

November 15, 2004

MEETING SUMMARY

Re: **Outcomes from Pond Cluster Options Workshop - October 27, 2004**

Background: Two public workshops were held on September 29 in San Leandro (Eden Landing ponds) and September 30, 2004 in San Jose (Alviso/Ravenswood ponds) to seek public input on shaping the initial ideas for restoration alternatives at the pond complex level. A third workshop was held on October 27, 2004 at the Coyote Point Museum in San Mateo from 7:00 to 9:00 pm, to discuss initial options for restoration for the entire South Bay Salt Pond Project area. This third meeting built on the outcomes from the earlier meetings. Attendance was strong with over 60 people attending this final workshop.

Meeting Materials: In advance of the meeting, interested parties were sent a document entitled “Preliminary Options Considerations” that explained the set of criteria that helped guide where specific design elements (e.g., tidal habitat, managed pond habitat, flood management, public access/recreation) should most likely be located within a pond complex. This document was also available from the project website (<http://www.southbayrestoration.org>).

Substantive Meeting Outcomes:

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review

Mary Selkirk, facilitator from the Center for Collaborative Policy, welcomed everyone to the third meeting in the public workshop series to get feedback on the initial options for restoration and other features of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project area. She pointed out that this workshop was also an opportunity to dialogue directly with members of the Project Management Team, the Design Team, and others who have done a great deal of work in developing the initial restoration options out of feedback from many different stakeholders—the Project Management Team, the Science Team and technical experts, the public, the Stakeholder Forum and the Forum workgroups.

Steve Ritchie, Executive Project Manager, provided an overview of the agenda and workshop objectives. He asked everyone to explore the range of preliminary restoration options and provide their feedback. He pointed out that the process is still a ways from determining the official alternatives, but wants to make sure people know the range of options that are out there. He wanted those attending to identify what features and general considerations would be common to the pond complexes and what might vary. Later in the meeting, there would be a discussion on how this process then moves from options to distinctive alternatives, which have formal designation under NEPA (National Environmental Protection Act) and CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act). The meeting is designed to look at the entire project area in terms of the individual pond complexes and how they start to come together as alternatives. He then asked the attendees of the meeting to introduce themselves.

2. *Overview of the Current Planning Process*

Ritchie discussed where we are in the overall project schedule and process. Currently, there are various studies going on and we are starting to formulate alternatives. We have already started the Initial Stewardship Plan (ISP), which started with the ponds' purchase and received the Record of Decision (ROD) allowing the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game to begin to manage the ponds that Cargill managed for many years.

Ritchie summarized an updated project schedule detailing the key restoration development milestones and upcoming opportunities for public input into the overall restoration planning process (updated timeline is available from the project website). Highlights included:

- **November 2004:** Formal scoping as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) will be initiated. The joint federal NEPA leads for this process will be the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the State of California CEQA lead will be the Department of Fish and Game. Scoping meetings will be held on November 16 and 17.
- **December 2004:** Preliminary project alternatives will be sufficiently developed for public review and the Stakeholder Forum will hold a meeting December 15 to begin reviewing preliminary alternatives. At the December 15 Stakeholder Forum meeting there will be more details on the Army Corps of Engineers' process, how that dovetails with the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Process, and how the two will be integrated.
- **April/May 2005:** Public weighting and ranking of alternatives will be undertaken. Work Groups will be asked to vary the weighting of each objective in order to rank the performance of the various alternatives.
- **June/July 2005:** The Forum will seek consensus on the set of alternatives for detailed analysis in an Environmental Impact Statement/Report (EIS/EIR) compliant with both NEPA and CEQA.

Ritchie added that the project's National Science Panel, a group of experts from around the country, recently held a meeting and are giving us advice and guidance on shaping the alternatives. They would like to have another meeting in February, to give constructive suggestions and feedback and to make sure we are not missing anything in moving forward to develop realistic alternatives we can use in the EIS/EIR process.

He reiterated the project mission, "To prepare a scientifically sound and publicly supported restoration and public access plan that can begin to be implemented within five years. The overarching goal of the long-term restoration and enhancement of wetlands in the South San Francisco Bay while providing for flood management and wildlife-oriented public access and recreation." He stated that that means not having one uniform habitat--we want to have a true ecosystem in the South Bay.

