



# 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 August 4, 2015 SBSPR Project Phase 2  
Alviso/Ravenswood Draft EIS/R Public Meeting

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**Background:** The South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project (Restoration Project) released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report (EIS/R) for Phase 2 alternative plans at the Alviso and Ravenswood ponds on the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). The Restoration Project and its consultants held a public meeting at the Mountain View Community Center to provide the public an opportunity to learn more and discuss the document and potential plans. A draft environmental document for Phase 2 plans at Eden Landing ponds is expected next year.

**To provide comments on the Draft EIS/R:**

- Send an e-mail to [phase2comments@southbayrestoration.org](mailto:phase2comments@southbayrestoration.org);
- Submit a letter to Brenda Buxton, State Coastal Conservancy, 1330 Broadway, 13th Floor, Oakland, CA 94612; or
- Submit brief comments through the SBSPR website:  
[http://www.southbayrestoration.org/Question\\_Comment.html](http://www.southbayrestoration.org/Question_Comment.html)

**Deadline: 5 p.m. September 22, 2015**

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

**Meeting Materials:** The PowerPoint presentation slides, which give more details on the alternatives, are available on the Restoration Project website at [www.southbayrestoration.org](http://www.southbayrestoration.org). At the meeting, attendees could review a hard copy of the EIS/R, view maps and receive handouts summarizing the draft alternatives.

**Substantive Meeting Outcomes:**

**1. Introduction**

John Bourgeois, Executive Project Manager, and Pat Showalter, City of Mountain View Vice Mayor, welcomed attendees and explained the purpose of the meeting.

## **2. Preview of Phase 2 Alternatives**

David Halsing of AECOM, Project consultant, reviewed the Phase 2 Alternatives for Ravenswood and Alviso ponds. Each location includes a No Action alternative and alternatives with various levee configurations, restoration actions and public access:

- **Ravenswood ponds (R3, R4, R5, and S5):** All alternatives would enhance the All American Canal to offset the flood protection that R4 currently provides. R4 will become tidal marsh, and R3 will remain as a salt panne for plover nesting habitat. R5/S5 alternatives include operating as managed ponds, tidal mudflat, or managed ponds to receive Redwood City excess stormwater.
- **Alviso Mountain View Ponds (A1 and A2W):** The primary difference between the alternatives is whether to include Charleston Slough in the Project restoration efforts. The City of Mountain View is required to eventually transition Charleston Slough to tidal marsh habitat.
- **Alviso Island Ponds (A19, A20, and A21) and A8 Ponds (A8 and A8S):** The Island Ponds alternatives focus on modifying the existing breaches to improve habitat complexity and conductivity in A19. Phase 2 would add an upland transition zone/ecotone in one or two corners of A8S near San Tomas Aquino Creek and the Baylands Community Park.

## **3. Group Question and Answer Session**

Attendees were invited to ask questions and provide comments.

Q: Will the Mountain View City Council review the alternatives to select the Preferred Alternative?

A: The Mountain View City Council will have the opportunity to comment on the draft EIS/R, but they will not be the decision-making body for the alternatives selection. However, the City has been a partner with the Restoration Project for many years, and the City will decide whether to include Charleston Slough in the Project restoration efforts.

Q: What is the cost for each alternative?

A: We have preliminary cost estimates described in the EIS/R appendices.

Q: How will you separate public access areas from upland marsh transition zones to prevent wildlife disturbances, especially if transition zones are dry?

A: Mechanisms to separate wildlife from public access will be site-specific. Some options include planting dense vegetation between marsh habitat and public access or lowering levees. We also welcome any suggestions.

Q: Will you build channels between public access and the wildlife [to prevent dogs from disturbing birds]?

A: Many ponds have a borrow ditch [a ditch around the edge of the pond], but we can consider channels when we build these transition zones.

Comment: Consider including more upland and island features in the ponds as habitat refugia.

Response: Those possibilities certainly exist in the future; however, deeply subsided ponds pose a major challenge. In the near term, transition zones provide refugia.

Q: Can you elaborate on your rationale for different pond management for different habitats?

A: We partly select our management strategies based upon the suite of species we want to support in those ponds. For instance, we may manage a pond that supports mudflat habitat to attract shorebirds or deepen the pond to attract waterfowl.

Q: Will the alternatives lead to smellier ponds?

A: Part of the smell results from decaying algae in stagnant waters. Therefore, the smell should generally improve due to better circulation in tidal wetlands.

Q: Is it possible to naturally neutralize the odor?

A: There is a certain smell to the Bay naturally. Since the odors result from natural processes, we do not want to conduct any management actions that counteract those natural processes.

Q: Have you selected a preferred alternative?

A: We have not yet selected a preferred alternative on purpose. We invite the public to identify what components they like or dislike in the various alternatives. This will help us develop a preferred alternative based upon that input.

Comment: There was a white paper a few years ago on public access and target species. The paper provided guidelines on appropriate distances between the public and wildlife. Response: Those guidelines are very helpful. One reason we are considering a mudflat habitat in R5/S5 is because shorebirds tend to be less affected by the public in close proximity.

#### ***4. Break Out to Stations***

At this time, attendees could meet individually with Refuge staff and consultants at three stations focused on three pond locations – Ravenswood, Alviso Mountain View, and Alviso Island/A8 complex ponds.

**Attachment 1: August 4, 2015 Meeting Attendance**

*Sign-in is optional*

<b>Full Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Laura Adleman	AECOM
Ariel Ambruster	Project Facilitation Team
Chris Barr	USFWS
John Bourgeois	Executive Project Manager, State Coastal Conservancy
Brenda Buxton	State Coastal Conservancy
Laura Cholodenko	State Coastal Conservancy
Terry Cooke	AECOM
Francesca Demgen	AECOM
Mary Deschene	SF Bay Wildlife Society
David Fee	AECOM
Jessica Gonzalez	SFBBO
Dave Halsing	AECOM
Carin High	CCCR
Stephanie Horii	Project Facilitation Team
Amy Hutzell	State Coastal Conservancy
Ellen Johnck	Port of Redwood City
John Krause	CDFW
Marilyn Latta	State Coastal Conservancy
Pat Mapelli	Cargill Salt
Eileen McLaughlin	Wildlife Stewards
Anne Morkill	USFWS
Melvin A. Quezada	
Lucas Ramirez	League of Women Voters
Pat Showalter	City of Mountain View
Jacqueline Solomon	City of Mountain View
Renee Spent	Ducks Unlimited
Rachel Tertes	USFWS
Raymond Wong	City of Mountain View