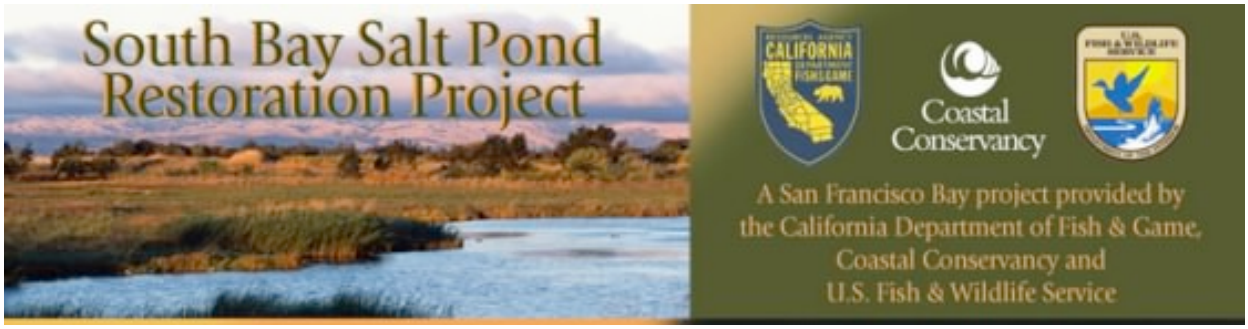

November, 2003

Welcome to the first issue of the quarterly electronic newsletter of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project (SBSP). The purpose of this newsletter is to provide you with a brief update on our effort to restore more than 15,000 acres of industrial salt ponds in the South Bay which were purchased by state and federal agencies in May of 2003. For more detailed information about the restoration project please visit our web site at **www.southbayrestoration.org**. If you are not interested in receiving this quarterly update please contact tcorrigan@scc.ca.gov.

1. Three Agencies Lead Restoration Effort

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 California Coastal Conservancy is facilitating the project and managing contracts and grants, and the California Department of Fish and Game and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are the land owners and active partners in the project. More information about the Project Partners and the Memorandum of Understanding between the agencies can be found on our web site. The Project Partners are currently in the process of hiring a consulting team to develop the restoration plan alternatives and to prepare environmental compliance documents. The request for proposals (RFP) for that contract is also posted on our web site at www.southbayrestoration.org/requests.html. The RFP contains information about the scope of work the selected consultants will conduct and the method for selecting a consulting firm or team.

2. Project Partners Adopt New Organizational Structure & Launch Collaborative Planning Process

In May of this year the SBSP Project Partners hired the Center for Collaborative Policy (www.csus.edu/ccp/) to conduct an in-depth assessment of the salt pond restoration project and to make recommendations about how the project could engage stakeholders and the broader public in a collaborative planning process. As a result of that assessment, the Project Partners have adopted a new organizational structure and hired the Center to launch and manage a collaborative stakeholder process. A complete copy of the Assessment & Recommendations Report is posted on the project web site. To find out where you or your organization fits into the planning process, please visit the interactive organizational chart on our web site at www.southbayrestoration.org/Structure.html.

3. First Meeting of the Stakeholder Forum Scheduled for December

The cornerstone of the restoration's project's collaborative planning process will be the approximately 25 member Stakeholder Forum. The Project Management Team is currently reviewing applications from core stakeholders with a demonstrated interest in the restoration plan to sit on the Stakeholder Forum. Forum members will meet regularly to provide ongoing,

high level, publicly derived input to the Project Management Team on the three major components of the plan: habitat, public access and flood management. The first meeting of the Forum will take place in early December. Stakeholder Forum agendas, meeting times and locations will be posted on the web site Events page (www.southbayrestoration.org/Events.html).

4. National Science Panel and Science Team Begin Work

This summer the National Science Panel held its first meeting to discuss the role of science in the restoration planning project. The National Science Panel is comprised of nationally and locally-recognized experts familiar with large-scale wetlands restoration efforts. The Panel's role is to provide high level science oversight to the overall planning process. The Panel recommended that the project create a core Science Team whose first task should be to develop a science strategy for the restoration planning. Lead Scientist Dr. Lynn Trulio is heading the Science Team which had its first meeting in September. The Team expects to develop a science strategy for the project by next Spring. In addition to providing technical support to the Project Partners, the Science Team will also consult and advise the Stakeholder Forum (see above). View a list of members of the National Science Panel and Science Team on the web site. Also available there are meeting summaries and agendas.

5. USGS Work in the South Bay Critical to Restoration Project

In October of 2001, the US Geological Survey initiated a monitoring and research program for the South Bay Salt Ponds as part of their place-based program in San Francisco Bay. Under an agreement with the State Coastal Conservancy, USGS has expanded their work on physical and biological data in the South Bay to help inform the restoration planning process. Knowledge of existing elevation profiles is essential to the restoration of these areas to tidal influence. USGS is using an acoustic profiler to develop a bathymetric map of the ponds and conducting a LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) survey to develop a land surface elevation map of the South Bay. The bathymetric map provides a detailed elevation profile of each pond. The LIDAR survey is a way of mapping the elevation of very shallow underwater features and topography around the ponds. USGS is also monitoring water quality and bird use of the ponds and invertebrate and fish populations in ponds and adjacent sloughs. For more information on USGS work on former salt evaporation ponds please visit sfbay.wr.usgs.gov/access/saltponds/.