



**October, 2004**

**Welcome to the fifth 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. Public Views Initial Sets of Options at Workshops in September & October**

After spending the first half of the year helping to establish project goals, objectives and evaluation criteria, the Stakeholder Forum and other interested members of the public got their first look at what these concepts might actually look like on the ground during three public workshops this fall. In September and October, the public, along with

members of the Project Science Team, gathered in San Leandro, Alviso and San Mateo to review an initial set of restoration options for each set of ponds in the project area. After breaking into small groups, workshop participants provided feedback on maps containing four different initial project concepts for each of the three salt pond complexes (Eden Landing, Alviso and Ravenswood). The maps depicted initial ideas for the location of tidal habitat, managed pond habitat, flood management and public access and recreation features. The maps will be refined and combined over the next month in preparation for the next Stakeholder Forum Meeting in December. At that meeting, the public will review a preliminary set of restoration alternatives. The preliminary restoration alternatives will serve as the foundation for environmental modeling and analysis next year. For a complete list of upcoming meetings and/ or to be notified of future events, please visit the project web site at [www.southbayrestoration.org](http://www.southbayrestoration.org).

## 2. More Opportunities for Public Involvement This Fall

In addition to attending regular meetings of the Stakeholder Forum, the public will have the opportunity to participate in scoping meetings as part of the environmental review process. The goal of the scoping meetings is to solicit comments on the environmental effects of the project and the appropriate scope of the Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR). The public is invited to comment on environmental issues to be addressed in the EIS/EIR during these meetings. Please check the project web site for the time and location of these important meetings ([www.southbayrestoration.org](http://www.southbayrestoration.org)).

For those who would like a closer look at the restoration site, Wildlife Stewards continues to offer docent-led tours about the project. The tours enable visitors to view the projects site from Bayfront Park in Menlo Park. They are scheduled on Saturdays and Sundays between now and the end of November. The project is also sponsoring its third Local Government Forum on November 10<sup>th</sup> for local elected officials. Attendees will be briefed on initial ideas for restoration of the various salt pond clusters and the schedule of upcoming events and meetings.

Below is a summary of some of the public activities taking place this fall. For more information on any of these events, including agendas and directions, please visit the Events and Meetings Section of the project web site at [www.southbayrestoration.org](http://www.southbayrestoration.org).

Public Outreach Activities for November and December 2004			
What	Who	When	Where
Docent-Led Tours	General public	Oct. 30 Nov. 7, 14	Bayfront Park, San Mateo
Local Government Forum	Local Elected & Appointed Officials	Nov. 10	City of Sunnyvale Council Chambers
EIR/ EIS Scoping Meetings	General public	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
Stakeholder Forum Meeting	General public	Dec 15	NASA Ames Rsch. Center Moffet Field



## 3. Army Corps of Engineers Joins Forces with Project to Coordinate Planning in the South Bay

In 1992, the Army Corps of Engineers found that there was not a federal interest in developing a flood management

project along the South Bay Shoreline mainly because Cargill Salt had an economic interest in maintaining their existing (and un-engineered) salt pond levees. Now that federal and state governments have acquired 15,100 acres of the salt ponds in the South Bay and are planning a restoration project, the U.S. House of Representatives has requested that the Corps review their last study and expand its scope to include environmental restoration and protection, as well as tidal and fluvial flood protection.

The Corps has completed the initial Reconnaissance Study and will be undertaking a Feasibility Study over the next few years. A copy of the current study can be found on the project web site at [www.southbayrestoration.org/Documents.html](http://www.southbayrestoration.org/Documents.html). The Corps' study area overlaps the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project, encompassing the entire shoreline south of Highway 92 on the East Bay side and south of Redwood Creek on the west side. The Project Management Team along with the Santa Clara Valley Water District and Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District are working closely with the Corps to update the South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Study.

Based on the results of the study's cost-benefit analyses, the Corps may be able to cost-share significant portions of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project, including restoration, flood management, and recreational components. Because of the overlap in the two projects and the desire to integrate efforts as much as possible, the Corps is a joint lead federal agency, with the FWS, on the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project's Environmental Impact Statement.



#### **4. NOAA Plays Critical Role in Mapping & Protecting Marine Resources**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is playing several roles in the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project. NOAA Fisheries is dedicated to the stewardship of living marine resources through science-based conservation and management, and the promotion of healthy ecosystems. The Project Management Team is consulting with NOAA Fisheries on the best way to protect endangered fish in the project area. The project provides opportunities to aid in the recovery of Steelhead Trout, which use tidal wetlands on their migrations up and down South Bay creeks and rivers. A NOAA Fisheries staff person attends regular meetings of the project's Regulatory Agency Group to get updates and provide expertise on marine issues.

The NOAA Restoration Center, which enhances living marine resources to benefit the nation's fisheries by restoring their habitats, has provided funding for fish monitoring in the project area, as well as funding for water control structures being installed on the ponds as part of the Initial Stewardship Plan. Through their Community Based Restoration Program, NOAA has provided funding throughout the Bay Area, and the country, for riverine and wetland restoration efforts since 1996. The Restoration Center is interested in continued funding for aspects of the project that are related to their mission.

And last, but not least, NOAA's National Ocean Service, the portion of the agency that measures and predicts coastal and ocean phenomena, is providing technical assistance to the Conservancy and USGS on a bathymetry survey of the South Bay. The survey will map the bottom of the Bay from Coyote Creek to just south of the Oakland airport and San Francisco airport, as well as several sloughs. USGS will compare the results to surveys conducted in 1858, 1898, 1931, 1956, and 1983 to analyze erosion and deposition of sediments. Predictions about future sedimentation can then be used to evaluate restoration alternatives, as tidal marsh evolution depends on sedimentation to raise the elevation of the salt pond bottom to a level where plants can grow. NOAA has provided critical guidance on the collection of tide data during the survey and is loaning four tide sensors to the project. NOAA may be able to use the new bathymetry data to update their own nautical charts.

## **5. National Science Panel Makes Recommendations at October Meeting**

In October the project's National Science Panel met at the Bay Conservation and Development Commission offices in San Francisco to provide feedback and guidance on the project as part of its effort to develop a "scientifically sound" restoration plan. All seven of the National Science Panel members were in attendance for a constructive discussion with members of the Science Team, the Consultant Team and the Project Management Team. Panel members include restoration scientists from the Bay Area as well as Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Washington and Australia. The panel spent a portion of the two day meeting reviewing lessons learned from adaptive management programs in other parts of the country and discussing the structure and content of conceptual models for restoration. The panel also made the following key recommendations:

- Expand efforts to understand what is occurring within the ponds as part of the Initial Stewardship phase of the project.
- Develop an adaptive management and monitoring plan for the anticipated tidal restoration of Ponds A19, 20, and 21 in 2006.
- Continue existing efforts in the Science Plan to explain what we know, what we don't know, and what we need to know.
- Consider conducting an invitation-only landscape level design charette for National Science Panel members and other experts in February, 2005.

For more information about the National Science Panel meeting click on the Science link at the project web site [www.southbayrestoration.org](http://www.southbayrestoration.org).