He also reviewed the guiding principles and project objectives and explained that these statements had been developed with input from the Project Management Team and the Stakeholder Forum, and were refined based on input from the public. He further explained that the Preliminary Option Considerations are informed by the guiding principles, and project objectives, as well as

opportunities and constraints and conceptual models of habitat restoration (in progress). The options that have been developed so far are designed to create a natural system that mimics what was historically present in the South San Francisco Bay.

3. Overview of Initial Options for the Project Area and Comparison with Project Objectives

Michelle Orr, with Phil Williams & Associates, presented an overview of the four preliminary options for restoration at the pond clusters. These options are:

- Option 0 – No Action / Initial Stewardship Plan (ISP)
- Option 1 – Managed Pond Emphasis
- Option 2 – Mix of Managed Ponds and Tidal
- Option 3 – Tidal Emphasis

Orr explained that the preliminary options are intended to explore a range of possibilities and should be considered very flexible. The options vary in the relative extent of tidal and managed pond habitat, with the exception of the No Action option. Varying the options in this way allows the project to accommodate different resolutions of key uncertainties without having to backtrack later in alternatives development. The key uncertainties are sediment availability and the importance of managed pond habitat in relationship to tidal flats and marshes to bird use of the South Bay. Uncertainties about sediment availability affect our ability to know where and to what extent tidal marsh can be restored, as well as how much existing and created mudflats there will be following project implementation. Uncertainties about bird use affect our ability to know the extent of managed pond, mudflat, tidal marsh and bay required to maintain current migratory bird species that use the South Bay.

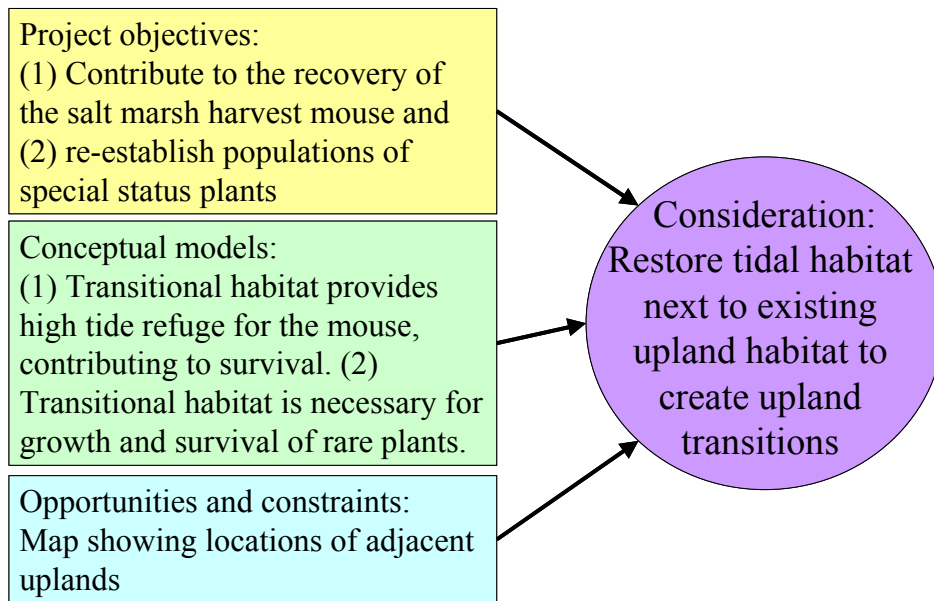
Orr further provided definitions of key terms being used in developing the initial options:

- Tidal Habitat – is broadly defined to include vegetated marsh, tidal mudflats, tidal channels, subtidal areas, and marsh/upland transitional areas.
- Managed Ponds – includes islands for nesting and roosting, open water and water of varying depths, high and low salinities, year-round and seasonally-ponded areas.

She said that we received a lot of comments to make clear that there are overlapping ecological functions provided by these two broad categories. For example, tidal mudflat and tidal marsh can provide habitat for a lot of different types of birds that use the managed ponds.

