



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 October 27, 2009 Eden Landing Working Group Meeting

Background: The South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project held the third meeting of the Eden Landing Working Group (Working Group) on Tuesday, October 27, 2009 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Hayward Shoreline Interpretive Center in Hayward. The Working Group convenes as a subcommittee of the Project's Stakeholder Forum and as the Lower Alameda Creek Stewardship Committee of the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. It was convened to provide ongoing input and advice to the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project Management Team (PM Team) on Phase 1 restoration and public access implementation, as well as flood protection planning, in the Eden Landing area.

Meeting Attendance: Attachment 1 lists meeting participants.

Meeting Materials: In advance of the meeting, Working Group members were provided a meeting agenda. At the meeting, the previous meeting summary, a printout of the meeting slides, South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project brochures and posters were available. Most presentations are available on the SBSP Project website (www.southbayrestoration.org).

Substantive Meeting Outcomes:

1. Welcome and Self-Introductions

John Krause, Manager of the California Department of Fish and Game's Eden Landing Ecological Reserve, welcomed everyone and led a round of self-introductions.

2. Agenda Review & Announcements

Facilitator Ariel Ambruster of the Center for Collaborative Policy reviewed the day's agenda. She announced that the Interpretive Center will be dedicating one of its rooms to Janice and Frank Delfino. The dedication event for the Janice and Frank Delfino Wetland Habitat Room will be Saturday, November 21 from 10:30 AM to 1 PM. A plaque, featuring an artist's watercolor, will be unveiled.

3. Tracking Our Progress Project-Wide

John Krause, with the aid of PowerPoint slides, gave a status report on management, funding and construction for the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project.

Management Changes

- Executive Project Manager Steve Ritchie has resigned to become Assistant General Manager for Water Enterprise with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. The Project Management Team is in the process of selecting a replacement.
- Laura Valoppi, scientist with the U.S. Geological Survey, has been named the Project's new Lead Scientist

Project Funding

The state fiscal crisis and congressional appropriations for the Project in fiscal years 2008 and 2009 have resulted in federal funds providing a larger share of money for the Project, with less money coming from state bond funding. NOAA and stimulus funding dollars are contributing most of the \$8.8 million in federal dollars to the Project. NOAA has joined the Project Management Team. The state is contributing \$13 million. Additional funding has come from mitigation/penalty funds and local funds, including those from the Alameda County Flood Control District and settlement of the leopard shark case.

Project-wide Phase 1 Construction

- Construction began in March at Pond SF2 of the Ravenswood Ponds to install water control structures so water can be circulated through the pond system, improving water quality. The pond is also being enhanced by the construction of roosting and nesting islands.
- A Project billboard sign has been erected on the west side of the Dumbarton Bridge. A similar sign will rise on the east side of the San Mateo Bridge, near Eden Landing, by spring 2010.
- At the Alviso ponds, construction of a reversible tidal system, to turn pond A8 into a muted tidal system, has gone out to bid. The construction will allow for experiments and studies on mercury, which has entered the ponds from the old Almaden mercury mine by the Guadalupe River. The project is a way to move toward tidal restoration, while allowing for changes if there should be long-term problems with mercury.

4. Tracking Our Progress at Eden Landing: Phase 1 Restoration Work

John Krause, with the aid of PowerPoint slides, presented an update of Phase 1 restoration actions in Eden Landing. Active restoration of the Baumberg ponds in the original Eden Landing Ecological Reserve project was completed a year ago, and the ponds are now fully open to tidal action. Three ponds can be managed for snowy plover habitat within the original 835-acre Reserve.

Ponds E8A, E9, E8X Restoration

This 630-acre project will include some significant breaches and levee lowering to restore the ponds to tidal marsh. Along Mt. Eden Creek, the western end of the Pond E10 levee will be rebuilt, setting it back from the Mount Eden Creek channel, which is expected to widen as tidal restoration continues. Rather than the originally planned ditch blocks within Pond E8A, the borrow ditch in the pond will be filled with sediment excavated as part of an Alameda County Flood Control District flood control project on Old Alameda Creek. Small ponds called pannes will eventually be created. Pond E8A has a hard gypsum layer from historic salt making, which

could inhibit the process of tidal restoration. Some of the gypsum will be treated, by breaking it up, to compare marsh development with and without treatment. Design work is 90% complete on this project, and construction is expected to start in early 2010.

