



# South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project

*Restoring the Wild Heart of the South Bay*

**To:** South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project Team

**From:** Center for Collaborative Policy

**Re:** Outcomes from the November 20, 2008 Stakeholder Forum Meeting

**Background:** The Stakeholder Forum (Forum) met on Friday, November 20, 2008 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Olive-Hyde Arts Center in Fremont. The Forum has been convened to provide ongoing input to the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project Management Team (PM Team) and its technical consultants on the development of the South Bay Salt Pond restoration, flood management, and public access plan.

**Meeting Attendance:** Attachment 1 lists meeting participants.

**Meeting Materials:** In advance of the meeting, Forum members were provided a meeting agenda and the 2008 meeting summary. At the meeting, Forum members received handouts outlining Phase 1 funds and Project 2008 activities and the San Jose presentation, and a printout of meeting slides. The PowerPoint presentation slides and handouts will be available on the SBSP Project website ([www.southbayrestoration.org](http://www.southbayrestoration.org)).

## **Substantive Meeting Outcomes:**

### ***1. Welcome, Self-Introductions, and Agenda Review***

Steve Ritchie, Executive Project Manager, welcomed Forum members and the audience, led introductions and reviewed the agenda. The meeting agenda included:

- 2008 progress report
- Status report on the Project Science Program
- Shoreline Study update
- Presentation on Project cultural resources and dialogue on interpretation themes
- Presentation on San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plan master plan
- What's ahead in 2009
- Unveiling of new Cargill DVD on the Project

### ***2. Executive Director's 2008 Progress Report***

Steve Ritchie outlined key activities and milestones for 2008, including Working Group meetings, the Science Program, public outreach, funding and permitting. Handouts of 2008 activities and funding were referenced. In regards to the Science Program, project managers hope in January to have a new full-time lead scientist from USGS.

**Project Logo** – Ritchie introduced the Project's recently selected new logo. One Stakeholder Forum member said his group is very disappointed that the logo features just people and plants, and no critters. He said he hopes it doesn't reflect the mindset of the organization, and asked if there is time to put a little bird in the picture. Ritchie said project managers will explore that question.

**Pamphlet & Poster** – A pamphlet that includes a map and Phase 1 changes will be available after the Fish and Wildlife Service has signed the Record of Decision, which is hoped to occur in mid-December. Ritchie also presented a new Salt Ponds poster created by Cris Benton, a UC Berkeley professor of architecture and practitioner of kite photography. Benton will be giving a demonstration of kite photography at Alviso on February 28 – details are on the Project website.

**Permits** – The Project has obtained permits from the Regional Water Quality Control Board and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, and has the Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinion in hand. It is hoped that the Biological Opinion from the National Marine Fisheries Service will be obtained in two weeks. Once that is accomplished, it would take another two weeks to get a permit from the Army Corps, and then the Record of Decision would be issued. At that point, Phase 1 restoration and public access construction can proceed in force. Mendel Stewart of the Fish and Wildlife Service said his department's compatibility determination for public access projects has been completed and can be signed after the Record of Decision is issued.

**Land Transfers** – In 2008, all Ravenswood ponds except A22-23 were transferred from Cargill to the Fish and Wildlife Service. Stewart said Cargill was gracious in keeping and accruing the cost of maintaining them until FWS was ready to accept them.

**Management** – Eric Mruz of FWS reported on 2008 Project management activity:

- R1, R2 & R3 were recently flooded to remove vegetation
- On October 8, the northern portion of the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve was restored to tidal action
- Also at Eden Landing, a 50-slot parking lot and a Bay Trail connection between the San Mateo Bridge and Eden Shores neighborhood is under construction and should soon be open
- A portion of the outer area of Bair Island has been breached and dredge material will be used to fill the subsided inner island. A December 8 Bair Island Task Force event will commemorate the beneficial reuse of dredge material

Stewart was asked if the event will recognize the efforts of Florence and Ralph LaRiviere. Stewart said the talking points mention Ralph LaRiviere and he will confer with CCCR.

Ritchie noted that CCCR member Janice Delfino has passed away and a memorial would be held Saturday November 22 at the Refuge.

### ***3. SBSP Project Science Program Status Report***

Cheryl Strong, wildlife biologist at the Refuge, discussed 2008 research highlights and activities planned for 2009.