Orr said that ponds will be designed and managed to significantly enhance shorebird and waterfowl foraging, roosting and nesting opportunities and that a higher level of management than currently undertaken for the salt ponds or ISP is anticipated. This level of management is comparable to other wildlife and refuge areas and is expected to provide more habitats in the same “footprint”.

The options were developed by applying “considerations” – a set of criteria that guide where to locate design elements within the landscape. An example of this process is graphically illustrated below:



The considerations were developed with input from the Project Management and the consultant teams, and will be refined in the future based on input from the public and the Science Team.

The considerations provide guidance, but do not dictate the answer. It is not unusual and, in fact expected, that design considerations conflict. Sometimes a given pond may be a great location for tidal habitat and also for managed ponds, while another pond may not be an optimal location for either. The options represent different trade-offs between applications of the design considerations. The most significant considerations at this time are:

- Restore tidal habitat adjacent to the mouths of major creeks that currently experience flooding or are otherwise undersized (also benefits anadromous fish)
- Restore high elevation ponds to tidal habitat
- Restore moderate elevation (~Mean Tide Level) ponds to managed ponds
- Create a tidal marsh corridor
- Create upland transitions
- Restore unique historic tidal habitats
- Create large tidal systems where it is possible to sustain high order channels and to isolate broad areas from human and predator access
- Restore antecedent drainage channels as possible
- Restore tidal preferentially in saline areas versus brackish
- Enhance managed ponds near the historic salt works
- Enhance managed ponds in areas accessible for management (generally landward)
- Widely disperse ponds managed for breeding habitat
- Restore managed ponds in areas with relatively less adjacent managed pond habitat
- Close gaps in the Bay Trail
- Cluster public access uses to reduce habitat encroachment
- Provide public access to historic and cultural points of interest
- Coordinate public access (trails) with flood control levees as much as possible
- Spine trail(s) would be open all year; some spur trails may be closed seasonally

Orr said that there has been a lot of work done to make changes to the maps from the comments received at the previous two meetings in September and that it will be an ongoing process. They received a lot of requests for additional information that is either not mapped or that we are not that far along in the process yet to be that specific. A lot of comments were focused on public access.

She explained that application of preliminary options resulted in different emphases for each complex. Maps were created for each of the pond options at each pond complex and workshop attendees were able to review the maps in detail.

Assumptions that were made in developing the options included:

- No relocation of major infrastructure (railroad, PG&E substation, etc.)
- Assumes PG&E towers can be raised or improved as needed and maintenance access can be accomplished via appropriate structures and permit conditions
- Fill is available for levee construction and creation of significant transitional habitat
- Some outboard levees may need to be maintained until marsh corridor develops
- Tidal restoration adjacent to creek mouths will improve flood protection (habitats flexible until flood protection confirmed)
- Risk of mercury methylation to be evaluated in adaptive management experiments
- Ongoing mosquito management

Orr proceeded to explain that options were developed for each pond complex (e.g., Eden Landing Options 0, 1, 2, and 3), and that the options have been refined for the October 27 workshop based on input received at these early workshops, and as additional baseline information and analysis becomes available. The alternatives for NEPA/CEQA will be formed by combining all or parts of pond complex options.

She finished her presentation by asking attendees to review the maps in the three breakout stations and provide feedback in response to the following questions:

- Do the options meet the project guiding principles, goals, and objectives?
- Do the options capture the range of reasonable possibilities?
- Is anything missing from the options and is there a fourth option?

Steve Ritchie then explained how these options relate to the project objectives and that we are talking about a reasonable range that we think we would be realistically able to achieve.

He mentioned that there are two significant questions around the habitats we need to resolve and we are setting up two work groups to examine those issues in more detail. One is the matter of sediment dynamics. There is some concern that the amount of sediment available in San Francisco Bay in the watershed coming down may not be enough to seed the amount of tidal habitat that we would like, especially in the Alviso area. If we have this much tidal habitat available, that may take up a lot of sediment from the Bay and we may lose various mudflats because there won't be enough sediment. The Sediment Dynamic Work Group will be set up in December comprised of technical consultants and scientists who specialize in this area. They will look hard at this issue and determine what we know and what we don't know, and what questions we need answered as we move forward.

