



June 23, 2004

To: South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project Stakeholder Forum

From: Greg Bourne, Center for Collaborative Policy

Re: Outcomes from the May 25, 2004 Public Access and Recreation Work Group

1. *Welcome and Overview of the Alternatives Development Framework.*

Steve Ritchie, Executive Project Manager of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project, welcomed participants. He outlined the meeting agenda, reviewed the project schedule to date, and presented an overview of the Draft Alternative Development Framework.

The framework has six objectives:

1. Create, restore, or enhance habitats of sufficient size, function, and appropriate structure to:
 - 1) Promote restoration of native special-status plants and animals that depend on South San Francisco Bay habitat for all or part of their life cycles.
 - 2) Maintain current migratory bird species that utilize existing salt ponds and associated structures such as levees.
 - 3) Support increased abundance and diversity of native species in various South San Francisco Bay aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem components, including plants, invertebrates, fish, mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians.
2. Maintain or improve existing levels of flood protection in the South Bay area.
3. Provide public access and recreational opportunities compatible with wildlife and habitat goals.
4. Protect or improve existing levels of water and sediment quality in the South Bay, and take into account ecological risks caused by restoration.
5. Implement design and management measures to maintain or improve current levels of vector management, control predation on special status species, and manage the spread of non-native invasive species.
6. Protect the services provided by existing infrastructure (e.g., power lines, railroads).

In addition, two additional evaluation factors have been added to ensure cost effectiveness and minimization of environmental impacts.

Ritchie stated that the objective of today's meeting is to receive feedback on the opportunities presented by the objectives, conflicts between objectives, and ideas on how to resolve conflicts.

He noted that the public draft would be posted and distributed on June 1, 2004. As such, it was unlikely that many of the comments sought from the Forum members and the Work Group members would be incorporated into the June 1 public draft.

2. *Question and answer session.*

Question: How will the conclusions from the Science Panel be incorporated into objectives?

Answer: Science will be the basis of the adaptive management strategy.

Question: What is the date of the next Local Government Forum meeting?

Answer: To be determined.

After Steve Ritchie's overview, meeting participants broke into their respective Work Groups for about ninety minutes to discuss the detailed objectives and overall evaluation approach.

After a short break, Work Group members went "on tour" to the other two Work Groups to consider the other detailed objectives and provide comments on potential synergies or conflicts across the elements of the overall restoration plan, and to make suggestions for how to resolve those potential conflicts. In addition to providing oral feedback, some meeting participants filled out worksheets that outlined a series of questions pertaining to the overall project objectives and their compatibility with one another

3. Public Access and Recreation Work Group meeting

Greg Bourne (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 lists meeting participants). The meeting objectives were:

- Preview the Draft Alternatives Development Framework (addressed in the plenary session prior to individual Work Group meetings)
- Discuss and provide feedback on revised detailed South Bay Salt Pond Restoration project objectives, evaluation criteria and overall evaluation process
- Discuss and provide early input on project opportunities and constraints

a. Feedback on Revised Project Objectives, Evaluation Criteria and Overall Evaluation Process

Donna Plunkett from EDAW, part of the PWA team, distributed a copy of the detailed objectives, indicating notes and underlined text show changes made based on input from the previous work group meeting (April 15, 2004). It was noted that the current draft objectives and evaluation criteria will be used in measuring the restoration alternatives when they are developed later. Likewise, they should be considered as a "work in progress." As needed, the detailed objectives and evaluation criteria can be refined to reflect the evolving understanding of the salt ponds and their response to various restoration alternatives and activities.

Work Group participants reviewed the revised objectives and evaluation criteria and proposed the following modifications:

Objective 3a: It was suggested that the evaluation criteria be revised to include "other agencies adopted plans and policies," and it was noted that based on the meeting on April 15, 2004, this included BCDC plans and policies. It was agreed the wording would be revised to make this more explicit. It was suggested this criterion also reference other agencies with jurisdiction and responsibilities, as well as landowners whose land could be impacted by or affect restoration initiatives.

Objective 3b: This will stay the same although there was a question about the difference between 3a and 3b. It was noted that the former focuses more on the managing agency missions while 3b covers the notion of simply providing public access and use.

Objective 3c: After some discussion about the need for and potential approaches to defining “active and passive uses” (e.g., such as using the BCDC definition of trail use being passive and other activities being active), participants decided to delete this phrase from the third evaluation criterion.

Objective 3d: A member of the group suggested adding “trails” after “open spaces” in the description of the detailed objective and the group concurred.

Objective 3e: Participants discussed what was meant by “popular” under the second evaluation criteria. It was noted that the intent was to try and address the “quality” of the visitor experience as discussed in previous meetings. The group decided it would be best to delete “popular” and leave the note that discusses the importance of providing quality experiences in the descriptive text.

b. Early Input on Project Opportunities and Constraints

Donna Plunkett then led Work Group participants in a mapping exercise to identify public access and recreation opportunities and constraints. Using maps of the existing recreation and access facilities within the project area, participants divided into two groups to identify specific locations of potential opportunities and constraints. It was noted the results of the mapping exercise will assist the consultant team in developing alternatives for restoration that adequately address recreation and public access.

