <http://www.southbayrestoration.org/SaltPondTours-next.html>.

**Watch the video:** A short film by award winning filmmaker Judy Irving is now available on the project web site. The six- minute film introduces viewers to the salt pond restoration project and is narrated by Keith Fraser. To view the film go to <http://www.southbayrestoration.org/videoaudio.html>

**Listen to the podcast:** The project has produced two short podcasts about the project that include interviews with Project Executive Director Steve Ritchie. To listen to or download the podcasts go to <http://www.southbayrestoration.org/videoaudio.html> For additional podcasts about Bay restoration, visit [http://www.yourwetlands.org/wetland\\_tours\\_podcasts.html](http://www.yourwetlands.org/wetland_tours_podcasts.html).

**Visit the interactive map:** If you can't make it to the South Bay for a tour, 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. To reach the map, go to <http://www.southbayrestoration.org/interactivemap>

**Photo Credits:** (Thank you to Rob Holt, Beth Hunning, and Marilyn Latta)