Mary Selkirk added that the work group will be similar to the Mercury subgroup. She said there were members of the Stakeholder Forum that participated in that subgroup and the Project Management Team will ask if any Forum members are interested in the sediment dynamic issue.

Ritchie said that a second work group will be set up on the issue of bird habitat to address the question of how many birds actually use managed ponds, among others. He said that, historically, the ponds in this area were managed for manufacturing salt, they weren't managed for bird populations. So we want to get a similar group together of experts, including members of the Science Team and technical consultants to delve into this issue. He stated that it is clear from the ISP that there are a lot of different ways to manage habitats, and as we get to more detailed alternatives we will represent them in more detailed ways.

He mentioned that the flood management features that are the most significant are opening up to tidal action areas that are now viewed as creeks, representing a significant amount of flood plain availability that is very beneficial to flood management. In looking at the varying options in terms of that type of flood plain management, as well as levees that tend to be along the backside of the ponds, we feel pretty confident that flood management is something we will be able to deal with in the project very robustly.

He said the same is true of public access. One of things we are able to do here, particularly in Eden Landing, is to have a lot of public access opportunities. We feel very confident in meeting the objective for improved public access; it is just a matter of how far we can go. One of the things we have tried to do in each option is to close the Bay Trail gaps in the South Bay area.

Our next objective related to the level of water quality is linked to the Sediment Work Group, we think that sediment dynamics will be important, for example, where sediments are scoured out and plumes of toxic elements that have been covered over may be exposed. Understanding the sediment issue is really key to understanding how well we will do on the water quality issue. We have had a working group on mercury, and there is no reason not to do restoration because we are afraid of mercury, and we will deal with mercury in a measured, thoughtful way.

He continued that the next objective is to maintain or improve current levels of vector management, control predation on native species, and manage the spread of non-native invasive species. We need to make sure we do not create any new mosquito problems; so designing areas with a lot of moving water will be beneficial. As far as isolated areas to limit predation, we tried to have isolated areas for tidal habitat to limit predation on special status species. Members of the Science Team and Habitat Work Group are at the international conference in San Francisco on invasive *Spartina*. The east coast version has hybridized with the native west coast variety, and the hybrid version is fairly aggressive. There is a lot of concern that if you open up areas to tidal action, it will make certain kinds of habitat more suitable for the spread of *Spartina*.

Lastly, there is the protection of services provided by infrastructure throughout the restoration area. Particularly important are the PG&E lines that come across the Alviso pond area, as well as the Hetch-Hetchy Aqueduct area, and the San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant, which is prone to flooding. We will be paying close attention to these and other infrastructure issues.

Overall, we feel good that we have covered the significant issues to help us meet the objectives of the project, and we will be adding more in-depth looks at sediment dynamics and bird habitat.

4. *In-Depth Review in Breakout Sessions*

To allow closer review of the option diagrams and to interact with member of the Project Management Team and the consultant design team, public attendees were invited to one of three breakout stations that included a full set of the options maps. Attendees were encouraged to use “post-its” to indicate specific questions and/or concerns they had directly on the diagrams. In addition, staff was present in each breakout station to record comments on flipcharts. All comments received are included as Attachment 1 to this memo.

5. *Public Questions and Discussion*

- *Have you thought about having a public access work group to deal with those issues in more detail?* Response: Ritchie said it was an excellent idea.
- *Will many ponds have vegetation? How do you manage to improve habitat for the salt marsh harvest mouse?* Response: Yes, many of the ponds will have vegetation and some ponds will be managed more intensely than others. The restoration process is in its early stages and the best methods for managing habitats for the various species has not been determined yet.
- *You originally had 60/40 percent separation for tidal and managed ponds, have you added up the changes in the mix?* Response: Yes, it is a 2:1 ratio, 2 tidal to 1 managed ponds. It comes out to roughly that, a little more tidal and a little less managed ponds.
- *Comment: Regarding the issue of global warming and sea level rise, where you have open spaces that are not yet built on, we may in the future want to try to acquire those and move the trail if necessary. In planning public access, we should be looking at those elements wherever they may occur and allow for flexibility and placement so that we’re not putting something in place that may be significant and need to be changed in 20 years.*
- *Comment: All the public access is from a landside point of view, and one thing worth considering is sea public access. As you try to restore these areas, there are thoughtful ways you can open up historically navigable channels all over the South Bay where streams and creeks were blocked and redirected, so that you can provide a lot of public access in the South Bay to the water.* Response: I think that’s an excellent point, it relates to Michelle’s comments about increased tidal action allowing you to open up the channels.

