



South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project



September 2007

Welcome to the fifteenth 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.

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1. Work Groups Dig Into Phase One Details

More than 100 people attended the first series of geographically based Work Group meetings in June and July. One Work Group is assigned to each of the three pond complexes that make up the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project: the **Alviso pond complex** in the extreme South Bay; the **Ravenswood pond complex** near the Dumbarton Bridge; and the **Eden Landing pond complex** in the

East Bay. The Work Groups will augment the ongoing work of the Stakeholder Forum whose 30 members will convene as a full Stakeholder Forum late this Fall.

The Work Groups provide a place for local community members to weigh in on the design of restoration and flood management projects as well as trails and other public access features during Phase One of the restoration, which begins in 2008. Before each meeting, attendees were invited to tour the adjacent pond complex area. Pictured here are

Eden Landing Work Group members touring the pond complex managed by the California Department of Fish and Game.

Because each pond complex contains a combination of habitat restoration, flood control and public access features, there are many design and timing features for the public to respond to during the Work Group meetings. A detailed map of each pond complex and the proposed Phase One activities for each area can be found the [project web site](#). The site also contains summaries and agendas for all the work group meetings. The Work Groups are expected to convene again early next year. In the meantime, if you would like to be notified of the time and location of the next Work Group meeting in your area, please contact [Anna Schneider](#) at the California State Coastal Conservancy (510-286-1015).

2. Work Continues on SBSP Environmental Document

Since May, project managers and consultants have been working to respond to the comments received on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report released in March of this year. The project received 306 pages of comments representing the views of 111 different commentators. We want to thank everyone who took time to respond to the environmental document. Project managers expect to be back in touch with responders in the next couple months.



3. Volunteers Needed this Saturday for Eden Landing Clean Up!

Save the Bay continues its partnership with the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) this weekend for Coastal Clean Up Day. On Saturday Sep 15, 2007 from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. volunteers from around the Bay are invited to help prepare a portion of the Eden Landing site for restoration. As a volunteer, you can learn more about the future of restoration while helping clean

up trash along the shoreline. For more information please visit the [Events and Meetings Section](#) of the project web site.

The South Bay Salt Pond project was the beneficiary this summer of the Volunteer Center of Silicon Valley's **Year of Family Volunteering "Green Challenge" Initiative**. The campaign, which will continue into next year, started with a series of clean-up events at sites within and adjacent to the Salt Pond Restoration project area. Working in partnership with Save the Bay, the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge and the Department of Fish and Game, as well as Friends of San Francisquito Creek, the Volunteer Center marshaled the man and kid power of over 200 volunteers to help weed, clean and generally prepare several salt pond sites for restoration. At Eden Landing site alone, fifty volunteers from the San Jose Mennonite Convention pulled 552 pounds of

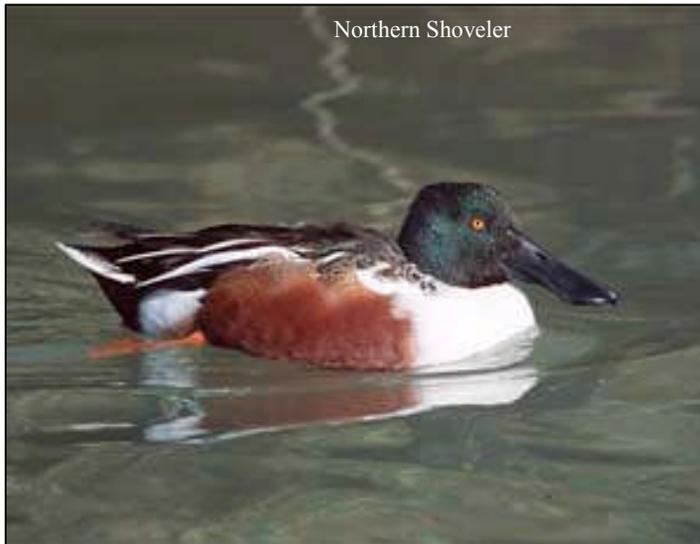
trash from the site including several very large items. We would like to thank all of the volunteers and the Volunteer Center of Silicon Valley for lending their time and energy to help with the restoration.



