NOTICE OF PREPARATION

To: **All Interested Parties**

Subject: **Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project, Eden Landing Ecological Reserve, Phase 2**

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Lead Agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), will prepare a joint Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for Phase 2 actions proposed at the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve (Reserve). Actions proposed as part of Eden Landing Phase 2 represent project level actions previously considered under the Programmatic EIS/R prepared for the South Bay Salt Pond (SBSP) Restoration project. We need to know the views of the public and agencies related to the scope and content of the environmental information. For agencies, these comments should be limited to the environmental information that is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project, including your use when considering a permit or other approval for the project.

A description of the project, location, and the previously identified potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials.

Due to the time limits mandated by State and Federal law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice. A public scoping meeting will be held on Thursday June, 30 2016, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., at the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters, Third Floor Auditorium, which is located at 1 Marshlands Road, Fremont, CA, 94555. Persons needing reasonable accommodations in order to attend and participate in the public scoping meetings should contact Ariel Ambruster, at (510) 815-7111, sufficiently in advance of the meeting to allow time to process the request. The details of the public scoping meeting will be posted on the SBSP Restoration Project's website (http://www.southbayrestoration.org/events/).

Please send your response, and the name of a contact person in your agency, to:
Scott Wilson
Regional Manager – Bay Delta Region
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
7329 Silverado Trail, Napa, CA 94558

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Title: Regional Manager (Bay Delta Region)

Telephone: (707) 944-5570

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The SBSP Restoration Project is located in the San Francisco Bay, in northern California. The Project is a multiagency, multiphase effort to restore and enhance a mix of wetland habitats while simultaneously providing flood protection and wildlife-oriented public access and recreation in the South Bay. The SBSP Project as a whole contains over 15,000 acres of former industrial salt production ponds in three complexes: the Ravenswood pond complex, the Alviso pond complex, and the Eden Landing pond complex. The Ravenswood and Alviso pond complexes are owned and managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). The Eden Landing Ecological Reserve (Reserve) is owned and managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).

The first phase of the project was discussed in a joint EIS/EIR (published in 2007) that was both a programmatic EIS/EIR and a project-level EIS/EIR specific to Phase 1 actions at all three pond complexes. Implementation of Phase 1 actions began in 2008 and was completed in 2016. The Phase 2 actions at the Alviso and Ravenswood pond complexes were considered in a separate project-level EIS/EIR, the draft of which was published in August of 2015 and is expected to be finalized in summer of 2016.

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) is specific to the southern half of the CDFW-owned Eden Landing Ecological Reserve. The Eden Landing Ecological Reserve is approximately 4,600 acres in total, but the northern half of the complex was addressed in Phase 1. The proposed Phase 2 actions at Eden Landing that will be presented and analyzed in this EIS/EIR are part of the long-term restoration plan that was laid out in the 2007 South Bay Salt Pond (SBSP) Restoration Project Programmatic EIS/EIR. Phase 2 project-level actions to be evaluated in this EIS/EIR are proposing to initiate project-level habitat restoration activities of approximately 2,300 acres of former salt ponds, while also providing recreation and public access opportunities, and maintaining or improving current levels of flood protection in the surrounding communities.

PROJECT LOCATION

Phase 2 at Eden Landing encompasses approximately 2,300 acres of former salt ponds in San Francisco Bay, south of the San Mateo Bridge in Alameda County (Figure 1). The Phase 2 project activities at Eden Landing would occur in 11 ponds in the southern half of the Reserve.

As shown in Figure 1, these 11 ponds, which for convenience in discussions are frequently grouped based on their proximity and similarity to each other, are as follows:

- The Bay Ponds – Ponds E1, E2, E4, and E7 are the four large ponds closest to San Francisco Bay;
- The Inland Ponds – Ponds E5, E6, and E6C are somewhat smaller ponds in the northeast portion of the complex; and
- The Southern Ponds – Also sometimes called the C-Ponds, the Ponds E1C, E2C, E4C, and E5C are in the southeastern portion of the complex. They are separated from the Inland Ponds and the Bay Ponds by an Alameda County-owned freshwater outflow channel and diked marsh areas known collectively as “the J-

Ponds". The Southern Ponds surround a natural hill known as Turk Island that is on a private inholding.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Alternatives and individual actions proposed as part of Phase 2 at Eden Landing are intended to restore and enhance a mix of wetland habitats while simultaneously providing flood protection and wildlife-oriented public access and recreation in the South Bay. Habitat restoration actions evaluated in the EIS/EIR may include the following:

- Breaching levees at one or more locations to allow tidal flows into the ponds
- Adding water control structures to allow some ponds to be retained as enhanced managed ponds for pond-dependent bird species.
- Increasing habitat complexity by adding deep-water channels, islands, and/or habitat transition zones
- Modifying pond bottom elevations or topography to redirect tidal flows
- Using dredged or upland fill material to speed marsh vegetation establishment

Recreation and public access actions may include the following:

- Maintain the existing trail that runs along the top of the large federal levee that forms the southern edge of the complex. This may involve constructing bridge(s) over any changes that are made to that levee.
- Complete the Bay Trail spine along the eastern edge of the pond complex.
- Adding a spur trail along the northern edge of Pond E6 from the Bay Trail spine to the site of the former Alvarado Salt Works.
- Convert the above spur trail into a loop by building a footbridge over Old Alameda Creek and a trail back to the Bay Trail spine.