David Blau added, “We do show kayak and canoe launch points on the maps and our existing recreational activity map of the whole South Bay shows the canoe trail on the water, but when we take these three pond complexes and we start putting them on maps, they just don’t fit on these complexes graphically.

- *Comment: Kayaks and canoes are one thing, but you need 5-6 feet of water for a reasonable boat to cruise in the South Bay and it would be good to have that restored.*
- *Throughout most of the steps, we haven't covered funding and how much each of the different options will cost. At what point do we consider where the money is going to come from and whether there is enough money to manage the ponds? Response: We're already considering where the money could come from to some extent in that we're working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the context of the South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Study to look at the possibility of federal funding for part of this. Our emphasis is to come up with a plan that works for the people in the Bay Area, while at the same time, looking for opportunities to provide federal funding support for that. When we get to the final alternatives, that's when we're going to look very closely at the funding. At this level of detail, there is really not enough information to determine what the costs might be, whether it's the cost of construction or cost of management over time.*
- *What impact this would have on the vector population? Also, how does it relate to this adaptive management idea, if things don't turn out the way the way that you think, you go back and try it again? Will there be some kind of money for pay for the mosquito spraying? Response: Our expectation would be to put in place a program to make sure that this is all properly managed.*
- *Do you have freshwater marsh options? Response: We do have freshwater marsh options.*

Several people asked about other kinds of tidal habitat options such as muted tidal saltwater habitat? Response: In the landscape maps, we didn't put in that level of detail. There were also suggestions that we put in some cross-sections across the complexes so people can better visualize what they look like—where are the upland transitions, where are the mudflats, etc.

- *Comment: On almost all of the alternatives the access is the existing mapped access. Around Alviso, almost every managed pond is encircled by access. Not seeing a range of accesses here, and in this level of detail we're not looking at access impacts on particular species, which I assume happens in future analysis--you don't have alternatives to fall back on if there are conflicts. Every pond is surrounded in every alternative. I think you have to acknowledge this and to weigh access with species' needs because it's not listed here. Response: These are diagrams, so if you think in terms of two basic trails, a levee trail or a tidal trail, which may be a boardwalk, if all these diagrammatically show where you have ponds surrounded by levees, it means you have an opportunity potentially to have a loop trail, but that doesn't mean we will build all these loop trails.*
- *Any idea of how many people will be coming to these areas? Response: I think in the EIS/EIR we'll get to that level of detail. We'll have to make some assumptions about trends and changes because it's a 50-year plan. If we go out 50 years, we'll have to make assumptions about future demand to access recreation areas and what activities might be in vogue.*
- *Comment: It's my understanding that between 500,000 and 1 million people come to Coyote Point (recreational area) each year. Considering what we're opening up in the South Bay for recreation use, it's not unreasonable to think that there will be more millions of people coming to take advantage of these recreational opportunities. It also means there will be a tremendous*

impact, so we have to be careful how we do it. Response: Yes, that's not an insignificant question and it will be addressed in the EIS/EIR process. For example, where is all the parking going to go?

- *Did we reaffirm that tidal lands and water are public, when you open these up that they'll be public water and public lands?* Response: If you ask the California Department of Fish and Game and they say you can take a boat out there, then it's public.
- *Did we provide for hunting access? Is that part of the plan?* Response: Yes, we actually do not show hunting by pond, but I think each map has a footnote relative to that.

Clyde Morris of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service responded, "Just to clarify, there are state lands along the waterways and sometimes the refuge (federal) will lease the state lands and we will restrict the public access to be protective of the species there. Just because it's a tidal, navigable water it doesn't mean that the public will be able to have unlimited use of it. Certain slough channels may be closed at certain times of the year and others will remain open.

John Krause, of the California Department of Fish and Game added, "We're not going to lose anything we have now, are you talking about the newly created ones?"