4. On the Ground: Dealing with Dust, Return of the Pickleweed, Return of the Ducks!

The relatively dry winter this year has brought a new set of challenges to DFG and USFWS officials preparing the salt ponds for Phase One restoration next year. Some of the ponds have experienced higher salinity than normal and with summer winds, managers are watering several dry ponds to prevent dust storms

from affecting air quality. In Eden Landing, managers have been experimenting with periodic flooding of seasonal ponds and that seems to be improving the salinity problem. It is unclear if the periodic flooding might also help solve the annual issue of low dissolved oxygen levels in some ponds during the hot summer months. Project managers continue to work with the Regional Water Quality Control Board to address ways to measure and mitigate low dissolved oxygen levels which, if left unchecked, could pose a threat to aquatic life in the ponds.



In other news, endangered snowy plovers have made extensive use of the project's seasonal ponds this year. The last of the plovers are now heading out for Fall migration. The Eden Landing area, near North Creek Marsh that was open to tidal action last October is already showing signs of progress with pickleweed and other marsh plants beginning to grow in the new tidal areas. Pickleweed is also starting to grow at Pond A21 (pictured here) which was

opened to tidal action in March of 2006 as part of a series of breaches at the Island Ponds near Fremont. The Santa Clara Valley Water District which manages that pond, also reports that sediment, critical to re-establishing marsh vegetation, is starting to accumulate and is now up to 17 inches deep in some areas of the pond.

The Fall migration is already beginning to take place at the ponds with the first

ducks (northern shovellers) arriving in August. Similar to previous years, DFG and the USFWS will offer limited duck hunting this year with the season expected to open in early October. The Refuge has incorporated a volunteer "Friends" group for duck hunting in the Alviso Ponds. The Friends group is made up of several local duck hunters that coordinate volunteer work parties. The coordinators offer a work party every third Saturday of the month to remove debris and re-build existing hunting blinds that have become dilapidated and unsafe to use. Their efforts have improved many of the hunting blinds which will offer more opportunities for hunters on the Refuge. For more information please contact [Eric Mruz](#) at the US Fish and Wildlife Service.



5. Faces of the Restoration: Janice and Frank Delfino

Frank and Janice Delfino are long standing members of the Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge—a citizens group committed to protecting the Bay's remaining endangered wetlands. Over the years, using publicity, education, legislation, political and legal action, the Delfinos and other members of the Citizens

Committee have helped to protect thousands of acres of South Bay Wetlands from development, helping to expand the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, protecting Bair Island from developers and stopping a development planned for Mayhews Landing in Newark. They were also very active in promoting the acquisition of the 15,100 acre South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project and have remained a central part of the planning process for the restoration.

How did you become active with the Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge?



We were working on our side of the Bay (East Bay) and Florence LaRiviere was working on her side of the Bay to fight development proposals and expand the Refuge. In 1984 Florence hosted a meeting at her home in Santa Clara Valley and asked *Why do we keep fighting to protect the Bay piece by piece? Why don't we work to integrate protection of the whole shoreline?* We also decided that the Refuge needed to be more than just a collection of salt ponds, that it should encompass a variety of upland, marsh and

other habitats and that we needed a coordinated approach to fighting development that might prevent the Refuge from expanding. And so the Citizens Committee was formed.

We've had success and losses over the years, I remember people cried when we added our first couple parcels to the Refuge. There was much celebration with the addition

of the Munster Property near Union City (44 acres) and the Warm Springs Unit near Fremont (285 acres) to the Refuge. But we've had some major losses too—we failed to protect the beautiful Oliver Hayfield area and it is now covered in houses.

What is your greatest hope for the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration?

I hope that we have enough tidal marsh and bird habitat to create a good balance for the ecosystem.

What is your greatest concern about the restoration?

I worry that without enough funding and adequate personnel to do what has to be done, nothing will happen to the ponds.

How do you like to spend your time when you are near or on the Bay?

Birding! We really enjoy what nature has provided for us and what we're working to improve. We've created quite a bit of bird habitat in our own yard with fruit trees and other flowering plants and bird baths. We're also close enough to the Bay that I can see some of the Cargill ponds right from my kitchen window. It makes it a little easier to keep an eye on what's going on out there.

Is there a favorite spot on the Bay that you like return to?

From the San Leandro Shoreline on down to Hayward there is always something to see. We've been out there counting shorebirds and all of a sudden a shark will swim by-- there is always something to see.

What advice can you give to other activists working to protect wetlands?

