



Meeting Summary
South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project Stakeholder Forum
Public Access/Recreation Work Group
April 1, 2004 Meeting

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Meeting Objectives

Austin McNerny (Center for Collaborative Policy) welcomed meeting participants, provided an overview of the meeting agenda and meeting objectives, and asked attendees to introduce themselves (Attachment 1 provides a list of who attended the meeting). The meeting objectives were:

- Build knowledge of ownership and management requirements;
- Briefing and input on EDAW data collection effort;
- Identification of existing/potential recreation and public access areas;
- Elaboration/clarification on issues identified at 2/18/04 Work Group Meeting; and
- Identification of next steps and future meeting topics.

2. Salt Pond Restoration Project Overview

Steve Ritchie, Executive Project Manager for the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project, utilized a PowerPoint presentation to present an overview of the restoration planning process. Specifically, Ritchie explained the geographic location of the salt ponds being restored; the organizational structure of the planning process; the anticipated project schedule and milestones; and a detailed explanation of the pending opportunities for public input on developing the alternatives planning framework and identifying overall project opportunities and constraints.

The following upcoming meetings were announced:

- Stakeholder Forum & Work Groups: April 15 (Forum 10 a.m. – 12:15, Work Groups 1 - 3:30 p.m.) - NASA Ames Research, Moffett Field, Mountain View
- National Science Panel: April 20-21, 8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. - San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, 50 California Street, Suite 2600, San Francisco, McAteer-Petris Conference Room
- Work Groups: May 25, 10 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. - Location to be determined – please check project website

3. Salt Pond Ownership and Management Requirements

Speaking on behalf of USFWS, Clyde Morris, Refuge Manager of the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge provided a presentation, available from the project website, entitled “Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge – Where Wildlife Comes First!” Morris provided a thorough overview of the Refuge’s mission and mandate and corresponding constraints that apply to developing a legally sound restoration plan.

As part of his presentation, Morris provided an overview of the “Compatibility Determination” process by which the US Fish & Wildlife Service evaluates proposed activities within national refuges. He described the types of activities that are currently allowed on the Refuge and what types of activities would most likely not be permitted on the Refuge in the future. Recreational activities must be “wildlife compatible” if they are to be permitted on Refuge lands. During his presentation, the following questions were raised:

- *How will USFWS undertake a Compatibility Determination for recreation activities on the restored salt ponds?*

Response: In compliance with USFWS requirements, separate determination document will be developed for each proposed activity (e.g.; hiking, bike riding, wildlife photograph, etc.) within the restored salt ponds area. The proposed activities' compatibility determination documents will receive public review at the same time the rest of the restoration plan is available for public comment.

- *Will off leash dogs be allowed in the Refuge?*

Response: No. The Refuge attempted to allow dogs to be off leash at Bair Island but owners were not able to control the dogs. There was unacceptable impact on the Refuge's wildlife and other visitors. On leash dog access may be considered for some portions of the Refuge but it would be subject to the compatibility determination.

Following the USFWS presentation, John Krause (Department of Fish & Game, “DFG”) provided an overview of the regulatory factors guiding the restoration planning and management of DFG’s lands (presentation is available from the project website). DFG will manage the Baumberg Salt Ponds also known as the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve (Eden Landing). Key points from Krause’s presentation included:

- The state’s portion of the South Bay Salt Ponds has been designated an “Ecological Reserve” by the Fish and Game Commission. Ecological Reserves are areas that provide critical habitat for threatened or endangered species or species of special concern. Planning and management of Ecological Reserves is guided by the purpose for which the lands were acquired as per the relevant sections of the Code.
- Purpose of Acquisition: To protect and provide for the restoration and enhancement of wetland habitat for the benefit of threatened and endangered species and wetland associated wildlife and to provide public access opportunities compatible with fish and wildlife management and protection.

- Use of Department Lands: Department lands may be made available to the public for fishing, hunting, or other forms of compatible wildlife dependent recreational use... whenever such uses will not unduly interfere with the primary purpose for which lands were acquired.
- There are a number of Fish and Game Codes that provide direction as to what can and what cannot be allowed at Eden Landing. Codes include, but are not limited to: California Fish and Game Code (Section 1580 et. Sec.); California Code of Regulations, Title 14 (Public Resources) Section 630; and the policies of the Fish and Game Commission and the Department.
- The Stakeholder Forum will provide recommendations for public access opportunities based on input from the working groups and the public to the Project Management Team. The decision-makers will consider those recommendations as part of the overall restoration plan.
- The more recently purchased lands within the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve, will provide the public with wildlife-oriented public access opportunities.