- *Comment: It's important to have money set aside, not by the federal government, and you know you have the money to pay for the maintenance of the trails and sites, patrols, these could have huge impacts if you don't have the money.* Response: My personal belief is that the money needs to come from the people of the Bay Area, and we'll see how well we do down the road.
- *What is the time frame for the Army Corps levees, will it pre-date your plan?* Response: It will post-date it.
- *Won't that be difficult for you to coordinate then?* Response: We're working together right now coordinating schedules with the Army Corps of Engineers' study and how that fits with this plan. The completion of their study all the way through to conclusion really extends a year to a year-and-a-half beyond our study. I think that for our project we want to make sure it is a locally preferred plan—what people in the Bay Area want. The Corps of Engineers' study will be looked at in ways to enhance that, for example, are there areas between where the ponds are that might need to have some attention and we will make a whole package that fits the South Bay. Then we'll figure out if there is federal interest, and there may be for some features and may not be for others, but it's going to be our plan.
- *Are there pilot projects included in the plan?* Response: I think you could call Phase 1 a pilot project in its own right. We have to carve out as part of the planning process what we want to do beginning in 2008, and that will immediately come under scrutiny in terms of monitoring, the whole adaptive management approach and so on.

Another response: What David has described is what the landscape map will look like, it really doesn't get into all the other components which, in my mind, is a whole array of things like the adaptive management planning setup, how to identify additional phases, pilot projects and other experiments that will need to go on through the life of the project.

Another response: Keep in mind that we have a pilot project going along for pond management in the form of the ISP. We have a pilot project as a component of that, which will restore the island ponds to tidal influence. We have a project that is not part of this planning process in Eden Landing where we will be restoring 500 acres to tidal influence in the next year or so. So we have components that are pilot activities that will inform us and we'll be looking at monitoring them to also inform this project. We will have pilot elements for how we manage ponds. I think Clyde, John and I are discovering that the ISP is not working the way it was planned, so we're learning from that.

- *Put in the context of 50 years in adaptive management, to what extent would this preferred alternative put in place perhaps change over the long-term?* Response: It will not look like the way it comes out of the chute and, also, some things will be irreversible. The chances are once you put a huge levee along one area, that it will not be moved, but a lot of other pieces could very well move and be managed differently over time. As we get to the formal alternatives, we will do a phasing diagram where we could see over time what we hope would happen, but then each phase after Phase I will require a thorough process-level environmental analysis.
- *Would it be more efficient to determine the flood management plan first and then add the other components?* Response: We can avoid that problem, but the one thing we have learned is that you can't pull apart the restoration objective from the flood management or the access—they are intertwined.

Mary Selkirk added that the challenge for the members of the Stakeholder Forum during the early part of next year, once these alternatives are in a preliminary form and going through modeling and analysis, the members of the Forum are going to be asked to provide feedback to the Project Management Team, actually grappling with weighting and ranking and all of those kinds of issues.

- *Are you planning to attach the invasive species to land and plant species and water species? Are you doing that along with the habitat restoration or before the habitat restoration or some kind of mix, because that can make a difference in the kind of restoration you want?* Response: the prime example right now is the *Spartina* issue and the group at the conference is delving into that more. Some folks believe that you could end up with nothing but that in the South Bay, and you would be better off using flood ponds in response to that. The questions we need to ask are: What are the risks of that occurring and what are the consequences of that? I think that's what we really need to assess. It will be done in tandem with the development of the rest of the plan.
- *Aren't we moving very quickly with developing the alternatives and not having the data from the Bird Habitat Work Group and the Sediment Dynamic Work Group yet? I wonder that if by adding more scientists and whatever the National Science Team will do in the interim will still give us enough time to develop the alternatives?* Response: We will have a serious discussion of what we mean by adaptive management in order to address that.
- *How many alternatives will you analyze for the EIS/EIR?* Response: Four or five.

- *How will sediment dynamics be dealt with?* Response: It will be done at the landscape level analysis. We will focus on what we don't understand about sediment analysis, coupled with doing experiments, but we will not get the answer.

David Blau: If we feel the result in Alviso is not achievable, we may not choose Option 3 since we can't achieve that result. It's a big concern, we want to have confidence when looking at the alternatives, the mix of ponds can change over time, but assessing the plus or minus of existing mudflats or tidal marsh is difficult, we need to know through the sediment analysis that the information is there and that we have confidence in it.