The groups met for approximately 30 minutes using “cutouts” of graphic symbols that represented various recreation and access ideas. Afterwards, a representative from each group summarized the highlights of their mapping efforts, identifying historic features, water trails, points to connect with existing open space and trails, interpretive opportunities, existing and proposed vistas and other recommendations. Donna indicated this work will be incorporated into the Opportunities and Constraints Report that will be prepared by the consultant.

c. Comments from Other Work Groups

After a short break, members of the two other Work Groups for Habitat Restoration and for Flood Management provided their thoughts and comments on the detailed objectives for public access and recreation. They were asked to respond to the following questions in providing their comments, either verbally, or on the worksheets provided to them.

1. As you look at these detailed objectives for habitat restoration/public access and recreation/flood management, where do you see specific opportunities for mutual benefit?

2. Which detailed objectives do you think may constrain one another and why?

3. How do you think these potential conflicts could be resolved in the restoration planning?

4. Are there any other thoughts regarding alternatives development that you want to share with the Project Management Team? If so, what are they? Comments offered during these review sessions included:

Comments from the Flood Management Work Group members:

General Comments

- 1) Objective 3a – 3d: Uses outside the project area should be consistent with existing land uses (e.g., wastewater treatment plant – chlorination facilities)

- 2) Public liability issues should be addressed for public access; perhaps pursue agency partnerships for land management (e.g., parks management of flood district lands)
- 3) Need to consider closures tied to land management practices (e.g., mosquito treatment)

As you look at these detailed objectives for habitat restoration/public access and recreation/flood management, where do you see specific opportunities for mutual benefit?

- 1) Public access on land owned by the Alameda County Flood Control District has typically been provided via agreement with another public agency (the EBRPD). The park district provides the “public liability” protection for the public use of the land. We look for more opportunities to do this.
- 2) Decrease water inundation threats (in flood management) objectives could protect access points, trails, open spaces to improve wildlife viewing.
- 3) Appropriate levee construction:
 - Meets REMA criteria for enhanced flood control and re-zoning justification
 - Complies with USACE requirements.
 - Allows for enhanced recreational access.
 - Allows for access to existing infrastructure
 - New/Improved levees could provide better access.

Which detailed objectives do you think may constrain one another and why?

- 1) Public liability issues may be a constraint if E&W and F&G are limited by financial conditions to not provide liability coverage.
- 2) Balancing use of access points for existing infrastructure servicing (PG&E), protecting wildlife nesting, and providing public access.
- 3) Infrastructure security provisions must be maintained – overzealous establishment of public access may create conflicts in land use.
- 4) PG&E maintenance boardwalks should not be considered for public use.
- 5) Levees used access to towers should be compatible for vehicles and hikers. Post signs on levees warning of vehicle use by authorized agencies.
- 6) 3a / 3d may conflict with infrastructure objectives.

How do you think these potential conflicts could be resolved in the restoration planning?

- 1) Overall coordination & planning could help.
- 2) Scheduling based on seasonal needs for each use.
- 3) Add compatibility with land uses and infrastructure in evaluation criteria (e.g., San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant land use policy and operational needs)

Are there any other thoughts regarding alternatives development that you want to share with the Project Management Team? If so, what are they?

- 1) Have money to do the maintenance, surveillance and needed mosquito control work; also maintain upkeep of the dikes for access.
- 2) I see the benefit with habitat and flood management working well together, with some public access in some areas.
- 3) Public access will impact all areas of management

- 4) Potential problems I see is too much public access in too many areas.
- 5) Long-term maintenance, surveillance program, with the money to do the upkeep.
- 6) Some of these areas may not be safe as “storm” or high tide (terms? times?)
- 7) Share documents well ahead of meetings so that thoughtful comments can be made

Comments from Habitat Restoration Work group members:

General Comments

1. Birding could be an economic boon for the South Bay; should perhaps consider working with existing/new tourism organizations and facilities to promote
2. Criteria - foster stewardship, perhaps through interpretive facilities; create opportunities for recreationists
3. Objective 3b - add stewardship and environmental education opportunities
4. How would different alternatives be distinguished by stewardship? (e.g., Save the Bay – kids and canoes programs); alternative which link to this should rank higher
5. Have “stewards” participate in restoration activities (e.g., seek volunteers for restoration activities & monitoring)
6. Issues of pet access – assure consistency with existing regulations
7. Nuisance species – Habitat Objective #5 & 1A - potential conflict with public access
8. Planning process needs to incorporate diversity – make cross-cultural approaches more explicit; potential conflict – minorities value on fishing – not compatible with some South Bay objectives
9. When ranking – how high should stewardship be valued?
10. Habitat levees within recreation and public access areas - differentiate between two types (e.g., surface, maintenance, etc.)

As you look at these detailed objectives for habitat restoration/public access and recreation/flood management, where do you see specific opportunities for mutual benefit?