### **2008 Research:**

- 83 snowy plover chicks were banded, the first year since the early 90s.
- An experimental drawdown of water at Pond A12 worked well, providing habitat for 300 avocets, 40 Forster's terns, and stilts and plovers. This was part of the effort to increase pond habitat, as A8 will become tidal. In response to a question, Strong said scientists believe that the change allowed bird populations to increase.
- The Point Reyes Bird Observatory has synthesized information on California gulls and provided management recommendations, which will soon be posted on the website. Stakeholders said that a lot of gulls are seen at New Chicago Marsh, and the Mowery colony is increasing. Strong said that colony uses landfills less than others, and scientists don't know at this point what the food source there is.
- A study that will help inform Project buffer zone recommendations found that ducks are disturbed up to 120 meters from a levee, and that responses vary by species.
- Research found that mercury is higher in Pond A8 than in Alviso Slough, suggesting that opening ponds to tidal action should improve the mercury situation.
- One project is developing a hydrodynamic model to predict effects of climate change and management change.
- Other research has been looking at sediment dynamics and plant recruitment at the Island Ponds, bat foraging behavior, growing conditions for wetland/upland native plants, and water quality and circulation conditions in the Alviso ponds.

### **2008 South Bay Science Symposium:**

- The September 25 event drew 220 people for presentations on climate change and restoration, wildlife and public access, invasive species, hydrology, and other topics. All oral presentations and most posters are available on the Project website.

### **2009 Science Activities:**

- The Project issued a request for proposals for research projects to advance scientific understanding in relation to key uncertainties. Proposals were due in September, and funding decisions will be made by the end of February.
- In addition, the Project is funding certain directed studies in areas where there are local experts or time urgency. Studies include:
  - Waterfowl response to trail use at the new Moffett Bay Trail
  - Enhancement of snowy plover nesting habitat, mostly at Eden Landing – this will include a shell spreading party on December 7
  - The third year of the San Francisco Bay shorebird census
  - Analysis and mapping of a large data set of Salt Pond bird use
  - A continuing study of sedimentation, vegetation growth and hydrodynamics at the Island Ponds

**Questions/Comments:**

One questioner asked if A8 will be used for snowy plover habitat. Strong said no, that that pond is being looked at for research on mercury issues. This is why managers are looking at other sites such as A12 for snowy plovers.

Strong was asked if efforts will be made to use research to estimate flyway populations. Strong said that is hoped, that research will look at how the San Francisco Bay estuary fits into the Pacific Flyway.

One questioner asked if public access studies assume that dogs and bikes are present on trails. Strong said dogs would not be allowed on the Salt Ponds trails. Bikes would be allowed, but haven't been part of the studies so far.

***4. Shoreline Study Update***

Beth Dyer of the Santa Clara Valley Water District discussed the Shoreline Study process, which covers an area including Santa Clara County and a small part of Alameda County.

The first milestone in the upcoming Study schedule is completion of floodplain maps by March 2009. These maps are not FEMA flood insurance maps. Instead, they will be used to determine what the benefits of the project would be, including habitat development, recreation and flood protection. This would be followed by development of alternatives, a final feasibility report, and the Chief's Report from the Army Corps to the federal Office of Management and Budget in spring 2014. There have been delays because of insufficient funding and a need to collect more data than anticipated.

As for funding, the Study received less funding than requested, but has done better than in previous years. The Study received \$1.4 million, and an additional \$400,000 has been requested. Dyer and Ritchie thanked Stakeholder Forum and audience members for their efforts at getting funding for the Study, and added that additional help is welcome in securing federal funding. Dyer said she can provide contact information to those who would like to contact their congressional representatives.

Once the floodplain map is completed, there will be enough information for project managers to consider whether to use non-federal funding to try to move forward on a faster implementation schedule than federal funding would allow. Under this scenario, local funders would receive credit from the federal government for future project costs.

Project Facilitator Mary Selkirk said a meeting of the Alviso Santa Clara Working Group will be convened once the floodplain maps are done.

**Questions/Comments:**

One Stakeholder Forum member thanked Senators Feinstein and Boxer and local Members of Congress who have helped the Project.

In response to a question about how the Study will consider sea level rise, Dyer said scenarios will range from historical levels to the state recommendation of 50-55 inches.

Another questioner asked if project managers are able to coordinate in order to move forward, when would a levee be built? Managers said it would be unlikely before 2017.

##### ***5. The Project's Cultural Resources; Opportunities and Themes for Interpretation***

Facilitator Mary Selkirk said this segment of the meeting will allow participants to think about cultural resources at the Salt Ponds and share their ideas on themes for interpretation they would like to see.

**Ellen Johnck**, who represents the Bay Planning Coalition on the Stakeholder Forum, received a master's degree from Sonoma State University in cultural resources management in May and is now a registered archaeologist. She presented her research on the human aspect of the Salt Ponds landscape, the commercial production of salt through solar evaporation, which was a major growth factor in California along with mining, farming and water development. Eden Landing was the first site of small-scale production, and the turn of the century saw the consolidation of these activities and lands into the chemical industry.

**Jennifer Heroux** of the Fish and Wildlife Service, who will be developing the interpretation plan for the Salt Ponds, discussed the purposes and tools of interpretation. The overall sign plan theme will be:

Today's restoration projects are part of the South Bay's long history of change.