6. *What's Next?*

David Blau, with Phil Williams and Associates, said that we are at the point now where we have done about 10 weeks of very intensive work on these options and we are ready to do some mixing and matching, and what we come up with will be called alternatives as a treatment in all three pond complexes linked together.

We are going to be going through a very rigorous evaluation; we will apply the criteria to these alternatives and rating how well these alternatives respond to those objectives. Why do we need to look at alternatives? If we were just doing a plan alone we could as many or as few alternatives as we choose. But we have the NEPA/CEQA overlay, and what that requires is that first we assess the No Action alternative--what if we don't implement the restoration plan? In this project, we have a unique twist in that the No Action alternative includes the Initial Stewardship Plan that is being actively implemented right now, and that provides the baseline for the incremental benefits and costs of the other alternatives.

Next we will identify a range of actions that respond to the project objectives. The law requires that we consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives. The law doesn't define reasonable, but it has to do with logistics, technology, feasibility, cost and so on. We think and we are asking you tonight if we have covered the reasonable range of alternatives for each of the three pond complexes.

A question was asked in the group about when are we going to look at how the three pond complexes work in conjunction with each other and everything else that's going to happen? We are just at that point now. All we have done here is inserted Option 2 for each of the complexes just so you can see the relationships to each other.

For Alternative 1, we pick up on the managed pond emphasis for the three complexes and we test that against the evaluation criteria. Alternative 2 is a mix of managed ponds and tidal, and as we progress to Alternative 3, we have primarily a tidal emphasis. An important point is that the answer does not have to be one of these three alternatives for the preferred alternative. The answer could be a mix of each, for example, we might take Option 1 of one complex and Option 2 and Option 3 of the others and put those together, or ultimately, the preferred alternative could be a hybrid of what we learn from evaluating these three alternatives.

One of the things we want to do in moving from options to alternatives is to get a little more specific in terms what we are talking about and this was asked many times tonight. To just show blue and green for the ponds, we did that deliberately because there are so many choices out there, and now

we are going to go back in and detail out each of these a little more to see what is happening in the managed pond habitats and tidal habitats. We also are going to look closer now at what specific recreational activities fits in each of the alternatives. We are going to look at the PG&E towers, for example, and how these alternatives protect the integrity of these utilities and access to those points. And we are also going to identify what will be included in Phase I. Remember that our EIS/EIR is programmatic for the whole 15,000 acres, but it is project level coverage for the first phase of implementation that we want to start construction on in 2008.

If we have construction in 2008, do the design in 2007 and have a record of decision in 2006, we have to do an EIS/EIR on these alternatives in 2005, and that means we have to define these alternatives pretty quickly, like by the end of this year.

You can have the same footprints on each of these maps, but you can manage it differently—you can vary salinity and water depth and look at what that produces in terms of wildlife response. So there is going to be some variation of management that is explored in the alternatives as well. You may have noticed that some of the recreation trails are not inseparably linked in Options 1, 2, and 3, so we are going to have to look at different recreational trail alignments and different activities and decide what we want to package as the alternatives.

We would like to define our preliminary alternatives by the end of this year, and then we start the rigorous process of applying the evaluation criteria. Our team will make no judgment about the relative importance of the criteria, but we will make judgments about how well each alternative responds to the criteria. Then it will be up to the Project Management Team after getting all the input to determine relative importance—how much weight do you put on the restoration goal versus the public access goal versus flood defense versus vector control and so forth. Then we want to have final alternatives by the middle of 2005, so we can begin preparing the EIS and EIR.

If we are in good shape and have a lot of consensus through this process around a preferred alternative, we will feature that alternative in the draft EIS/EIR. We don't have to do that—a number of federal agencies do equal treatment of alternatives in the draft and then arrive at their preferred alternative in the final EIR/EIS. But our goal is to have a preferred alternative in the published draft and we would only not do that if we can't seem to get agreement, then we might use the hearing process to further explore the alternatives and then select for the final draft and do a Record of Decision.