Ponds E12 & E13 Restoration

The project is at 30% design. Further design and construction are not yet funded. It will be an experiment to look at reconfiguring the ponds to manage them more intensively for shorebird foraging habitat. Different cells in the ponds will be managed for a range of salinities and depths, to see if there is a significant difference in bird foraging at the different levels. The Project has been looking for additional money for this experiment, and it may come from the EPA, to pay for monitoring, and for operations, as the energy costs of pumping will be more extensive than originally expected. Water will need to be pumped about one half of each month, particularly during neap tide periods. The ponds will no longer be managed seasonally, meaning they will be dry in summer and available for snowy plover use. It is expected they will use other ponds, such as E14, which is expected to be managed seasonally. Construction here would start after the E8/E9/E8X construction, which is expected to last two to three years. Once habitat has been constructed, scientists will collect baseline data before public access is allowed. This data will help researchers determine the effects of public recreation on species' habitat use.

Questions/Comments:

Q: Where is the existing tide gate structure on Old Alameda Creek (presumably to understand location of ponds discussed in Phase 1)?

A: The existing structure is downstream of Hesperian Boulevard, and has 20 tide gates (indicated on map).

Q: How long will it be before public access is opened?

A: Four to six years from now. (As indicated previously, after 3-4 years of construction is done, to allow approximately one year of baseline data gathering.)

5. Tracking Our Progress at Eden Landing: Science Update

Phase 1 Applied Studies

Project Lead Scientist Laura Valoppi, with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, gave an update on the Science Program's Request for Proposal Studies. The RFP was put out in October 2008 and the PMT has since made the selections, which are:

- Measuring Habitat Evolution Utilizing Satellite Imagery
- Assessment of Mercury Bioavailability
- Waterbird Nesting and Foraging in Managed Ponds
- Waterbird Response to Trail Use
- Pond, Slough, and Bay Water Quality Interactions
- Baseline Bird Data and Data Needs Assessment
- Effects of Restoration on Fish
- California Gull Displacement
- Graduate Fellows

Questions/Comments:

Q: Has thought been given to what might happen with the mosquito population, which could be a big problem?

A: Not specifically with this round of studies, but there is a possibility of doing that in the future. I'm expecting water quality to improve in general, as we convert to tidal, because there will be more flow.

Comment: It's important to think about, as the original Spanish settlers thought this area was uninhabitable because of mosquito problems. Mosquitoes would make nearby residents very unhappy. The project could consider reviewing the Union City Mosquito Abatement District records, which have been kept since the 1930s.

Response: It is something we've thought about. Tidal marshes are not as mosquito-friendly as small isolated ponds. But you are raising an excellent point.

Snowy Plover Nest Predators and Habitat Enhancements

Caitlin Robinson-Nilsen of the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, discussed threatened Western snowy plovers on the ponds, which have high predation rates and low fledgling success rates. She gave details on an experiment in which oyster shells, which have similar coloring to chicks and eggs, were spread on plots to provide camouflage for nestlings. The experiment increased hatching rates and nesting density, but not fledgling rates. She also discussed the results of camera monitoring of nests, which captured eight acts of predation by avian predators.

Questions/Comments:

Q: Did predation occur during the day or night?

A: Most all occurred within three hours of sunrise or sunset, except incidents of raven predation.

Q: Were there plots in foraging habitat? Is there adequate foraging habitat?

A: The random sampling selection process did not place many of the plots on better foraging habitat. We hope in the future to establish plots on foraging habitat.

Subtidal Habitat, Eelgrass and Oysters

Marilyn Latta, Project Manager for the San Francisco Bay Subtidal Habitat Goals Project, with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, discussed the project and the importance of eelgrass and oyster habitat. She discussed the possibility of creating eelgrass beds and artificial oyster reefs as part of a "Living Shoreline" bioengineering approach to buffer against erosion, improve water quality and provide critical habitat. She is developing a proposal for an Eden Landing project to monitor and expand existing populations of eelgrass and oysters.

6. Tracking Our Progress at Eden Landing: Latest Public Access Designs

John Krause introduced Callander Associates, the landscape architects who have developed the latest 60% designs for Eden Landing public access features.