- 1) I would advise designing recreation levees completely separate from habitat levees and refuge species monitoring levees fences will be cut through if not separate system.
- 2) Public access must take a second place to habitat protection.
- 3) Great habitat is the best public access amenity. Flood control levees and maintenance access can provide great trails and water access.
- 4) Coordination of habitat restoration and flood management.
- 5) Linking project areas could enhance habitat continuity.
- 6) Levees can provide both habitat but also access by predators.
- 7) Promotion of interest and support for restoration work, which could lead to funding for habitat restoration.

- 8) Flood management of land use planning outside project area could have positive benefits for project, but need commitment to resolving apparent conflicts.
- 9) Stewardship – the users educate other users and support maintenance.
- 10) Public access could encourage stewardship in public visiting the site, linking access to existing trails – places that already have high traffic.
- 11) Public access can bring more support for the restoration project – increased public understanding of wildlife and need for habitat protection.
- 12) Levees that allow for hiking, biking and those that could be habitat.

Which detailed objectives do you think may constrain one another and why?

- 1) Sensitive species must receive buffer zone from human and predator access – water buffers are best!!
- 2) Species that can't be relocated & public desire to access at that point, public access and use of bikes, walking of dogs, etc., in sensitive areas adjacent to access points.
- 3) Levees and trail do provide predator access
- 4) All objectives 1B conflict with each other. How do you “maintain” existing habitat while changing the relative proportion of habitats.
- 5) Objective 3 conflicts with Objective 5 & 1A.
- 6) Objective 2 conflicts with 1A-2, 1A-5, 5, 3
- 7) Objective 1C-4 may conflict with 1C-1 & 1B
- 8) Public access always needs to be balanced with the impact that the public could have on habitat values and functions
- 9) Public access / recreation & habitat restoration because people's presence may disturb wildlife
- 10) Public access and breeding areas
- 11) Too much or inappropriate use of levees for human access could jeopardize habitat restoration, such as disturbances, predator species and maintenance issues
- 12) Flood control objectives seem to have great potential to constrain habitat restoration
- 13) I think habitat vs. public access the objectives motivate a healthy debate and tradeoffs
- 14) Public access vs. habitat
- 15) High traffic and sensitive species, trails are conduits for predators
- 16) People wanting to intrude into sensitive areas – dogs, etc.
- 17) Who builds and maintains which levees, funding sources and operational staff

How do you think these potential conflicts could be resolved in the restoration planning?

- 1) I feel viewing, passive recreation should be separate design criteria from mountain bike exercise types.
- 2) Clear and unwavering identification of certain areas as being off limits.
- 3) Pet management programs. Predator degradation programs – design levees to focus predators in a few areas
- 4) Need brainstorm session for this
- 5) Public access points need to be minimized and consolidated away from sensitive habitat areas.
- 6) They can be minimized but not eliminated. Stakeholder meeting and input will accomplish this
- 7) By timing of public access and information as to habitat uses
- 8) Allocation of uses dependent on habitat needs
- 9) Thoughtful planning and balance between objectives with weight given to science rather than politics
- 10) Careful analysis of existing and potential conditions and resolution of agency mandates that may conflict

- 11) Respectful dialogue, adaptive management
- 12) Environmental education
- 13) Channel traffic away from endangered species habitat, don't create habitat for endangered species near access points
- 14) By involving as much public input as possible
- 15) By clever, collaborative planning

Are there any other thoughts regarding alternatives development that you want to share with the Project Management Team? If so, what are they?

- 1) There might be one particular area, on one of the duck ponds, for recreation hunters to train dogs. Hunting dogs are usually under tight voice or signal control and should not be an undue stress to wildlife, but a 'Darwinian' reality check.
- 2) Also, please design a "safe" boating use/access interface for canoes/kayaks/windsurfers so young people and teenagers could get survival skills and learn wind and weather dynamics.
- 3) Public access will require management and monitoring. The agencies involved will have to supply more personnel. Where will the funds come from to ad the needed managers, biologists? Stewardship plans are great as discussed in the last meeting, but stewardship is usually on a volunteer basis, and does anyone realize how difficult it is to keep a volunteer group active?
- 4) I think you're doing a great job!
- 5) I didn't realize access to open bay was a big criteria for recreation – maintain same access points that lead directly to the bay

Attachment 1

May 25 Public Access & Recreation Work Group meeting attendance

Name	Organization
David Blau	EDAW, Inc./PWA team
Craig Breon	Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society
Joan Cardellino	Coastal Conservancy
John Ciccarelli	Transight LLC / Bicycle Solutions
Frank and Janice Delfino	Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge
Steve Fiala	East Bay Regional Park District
Dave Fundakowski	
Lorrie Gervin	City of Sunnyvale, POTW
Meredith Hall	UC Berkeley
John Krause	DFG
Darcy Kremin	Garcia and Associates
Joseph LaClair	BCDC
David Lipsetz	ABAG, San Francisco Bay Trail
Clyde Morris	FWS -Don Edwards SF Bay National Wildlife Refuge
Sally Personett	City of Sunnyvale, POTW
Antoinette Romeo	Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Department
Ana Ruiz	Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
John Schmidt	Resources Legacy Fund
Denise Stephens	Mayne Elementary School
Mark Taylor	East Bay Regional Park District
Steve Willoughby	PG&E
Kevin Woodhouse	City of Mountain View