Well Frank and I are in our eighties so I guess I'd say don't ever give up! Try to make this area a better place. Keep trying to improve the quality of life in the Bay Area. And remember to enjoy it while you're doing it. Frank also says you also have to have "tough butt" to sit through all those meetings!



6. Putting It All Together—How Will We Fund the Restoration?

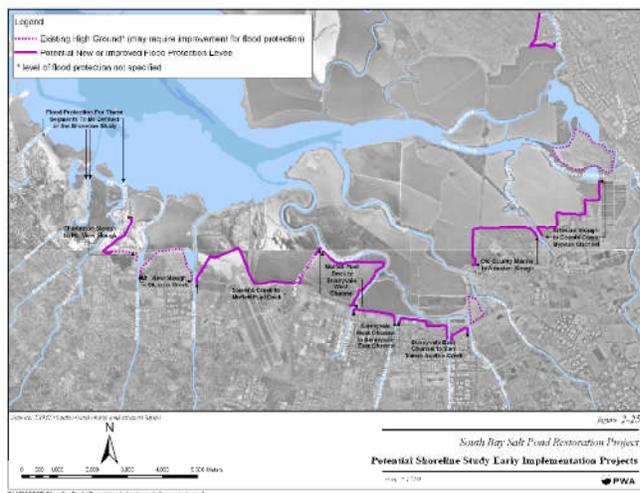
As we look forward to the first phase of restoration commencing in 2008, project managers are considering a variety of different funding sources. The construction cost for Phase I is estimated to be up to \$30 million with an additional \$2 to \$3 million needed annually to support essential monitoring and adaptive management

activities. You can view a map of the [Phase I activities](#) on the project web site. The

article below is the fourth in a continuing series of articles reviewing each of the potential funding sources for the project. In this issue we examine local funding sources.

Local funding sources will be an important element of the funding package for the Salt Pond Project. This is particularly true because the flood management elements of the restoration plan can only be successful if they are supported and managed by local agencies. Two active participants in the Project at the local level have been the Alameda County Flood Control District and the Santa Clara Valley Water District. Each agency is contributing right now by funding the design of a part of the Phase 1 restoration actions. Alameda is funding the design of the Ponds E8A/9/8X restoration in the East Bay, and Santa Clara is funding the design of the Pond A8 Phase 1 Actions in the South Bay. Additionally Santa Clara was an essential partner in and the primary funder of the Island Ponds restoration.

The Project expects to continue partnering with these two agencies and potentially others into the future. We expect to work closely with these two agencies and others on local funding measures like Santa Clara's Clean Safe Creeks Program as these kinds of local funding programs are considered in the future.



7. South Bay Shoreline Study Update

The South San Francisco Bay 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 Shoreline Study is being conducted in tandem with the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration project and will incorporate findings from the Restoration Project into its recommendations.

Study partners are currently developing a "Future Without Project Conditions" Report for the Alviso Ponds and Santa Clara County area. This report will provide detailed information about flood risks and levee conditions and will help to inform habitat restoration and public access options after SBSP Phase I implementation. This report will be completed in 2008. The integrated Feasibility Study and Environmental Impact Statement/Report for the Alviso Ponds and Santa Clara County area, which is dependent on federal appropriations, is slated for completion in 2010 or 2011.

This Spring agency representatives in San Francisco and Washington launched a series of problem-solving strategy sessions between the US Army Corps of Engineers, the Santa Clara Valley Water District, US Fish and Wildlife Service and the State Coastal Conservancy to ensure the project moves toward its stated goals. For more information about the South Bay Shoreline Study please visit the [Shoreline Study web site](#).



8. 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 Fall. 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: 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. The web site also includes video news coverage of recent restoration actions at the site and a recent time lapse about early restoration at the Island Ponds produced by Judy Irving in 2007. [View the footage.](#)

c. Listen to the podcast: The project has produced two short podcasts about the project that include interviews with Executive Project Director Steve Ritchie. 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 Work Group Meeting The next Stakeholder Forum meeting will likely be held in December of this year. And our Work Group meetings will start up again in January of 2008. All of these meetings are open to the public and you are welcome and encouraged to attend. For details on the next Stakeholder Forum meeting or to read minutes from previous meetings please check [Events and Meetings](#) on the Project web site.

Photo Credits: Tracy Grubbs, Save the Bay, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Rob Holt and Judy Irving.