Mark Slichter and Matthew Gruber of Callander Associates, with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, presented the 60% designs. Public access will include a Bay Trail spine along Mount Eden Creek to a historic saltworks and the Bay. In addition, there will be a seasonal loop trail around ponds E12 and E13. The four designed public access features are a kayak launch at

Mount Eden Creek; a large observation platform at the saltworks; a viewing area at another historic site of Archimedes screws; and lastly, a viewing area at the shoreline.

Kayak Launch

The launch on Mount Eden Creek would include a road/trail and turnaround so that boaters could drop off their boats and then park in the existing Eden Landing parking lot. The launch includes a ramp leading to a floating dock for kayaks and other non-motorized boats. There would also be a concrete launch ramp for motorized boats used by seasonal duck hunters or maintenance crews. The drive would include the same fence style as the parking lot.

Comments:

- **Security/Safety**
 - A gate was recommended rather than the planned bollard and locked chain across the launch ramp area to deter unauthorized use of the launch ramp.
 - Concern was expressed that the launch has been moved to the west, where it would not be in the line of sight of the parking lot and would be hidden by an outfall. Callander Associates representatives said the move was made because of unpredictable flows from the outfall, which could present challenges to kayakers if they passed in front of it as a substantial discharge occurred. There is concern about partying and unauthorized activities in the area. Such activities would be less likely if the site was more visible. The parking lot is always open.
- **Road Safety**
 - A wider road would be better to minimize conflicts between vehicles. Krause said he hopes to be able to build a two-lane, rather than a one-lane, road.
- **Fishing**
 - Concerns were expressed about curfew issues and fishing off of the launch ramp. The Park District has a 10 PM curfew, but the state allows fishing at all times from piers - the applicability of that policy to this site is unclear. DFG has not yet designated fishing areas but potentially might allow fishing from the ramp, although there probably would be better places to fish.
- **Materials**
 - Is attention being paid to the materials to be used, and whether there could be potential impacts to species from light transmittance, chemical content, shading or other effects on subtidal habitat? Krause said resources one would expect in a mature slough are not at this site, but that concern will be taken into account.
 - In response to a question, Krause said that pilings will be concrete, not creosote.
- **Accessibility**
 - In response to a question, consultants said the launch would meet state ADA requirements, and state and federal requirements for launch facilities.

Saltworks Viewing Platform

The platform features a prominent wooden gateway-style entry feature. The L-shaped platform would be 4,200 square feet, with three areas, and would be large enough to accommodate a school class or other groups. It would include benches and a bird-viewing rail with elbow rests for those using binoculars. The observation area is about 4-4.5 feet above the pond level. The walkway is 10 feet wide.

Comments:

▪ **Design/Entry Statement**

- Concern was expressed that the entry statement could attract predating raptors, as it could allow for perching. Krause said there would need to be a treatment on top to deter predators. It will be important to balance creating a sense of arrival with not adversely impacting site ecology.
- The entry statement creates a visual impact; the site should be kept as natural as possible.
- The entry looks great; it's a statement for the project.
- Perhaps the compass rose could be used as the design element for the saltworks entry

▪ **Shade Structure**

- What happened to the originally planned shade structure? Krause said it was removed because of maintenance and replacement costs and its attractiveness to predators. Concern was expressed about maintenance costs of a shade structure. No others in the audience expressed a desire for a shade structure.

▪ **Benches**

- There should be enough benches to provide resting and enjoyment spots for non-birders on other parts of the platform. Right now, designs call for six benches on the platform.

▪ **Materials**

- Participants asked about proposed materials. The plan is for pre-cast concrete piles and fir supports. The rail and posts would most likely be redwood. The decking would be recycled plastic, as this part would receive the most sun exposure. The rails would include cables with epoxy coating to make the structure ADA compliant. All connectors would be stainless steel marine grade.
- There is concern that the wood will degrade. Could pressure-treated timbers be used for supports? Krause said the NOAA permit does not allow pressure-treated wood that will come in contact with water. Cargill has used a lot of non-treated wood and has found that the salt environment actually preserves the wood.
- Have you considered Trex for the 4x4 pilings? Response: It could tend to add sag. The Project is trying to balance between cost and aesthetic value; piles are a huge cost.
- Prioritize long-term maintenance over short-term cost issues. Upsize beams and piles for long-term reliability.

