

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, Phase 2

The California State Coastal Conservancy (Conservancy) 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 of 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 which 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 September 24, 2013, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., at the San Jose Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant located at 700 Los Esteros Road, San Jose, California. Persons needing reasonable accommodations in order to attend and participate in the public scoping meetings should contact Ariel Ambruster, at (510) 528-5006, 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:
Brenda Buxton, Project Manager
State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 13th Floor
Oakland, CA, 94612

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Title: _____

Telephone: _____

PROJECT LOCATION

The SBSP Restoration Project area is located in the South San Francisco Bay, in northern California. The SBSP Restoration Project, Phase 2, encompasses approximately 2,400 acres of former industrial salt ponds located in the South San Francisco Bay (Figure 1). These Phase 2 activities would occur in the 8,000-acre Alviso Pond Complex and the 1,600-acre Ravenswood Pond Complex. These complexes are part of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, owned and managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Alviso Pond Complex:

As shown in Figures 2, 3, and 4, the SBSP Restoration Project Phase 2 includes the following pond clusters associated with the Alviso Pond Complex:

- Alviso – Island Ponds (A19, A20, and A21);
- Alviso A8 Ponds (A8, A8S); and
- Alviso – Mountain View Ponds (A1 and A2W).

Ravenswood Pond Complex:

As shown in Figure 5, the SBSP Restoration Project, Phase 2 includes the following pond cluster associated with the Ravenswood Pond Complex:

- Ravenswood Ponds (R3, R4, R5, and S5).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The SBSP Restoration Project, Phase 2 is intended to restore and enhance tidal wetlands and managed pond habitats in South San Francisco Bay while simultaneously providing for flood management and wildlife-oriented public access and recreation. Phase 2 actions presented and analyzed in this EIS/EIR are part of a long-term restoration plan that was laid out in the SBSP Restoration Project Programmatic EIS/EIR.

Previously, Phase 1 restoration actions were implemented at one or more ponds in each of these pond complexes. Phase 2 of the SBSP Restoration Project proposes to continue habitat restoration activities initiated during Phase 1 while also providing recreation and public access opportunities, and maintaining or improving current levels of flood protection in the surrounding communities.

Habitat restoration actions may include the following:

- Breaching levees at one or more locations to allow tidal flows into the ponds
- Increasing habitat complexity by adding islands or upland transition zones
- Modifying pond bottom elevations or topography to redirect tidal flows
- Using dredged or upland fill material to speed marsh vegetation establishment
- Installing water control structure to improve the control of hydrology in former salt ponds that will be kept as managed ponds.

Recreation and public access actions may include the following:

- Constructing or improving walking trails or elevated boardwalks

- Installing interpretive features or viewing platforms

Flood risk management may include

- Raising or improving existing levees or berms – or adding new levees or masses of land – as needed so that current levels of flood protection are not reduced by project activities that would bring the Bay closer to communities or roads.

PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

This joint EIS/EIR is a project-level environmental document that will tier from the SBSP Restoration Project Programmatic EIS/EIR. The joint EIS/EIR will identify 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 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
- Wetlands and Waters of the United States
- Geology, Soils, and Seismicity
- Biological Resources
- Recreation/Public Access Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Land Use
- Public Health and Vector Management
- Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice
- Traffic
- Noise
- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Climate Change
- Public Services
- Utilities
- Visual Resources



Figure 1
South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project, Phase 2