Subthemes include:

- Our changing relationship to the Bay
- The Bay's natural resources are unique and dynamic

Interpretation will be developed first at four sites:

- Moffett Trail
- SF2
- A16
- Bayfront Park

Heroux then asked participants to provide input on interpretation and sign themes by filling out worksheets or contacting her with ideas and questions at 408-262-5513 ext. 106 or [jennifer\\_heroux@fws.gov](mailto:jennifer_heroux@fws.gov). She encouraged participants to provide more in-depth stories if they felt they would add depth to the visitor experience. She also said she is searching for images and text – if organizations want to participate more in-depth, they could provide access to their files and libraries, or manpower or resources.

The group spent about 10 minutes brainstorming topics for the four sites. Ideas were:

## **Moffett Trail**

- Importance of Bay as estuary of international significance
- Why we need to restore:
  - Habitat
  - Climate change (carbon sequestration)
  - Destruction of the past/changing consciousness
- Meaning of Bay Trail for the public
- Uncovering the mystery of NASA Ames
- Ohlone tribal history – the only tribe that held land in fee simple title
- Significance of Hangar 1 as icon of Silicon Valley
- (NASA offered help from their staff, which includes an exhibits designer & cultural resources expert)

## **A16**

- Birds
- History of water treatment
- Subsidence: history of changing landscape, tie to human history
- Human history
  - South Bay provided food for Presidio from missions
  - Drawbridge
  - Transportation

## **SF2**

- Regional hub of infrastructure/coexisting with nature
- History of hunting/food/wetlands
  - Ducks
  - Rails

## **Bayfront Park**

- History & transformation of landfills, how wetlands were used as wastelands

## ***6. San Jose/Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant Master Plan***

Kirsten Struve and Matt Krupp of the City of San Jose presented information on the master plan, which is the first since 1968. The plant is adjacent to Pond A18, the largest pond in the Alviso complex. The Master Plan when complete will include a 30-year capital improvement program, a buffer lands plan and environmental documentation. It must address aging infrastructure, population growth, regulations and community values. The City is attempting to be responsive in developing the plan, and is conducting a proactive outreach and engagement process, including free tours that have involved 4000 people so far, the launching of a citizens advisory committee and community meetings. The plan is using a framework of sustainability and considering synergies with Silicon Valley, buffer use and nature. Some ideas that are under consideration would include developing a living museum, increasing the quantity and quality of recycled water, moving the Bay Trail closer to the Bay, using solar power or waste-to-energy to create biofuels. The next step of the master plan process after 2008 brainstorming is to consider feasibility and narrow alternatives. The final master plan would be adopted in 2011.

### ***7. What's Ahead in 2009***

Ritchie discussed the view ahead in 2009. The first round of Phase 1 projects will include:

#### **Ravenswood**

- Beginning construction of nesting islands at SF2, possibly in January
- Later, the development of viewing access at Bedwell Bayfront Park

#### **Alviso**

- Opening of the Bay Trail segment
- Later, the start of Pond A8 construction
- Possibly that year, development of viewing access

#### **Eden Landing**

- Restoration will not be visible until 2010 or later, but dirt-moving will be occurring at E13 and E14 to prepare for breaching levees

### ***8. Presenting New Cargill Salt DVD***

Jill Singleton of Cargill said the idea for the video arose from the Conservation International conference at the Refuge – afterwards, participants commented on how it should have been videotaped. The release of the DVD, which features clips from oral history interviews of participants in the launch of the Project, is tied to the fifth anniversary of acquisition. The idea was to produce something helpful to the Project.

**Attachment 1: November 20, 2008 Meeting Attendance**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization/Affiliation</b>
Maria Adas	Eden Shores Community
Kwablah Atjiogbe	Alameda County Flood Control
Ann Clarke	NASA
Bob Douglass	
Eric Dunlavey	City of San Jose
Christine Epres	Sen. Diane Feinstein's Office
Arthur Feinstein	CCCR
Jim Foran	Santa Clara Co. Open Space Authority
Lorrie Gervin	City of Sunnyvale
Carin High	CCCR
Beth Huning	San Francisco Bay Joint Venture
Ellen Johnck	Bay Planning Coalition
Ken Johnson	Eden Shores HOA
Ralph Johnson	Alameda County Flood Control
Christina Kerby	SFPUC
Yoriko Kishimoto	Mayor, City of Palo Alto
Matt Krupp	City of San Jose
Libby Lucas	California Native Plant Society & CCCR
Eileen McLaughlin	CCCR
Sean Michael	
Caitlin Robinson	San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory
Antoinette Romeo	Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation
Ana Ruiz	Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
John Rusmisel	Alameda County Mosquito Abatement
Rich Santos	Santa Clara Valley Water District
Howard Shellhammer	
Jill Singleton	Cargill
Maryly Snow	Bay Area Sea Kayakers
Kirsten Struve	City of San Jose
Katie Tague	Sen. Ellen Corbett's Office
Laura Thompson	Bay Trail Project
George Trevino	Alviso Water Task Force