4. Status of Data Acquisition

Prior to continuing with the agenda, Donna Plunkett (EDAW) oriented the group to the draft existing recreation features map prepared for this meeting. She pointed out the three pond complexes and noted those that are owned and managed by USFWS and DFG. She then distributed a handout entitled “Work Plan Outline/Data Collection Summary” and stated that this summary will be updated monthly. She explained that research and data collection efforts for public access and recreation will result in an Opportunities and Constraints Report, which will include a bibliography of published and unpublished literature, data, and a Geographic Information System (“GIS”) map illustrating the three project areas or pond complexes and the surrounding region. Plunkett has begun meeting with various groups and individuals to develop a comprehensive understanding of:

1. Existing management and ownership of recreation lands in the region and the associated policies and regulations;
2. What current recreational activities and facilities exist and where as well as visitor use and demand data;
3. What the existing research on wildlife and recreation performed to date can inform the planning process about new recreation and public access; and
4. What is the extent of cultural resources within the planning area?

This information will be displayed in the GIS map that will clearly illustrate existing recreation and public access features as well as a summary of opportunities and constraints.

5. Public Access & Recreation Mapping Exercise

To assist the Project Team develop the Opportunities and Constraints Report, Plunkett asked for assistance in identifying public access features on a large map of the project area. She also stated that participants could mark areas that they are familiar with and that may be potential recreation

or access points in the future. She stated that to begin the exercise, some brief presentations were planned and these were made from organizations with current South San Francisco Bay access and recreation projects and oversight. This would assist group members from Additionally she noted that any group or individual can provide information. These presentations are summarized below:

- Janet McBride (San Francisco Bay Trail) provided a brief overview of the 500-mile regional Bay Trail. The concept of a continuous path around San Francisco & San Pablo bays was proposed (in 1987) and subsequently endorsed (in 1989) by the State Legislature. About half (approx. 250 miles) of the ultimate Bay Trail is now developed and the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration could offer opportunities to address long-standing gaps in the trail network. McBride circulated maps and a corresponding memo aimed at highlighting desired public access/ trail opportunity areas and nearby connection points. A potential conceptual framework for different trail types was also discussed which included: multi-use, year-round compacted surface trail that could form part of the continuous Bay Trail "spine"; spur trails from the spine to overlooks, interpretive areas, etc.; neighborhood connector trails that would link to the spine and provide non-vehicular access to the refuge; and limited access trails (could be seasonal or subject to other restrictions) in particularly sensitive habitat areas.
- Terry Noonan (East Bay Regional Park District, "EBRPD") displayed the EBRPD's map of lands and identified the areas in close proximity to the project area on the east side, namely - Coyote Hills, Ardenwood Park, and Hayward Regional Shoreline. EBRPD strives to strike a balance between recreation and habitat protection in managing its lands, which include approximately 1000 miles of trails. The EBRPD Master Plan provides opportunities to expand and develop additional linkages to existing parks, however, all new planning and land acquisition requires funding. Past transportation projects have provided mitigation funding.
- Caitlin Sweeney (San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, "BCDC") described that the California Legislature created BCDC in 1965 in response to broad public concern over the future of San Francisco Bay. The Commission regulates all filling and dredging in San Francisco Bay, including salt ponds, and regulates new development within the first 100 feet inland from the Bay to ensure that maximum feasible public access to the Bay is provided.

She went on to explain that the salt pond restoration project will require approval from the Commission and will need to be consistent with the Commission's regulations and the policies in the San Francisco Bay Plan. The Commission's laws and policies require both the protection of the Bay's natural resources and the provision of public access to and along the Bay. The Bay Plan policies on public access have recently been revised to, while encouraging access, require that public access be sited, designed, and managed to prevent significant adverse effects on wildlife.

During and following the presentations, meeting attendees raised a number of questions and also indicated on the large project map areas of existing and desired public access. The following specific questions were asked.