Flood protection may include:

- Raising and improving existing levees or berms or making other improvements to maintain or increase coastal flood risk protection.

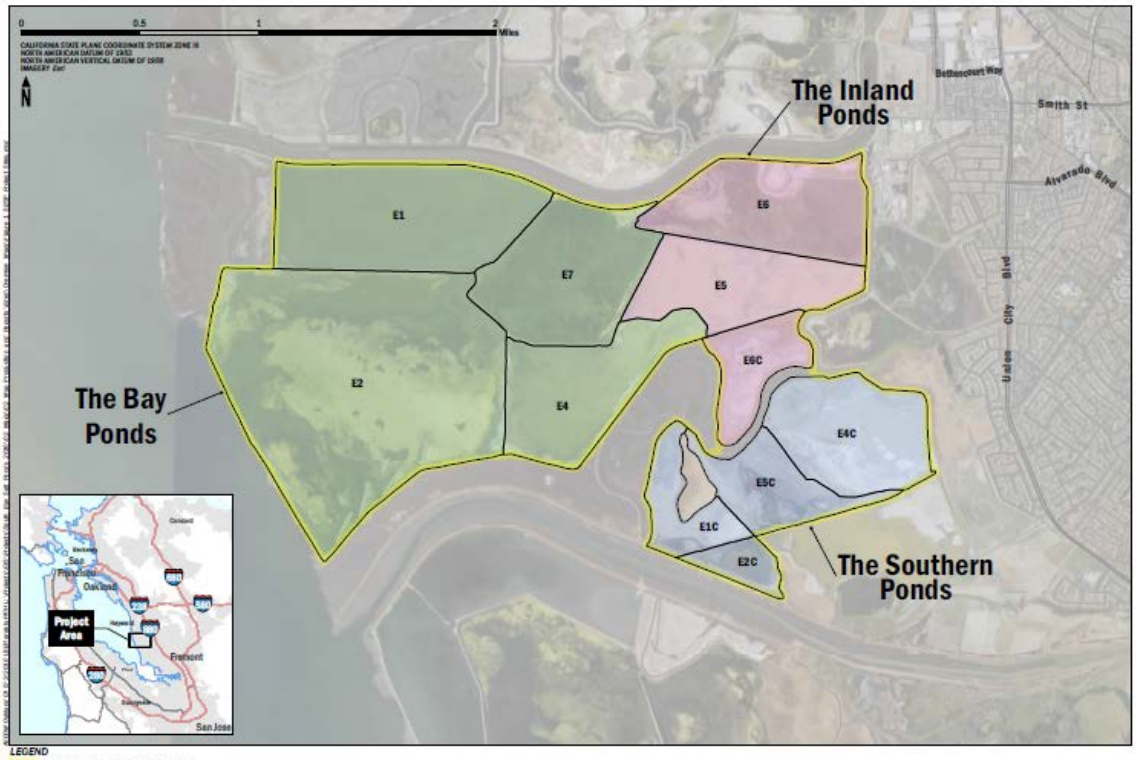
PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

This joint EIS/EIR is a project-level environmental document that will tier from the 2007 SBSP Restoration Project Programmatic EIS/EIR. The joint EIS/EIR will identify and assess the anticipated effects of the project alternatives (negative and beneficial) and describe and analyze direct, indirect, and cumulative potential environmental impacts of the project alternatives, including the No-Action/No Project Alternative, in accordance with NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508) and CEQA (14 CCR 15126.6(e)(3)(B)).

Based on the project description and the Lead Agencies' understandings of the environmental issues associated with the project, the following topics will be analyzed in detail in the EIS/EIR:

- Hydrology, Flood Management, and Infrastructure
- Surface Water, Sediment, and Groundwater Quality
- Geology, Soils, and Seismicity

- Biological Resources
- Recreation Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Land Use
- Public Health and Vector Management
- Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice
- Traffic
- Noise
- Air Quality
- Public Services
- Utilities
- Visual Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions



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South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project
Eden Landing Phase 2: Project Area

Figure 1
NOI/NOP Eden Landing Phase 2: Project Area