Archimedes Screw Viewing Area

This viewing area would look out at the old salt-making screw structures on Pond E14. It would include benches and interpretive signage. It is located where the year-round trail and the seasonal trail meet.

Comments:

▪ **Overall Design**

- The posts in the fence are too high, visually prominent and distracting. Use a curb instead of a fence, keep it simpler.

- Maybe wood could be used rather than concrete posts, or something with a wood-like look.
- It looks a like a crop circle.
- Maybe because this is a seasonal trail, less is more with this design for now. Don't create unrealistic expectations. This viewing platform design could be adaptive, reflecting the adaptive nature of the site, as there is the potential that the trail could become permanent, depending on habitat issues.
- Maybe reduce the size of the viewing area.
- Maybe create a lower grade to the structure, using ramps. That would be wheelchair accessible.
- Maybe create a simple gravel turnaround.
- Maybe some of the driftwood and old wood out there could be used, turned into the border or sitting area.
- **Gates and Fences**
 - There will need to be a big gate to keep people off of the seasonal trail when it is closed.
 - Pond E14 dries up. How will people be kept off the pond when it is dry? Plans are for a cable fence all along the south side of the trail, more of symbolic fence.

Shoreline Viewing Area

The viewing area would include benches and would look across the Whale's Tail Marsh to Mount Eden Creek and the Bay. It features a compass rose design at the center and geographical references to three visible peaks, Mt. Hamilton, Mt. Diablo and Mt. Tam. It is 3 feet above the levee with no vertical elements.

Comments:

- **Overall Design**
 - There might be interpretive panel potential at this site.
 - The landscape is the big design feature here, not the design of the platform.
 - I like the geographic orientation of the compass rose to mountains and landmarks.
 - Is there a way to do it with a simpler design? Signage? Metal?
 - I really like the design. It looks like a special spot – just an average person's viewpoint.
 - The compass rose is interesting. Could it be a theme at other spots, and tie all of the designs together?
 - This design doesn't overwhelm the landscape.
- **Materials**
 - Concern about colored concrete: any equipment to provide maintenance would also wear down the thickened concrete feature.
 - Gravel would be easy to fix.
- **Bird blinds**
 - Could there be bird blinds or photographer concealments? In some areas, these have been a revenue generator for the land manager through fees.

Ariel Ambruster said the designs will be posted on the South Bay Salt Ponds website at www.SouthBayrestoration.org. If members of the public have more comments or questions on

the designs, they can submit them up until November 10 by e-mailing Ariel Ambruster at aambrust@yahoo.com or mailing them to the Center for Collaborative Policy at P.O. Box 2363, Berkeley, CA 94702.

John Krause said all of the public access projects are scheduled for construction in 2012.

7. Next Steps

John Krause said additional Eden Landing meetings will be scheduled at least once a year, or at key decision-making points.

Ariel Ambruster said a tour of pond construction work at the Ravenswood ponds will be held Saturday, November 14, from 10 AM to noon. A meeting of the Alviso Working Group will likely be scheduled for early spring.

The meeting was then adjourned.

**Attachment 1:
Eden Landing WG October 27, 2009 Meeting Attendance**

Name	Organization/Affiliation
Erika Castillo	ACMAD
Evelyn Cormier	CCCR/Ohlone Audubon
Manny da Costa	Alameda Co Flood Control
Sara Cutuli	
Jason DelRio	
Tim Grillo	Union Sanitary District
Carin High	CCCR
Ken Johnson	Eden Shores Community
Ralph Johnson	Alameda Co Flood Control
Matt Kline	
Andrew Otsuka	Alameda Co Flood Control
Austin Payne	Ducks Unlimited
Roy Peek	
John Perez	US DOI
Roger Potash	
Brandon Powers	Irvington High School
Scott Powers	Irvington High School
Ronald Quinn	ACMAD
Mark Ragatz	EBRPD
Caitlin Robinson-Nilsen	San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory
Carol Severin	HASPA
Cheryl Strong	USFWS
Mark Taylor	EBRPD
Jim Townsend	EBRPD