- *What is the extent of horse riding on EBRPD lands and are staging areas provided?*
Response: Hayward Shores are closed to horse riding, but all other Park District areas are open to horses. Park District provides staging areas wherever they can.
- *Have you seen deer at Coyote Hills?*
Response: Not sure, but they could move along the levees.
- *Have the levees been breached yet at any of the ponds?*
Response: No, breaches have not been undertaken yet. We need to look at all opportunities for additional trail access.
- *How is the “shoreline” level determined?*
Response: BCDC defines their shoreline band jurisdiction as 100 feet landward of mean high tide, or in marshlands from five feet above mean sea level.
- *Do you include visual access as a component of public access?*
Response: Yes, visual access is considered as a component of public access.
- *Does BCDC have a perimeter map that shows jurisdiction?*
Response: BCDC has not mapped their jurisdiction, rather it is described in text in the McAteer-Petris Act.
- *Have the various rail corridor managers (Amtrak, etc.) been involved in the restoration planning process?*
Response: Yes, all landowners are being engaged in the planning process.
- Sea kayakers would like to see new staging areas that allow cars to be left for an extended period of time and would also like to see restrooms at staging areas. Presently, there are only three (3) access points in the South Bay.
- *Hunters would like to see more access points along the Bay. Need to identify trail connections to other areas and recognize that a large portion of the Bay dries up twice a day when the tide recedes.*
- *Wildlife Steward, a Refuge support group, has been helping develop the docent program and is currently leading tours in Bayfront Park near West Bay Ponds.*
- *The Math Science Nucleus has been working to integrate more science in public schools and is leading freshwater restoration efforts. The program is integrated into Fremont and Newark school systems and is working with Alameda County on sites in the South Bay. They are currently creating animation and storylines to help with education.*

- *Dennis Newman (South Bay Lands Trail Project) would like to see additional bike trails in the restoration project area. Specifically, he is looking for options for expanding Bay Trail along the west side of Dumbarton Bridge and south along levees. Commuters would appreciate approach to bridge from Palo Alto and points south. Newman identified desired routes in green on large project map. Stevens Creek Trail could be extended along road. Excellent opportunities for expanding trails along levees.*
- *Some proposed trails, if constructed, would create conflicts with hunting that extends from mid-October to end of January. Cyclists agreed and stated that levees are too muddy to travel during this period of time of year.*
- *What areas are open for hunting?*
Response: Proposal before USFWS now is to open hunting on ponds in south bay, but not ponds next to Mountain View Shoreline (A1 and A2W). Ponds would be open 3 days per week. Proposed ponds for hunting are B1, A2E, B2, A3W, A3N, A5, A7, and A8.
- *What about compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?*
Response: Goal is to provide access on as much of the trail system as possible, but not all trails will be able to be made accessible. USFWS just completed major accessibility upgrades within the Refuge.
- *The Midpeninsula Open Space District manages approximately 40,000 acres and the Ravenswood and Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Study Area are currently under restoration. The project includes a trail along inboard levee and two observation platforms on either end of site. Goal is to restore area and to provide larger flood plain for Stevens Creek. Stevens Creek trail is along levee and provides access to southern portion of Refuge. Ponds SF2 has a trail that ends at Hetch-Hetchy property.*
- *How will each work group's issues/concerns be raised to the overall planning process?*
Response: By reporting back to the PM Team and the Stakeholder Forum with meeting summaries and joint work group meetings at key times during the restoration program. Single plans for each pond complex will not be prepared but rather an integrated plan will be developed that incorporates all interest.
- *City of Mountain View has restored one marsh and is pursuing other restoration sites. Supports banning of hunting on ponds A1 and A2W.*
- *Shouldn't there be more public access points, especially at points north of Dumbarton Bridge? Frank Delfino identified a few sites on the map that would be good viewing spots and suggested that abandoned landfills work well as they provide elevation from which to look over the ponds.*
- *Does City of Mountain View have trails on levees around ponds A3W and access point at end of parking lot at water pollution control plant?*

Response: There are a few parking spaces, which are frequently used by hikers, joggers and birdwatchers. Baylands Park is owned by County, but managed by the City of Mountain View. Sometimes hunters are passing through area, which is legal, but causes potential conflict. Concrete recycling area near the parking area provides good viewing area.

- *How will proposed and yet to be developed restoration plans going to be integrated into the salt pond restoration plan?*

Response: All proposed plans will be made publicly available for review and comment and, thus, open to revision. Process needs to hear/learn about all other plans that are underway.

- *Waterfowl hunting is a very old tradition in the San Francisco Bay. Historic town of Drawbridge was a hunting area and hunting needs to be preserved to allow future generations the opportunity to experience this tradition.*

- *How will levees be maintained? How often will these levees have to be maintained and serviced?*

Response: Some levees will have to be maintained every 3-5 years and others will require less frequent management. USFWS and DFG will pay Cargill to use their equipment (dredge called the Mallard) for levee maintenance until they obtain equipment and staff to do it themselves.

