



Pond A-8 Work Group Summary of Meetings Held to Date

I. Background: Pond A8, adjacent to Alviso Slough, is a pond that is at a strategically important location in the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project area. Many Alviso residents are eager for it to be opened to tidal action soon to help scour the slough, increase salinity in the slough and provide for a more open channel similar to what existed historically. At the same time this could reduce future maintenance costs for maintaining existing floodwater capacity and increased flexibility in responding to high flow events.

Currently, the Santa Clara Valley Water District is moving forward with a \$2.6 million project for removal of 7 acres of aquatic vegetation (primarily fresh water plants) in the slough, downstream of the Gold Street Bridge. The Water District recently completed construction of a weir that allows for overflow of high flows from the Guadalupe River/Alviso Slough to Pond A8.

Pond A8 has also been the subject of mercury investigations along with the other ponds, but close attention has been paid to the ponds in this area because of their juxtaposition with the Guadalupe River drainage. One idea for use of the pond would be to receive high sediment loads from the Guadalupe River as part of high flow events, and then working to sequester the mercury associated with those sediment loads in the pond. As the property owner and Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge manager, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is concerned about mercury contamination and potential liability for mercury in the pond.

In the fall of 2004, the SBSP Project Management Team invited technical experts, project science team members and consultants, members of the Stakeholder Forum, and other interested members of the public to join together to discuss possible specific studies and pilot studies for Pond A8. The group was convened to identify and recommend specific applied studies, experiments, pilot projects or areas of investigation in the Pond A8 area that would increase our knowledge base resulting in better-informed decisions regarding the long-term management of Pond A8.

II. Working Group Organization: The SBSP Project Management Team organized and convened the work group. Steve Ritchie took the lead on developing agendas with input from Mary Selkirk of the Center for Collaborative Policy. Mary facilitated most of the meetings. A number of meetings were held beginning in December, again in late January, early February, and late March. Participation varied from meeting to meeting and the following individuals participated in at least one meeting:

SBSP Project Management Team

Steve Ritchie, SBSP Restoration Project
Clyde Morris, USFWS
Marge Kolar, USFWS
Beth Dyer, Santa Clara Valley Water District
Jim Fiedler, Santa Clara Valley Water District
Lynne Trulio, San Jose State University
Mary Selkirk, Center for Collaborative Policy

SBSP Stakeholder Forum members

Dan Bruinsma, City of San Jose John Rusmisl, Alameda County Mosquito Abatement District Denise Stephens, Mayne Elementary School Richard Santos, Santa Clara Valley Water District Tom Laine, Alviso Water Task Force

Members of the public, other agencies and consultants

George Trevino, Alviso Water Task Force Cindy Paulson, Brown and Caldwell Jeff Haltiner, Phil Williams and Associates Jim Foran, Santa Clara County Open Space Authority Daniel Strickman, Santa Clara County Environmental Resources Agency Noor Tietze, Santa Clara County Environmental Resources Agency Nicole Athearn, US Geological Survey Max Busnardo, HT Harvey Carrie Austin, San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board Steve Moore, San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board Ann Draper, Santa Clara Valley Water District Jim Dover, Alviso Vernon Santos, Alviso Kirk Wheeler, Schaaf and Wheeler Lonnie Gross, Alviso Water Task Force Bob Gross, Alviso Water Task Force Jim Foran, Santa Clara County Open Space Authority Dave Drury, SCVWD Dave Von Roeden, CH2MHill Kathleen Henderson, USGS Al Gurevich, SCVWD Lourdes Rivera Murphy, Alviso Water Task Force Eric Mruz, USFWS John Bradley, USFWS Mark Marvin-DiPasquale, US Geological Survey
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III. Key Outcomes: The second meeting, held at the yacht club in Alviso (and catered by Stakeholder Forum member Tom Laine) included the participation of several residents of Alviso. At both meetings, many promising ideas and hypotheses were generated and discussed by the group.

Following the second meeting, a group of volunteers from the Work Group met on February 4 to refine the study questions from the first two meetings and explore ideas for possible early actions involving Pond A8 that could be implemented during the long-term salt pond restoration planning. The following people attended that meeting: Richard Santos, George Trevino, Tom Laine, Charles Taylor, Beth Dyer, Jim Foran, Mark Marvin-DiPasquale (USGS), Cindy Paulson, Clyde Morris, Steve Ritchie and Mary Selkirk.

At that meeting, Mark Marvin-DiPasquale of the US Geological Survey gave a detailed presentation on mercury cycling monitoring and potential experiments. He then committed to draft a proposed Scope of Work for additional monitoring and experiments. In the ensuing few weeks, several other studies and proposals were developed and circulated among project consultants, technical experts and the Santa Clara Valley Water District. The Santa Clara Valley Water District developed a proposal to relate to Mark Marvin's study about field conditions and food chain entry in Pond A8 and Alviso Slough. The

San Francisco Estuary Institute developed a parallel proposal to study the process of mercury accumulation in sentinel species of the food chain, based on discussions that occurred at the SBSB Design Charette in February.

On March 24, the Santa Clara Valley Water District convened a meeting of the principal authors of proposals from the Water District, the San Francisco Estuary Institute, and the USGS. Attendees included the following people: Jim Fiedler, Beth Dyer, Dave Chesterman, and Ann Draper (all from the Water District), George Trevino (Alviso Water Task Force), Carrie Austin of the Regional Water Board, Mark Marvin-DiPasquale (USGS), Josh Collins and Letitia Grenier (San Francisco Estuary Institute) and Steve Ritchie and Mary Selkirk. The various studies under consideration were discussed, and there was general agreement that integrating these studies to co-locate and coordinate monitoring sites and experiments was a high priority.

IV. Next Steps: By mid to late April, the various study authors aim to have a joint plan for Pond A-8 studies and pilot actions, as well as a proposal for coordination and funding. This plan will include:

1. an approach to co-locate and synchronize sampling and to coordinate the USGS, SFEI and SCVWD studies
2. a plan to coordinate with the two other regional mercury research efforts currently under way
3. a proposal for funding the three proposals

Note: The San Francisco Estuary Institute has applied to the San Francisco Foundation Bay Fund for its proposal. The Water District will be investigating using funds from the Clean Safe Creek Enhancement Program for their proposal. Discussions are also under way with the USFWS and CDFG (who are currently doing monitoring as part of the Interim Stewardship Program); the foundations who have supported the acquisition and have contributed to the long-term planning; the Regional Board, and the US EPA. The latter two agencies are potential funders in the long, rather than the short, term. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Study may also be a source of funding for monitoring.