7. Wrap Up and Adjourn

Steve Ritchie wrapped up the meeting and reminded people about the upcoming meetings:

- Local Government Forum: November 10 (10:00 am - noon)
City of Sunnyvale Council Chambers
- Stakeholder Forum: December 15 (1:00 – 5:00 pm)
NASA Ames, Mountain View

Since this meeting will be the Forum's first anniversary, there will be a party following the meeting.

Information on all upcoming meetings will be posted on the project web site.

ATTACHMENT 1: Public Comments from Breakout Sessions

HABITAT

- Preference for A8 to be tidal habitat.
- Alviso managed ponds (AB1-A3W) must take California Least Tern use into consideration when designing public access.
- How is project considering muted tidal habitats?
- Muted tidal habitats breed mosquitoes – big issue.
- Need to have confidence that impacts of alternatives on existing conditions (e.g. mudflats) be really well understood.
- Option 2 does not provide adequate bird habitat.
- What is an optimal number of bird habitat acres to promote avian health and populations?
- What types of salt pans/salt habitats may result from tidal habitats?
- Sediment availability needs to be better understood before exact habitat mix can be more accurately estimated.
- Do any of the options provide snowy plover habitat?
- What about areas adjacent to salt ponds? What is the bigger South Bay habitat picture? How will this be addressed in landscape maps?
- Is 60:40 habitat split considering surrounding/adjacent habitat mixes?
- Can maps be created that show habitat goals?
- Where will certain habitats exist?

FLOOD MANAGEMENT

- Alameda County Flood Control District owns lands in Eden Landing that should be shown on maps.
- Alviso Ponds: fill in borrow channels where possible.
- Managed Pond adjacent to Moffett Field: if possible, make this site permanently flooded with only managed vegetation and good wave action to cover current mosquito site.

PUBLIC ACCESS

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access? Viewing sites along trails/trail surfaces?
- Public access through drawbridge is extremely unlikely – primarily due to extraordinary expense to combined construction, management, and maintenance. National Wildlife Refuge cannot support these costs.
- Good, broad range of options for Bay Trail spine and spur trails.
- Prefer to maintain or implement Bay Trail spine as priority, with variety of spur trails.
- Menlo Park Baylands Park – great opportunity for elevated viewing/interpretive site overlooking project at northeast corner.
- Show/acknowledge range of access to reflect species needs.
- Alternatives will have to make assumptions about future demand for access.
- Need to include regional recreation/public access features on maps.

- Alviso Option 3: How will kayak and other non-motorized boat access occur at the site identified? It should be kept in mind that it is a long walk on levees to get to the launch point. These levees will also be used by hikers and bike riders. Unless the Sunnyvale Treatment Plant will allow vehicle access around their site, which is doubtful, this would be a constraint. Another concern is that they only noted one launch site for boating in the Alviso ponds, and did not address access points for hunters or fisherman.
- Alviso Option 3: Where are staging areas? Staging is basically an area to congregate to access trails and 95% of the time it is a parking lot. Emergency and service vehicles can access trails and road from a staging area but it is not a specific use.

GENERAL

- Managed pond north of Moffett Field.
- Why can't more of A22 be used for vernal pools?
- Pickleweed in managed ponds and diked seasonal – big vector concern.
- Make map highlighting how project expands and preserves open space between large preserves in Santa Cruz and Diablo Mountains.
- Big concern: reliable funding for maintenance/vector control.
- Should major components be looked at sequentially?
- Concerns about how invasive species are addressed.
- Concern about aggressive timeframe.
- How will lessons from ISP be integrated?
- Critical importance of getting adaptive management process right.
- How will alternatives be crafted?
- What will Cargill's future pond management processes be and how will this affect SBSP?
- What about parcels adjacent to SBSP area that are being considered for restoration? How will these sites influence SBSP effort?
- Need to identify on maps lands that are possibly restorable in future versus lands that are owned by other entities (e.g., Cargill's leased lands on refuge & Cargill's privately-owned lands).
- How were managed pond sites chosen?
- What is the rationale/science behind pond site selection?
- How expensive will management be?
- Cross section diagrams of ponds would be helpful.
- Alviso Ponds' power transmission lines: develop deep-water channels as alternate access for PG&E to catwalks.