- *How will the final project be funded? Where will money come from?*

Response: A Long Term Implementation Work Group has been meeting to discuss funding and will focus efforts on identifying possible funding options for the project. Private foundations are funding the overall planning process at this time, but new funds will have to be identified to actually construct anything.

- *Vector control must be considered and evaluated for any proposed restoration activities.*

6. Detailed Project Objectives

Referring to a handout (available from the project website), David Blau (EDAW) reviewed the one public access & recreation-related project objective that the Stakeholder Forum has adopted. For each of the objectives, the Project Team has developed preliminary detailed objectives and preliminary evaluation criteria. The evaluation criteria may be evaluated at three different scales (Technical teams working at 3 scales: 1) landscape “whole bay”, 2) three pond complexes (West Bay, Eden Landing/Baumberg, and Alviso), and 3) individual ponds. Some of the criteria are identified as exclusion criterion “*” (i.e. must be met by alternative to carry forward and receive further consideration). The specific detailed objectives and their respective evaluation criteria are presented below.

Objective 3. Provide public access and recreational opportunities compatible with wildlife and habitat goals	
Detailed Objectives	Evaluation Criteria
Promote public use program consistent with DFG and USFWS missions	Number of compatible uses to relevant agency codes and criteria
Provide recreation that promotes wildlife-oriented public use	Number of opportunities for USFWS "priority uses"
Provide recreation for a variety of users	Number of user types accommodated
Create opportunities for linking the project areas to existing public open spaces and adjacent communities	Number of links provided
Enhance opportunity for visual experience	Number of viewing areas/viewpoints/scenic overlooks

Blau explained that the pond complexes are sediment deficient and, thus, the Project Team needs guidance from resource agencies regarding what the habitat priorities are for the overall landscape scale.

Challenge is to translate the objectives into more detailed objectives that provide criteria for evaluating the alternatives. Restoration plans will be evaluated against these criteria. Consultants have suggested that cost objective be added.

Project is so complex that logical process is necessary to document the decision-making process. A proposed alternatives planning framework will be presented and publicly discussed at the April 15 Stakeholder Forum meeting.

Following the presentation, a number of questions and suggestions for clarifying the detailed project objectives and evaluation criteria were raised, including:

- *Each objective should be evaluated as to whether or not it can be implemented in a reasonable cost.*
Response: The PM Team is considering another objective for cost.
- *Consider collecting information regarding what is optimal for each recreation user type. Users assign different values to various trips.*
- *The evaluation criteria seem very quantitative. What about the qualitative experience?*
Response: The criteria area geared towards rewarding the proposal that produces the greatest number of results. The Project Team seeks ideas as to how to expand these objectives and welcome all advice as to how to improve the evaluation process.
- *How are historical uses being analyzed? Will they be incorporated into potential future uses?*

Response: Information on cultural resources is being collected as part of the public access & recreation-planning task and will be incorporated into all potential restoration scenarios.

7. Next Steps

**Next Meeting of the Public Access/Recreation Work Group:
April 15, 1:00 – 3:30 pm, NASA Ames Research Center, Moffett Field**

Draft Agenda:

- 1. In-depth dialogue and feedback to PM Team and PWA Team on the emerging Alternative Planning Framework, specifically on evaluation criteria.**
- 2. Arrange tour dates for interested participants.**

Attachment 1: April 1, 2004 Meeting Attendance

First Name	Last Name	Company	Email
John	Armstrong	Palo Alto Sportsmen Club	jackarmy46@sbcglobal.net
Paula	Bettencourt	City of Mountain View, Mountain View Shoreline Park	paula.bettencourt@ci.mtnview.ca.us
Joyce	Blueford	Math Science Nucleus	blueford@msnucleus.org
Craig	Breon	Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society	craig@scvas.org
Joan	Cardellino	Coastal Conservancy	jcard@scc.ca.gov
John	Ciccarelli	Transight LLC / Bicycle Solutions	johnc@bicyclesolutions.com
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Dida	Cudrnak	U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance	OEPCSFN@aol.com
Frank and Janice	Delfino	Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge	
Tim	Frederick	San Francisco Boardsailing Association	timf@alum.mit.edu
John	Fritz		
Cecily	Harris	City of San Mateo, Park Planning & Development Division	Cecily999@aol.com
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