Figure 2
Alviso Pond Complex - Island Ponds

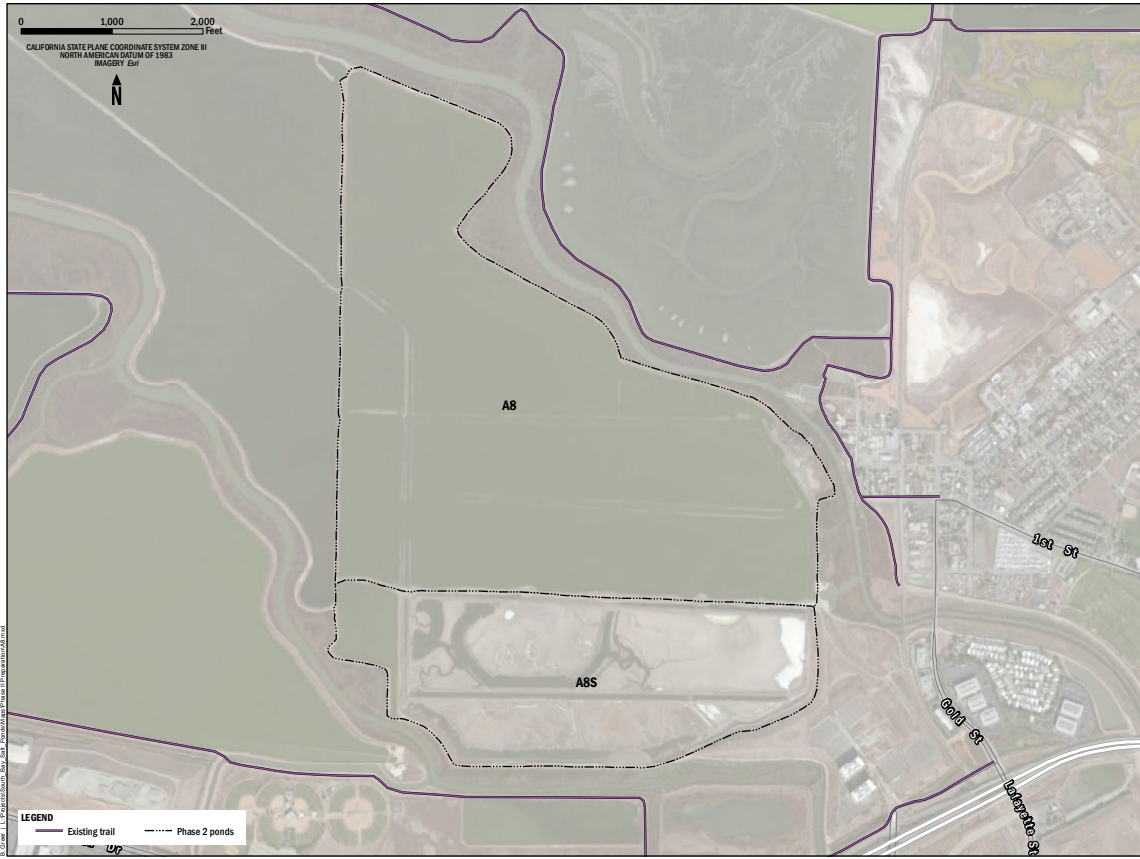


Figure 3
Alviso Pond Complex - A8 Ponds

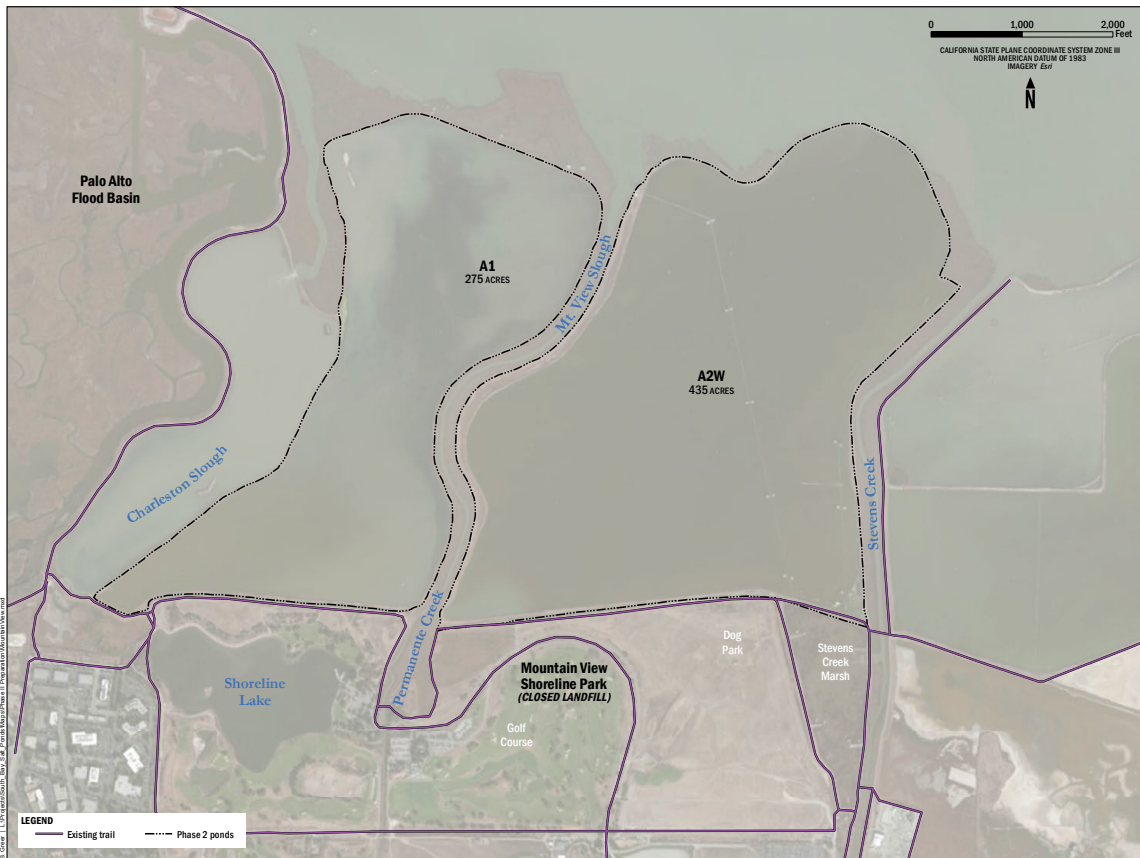
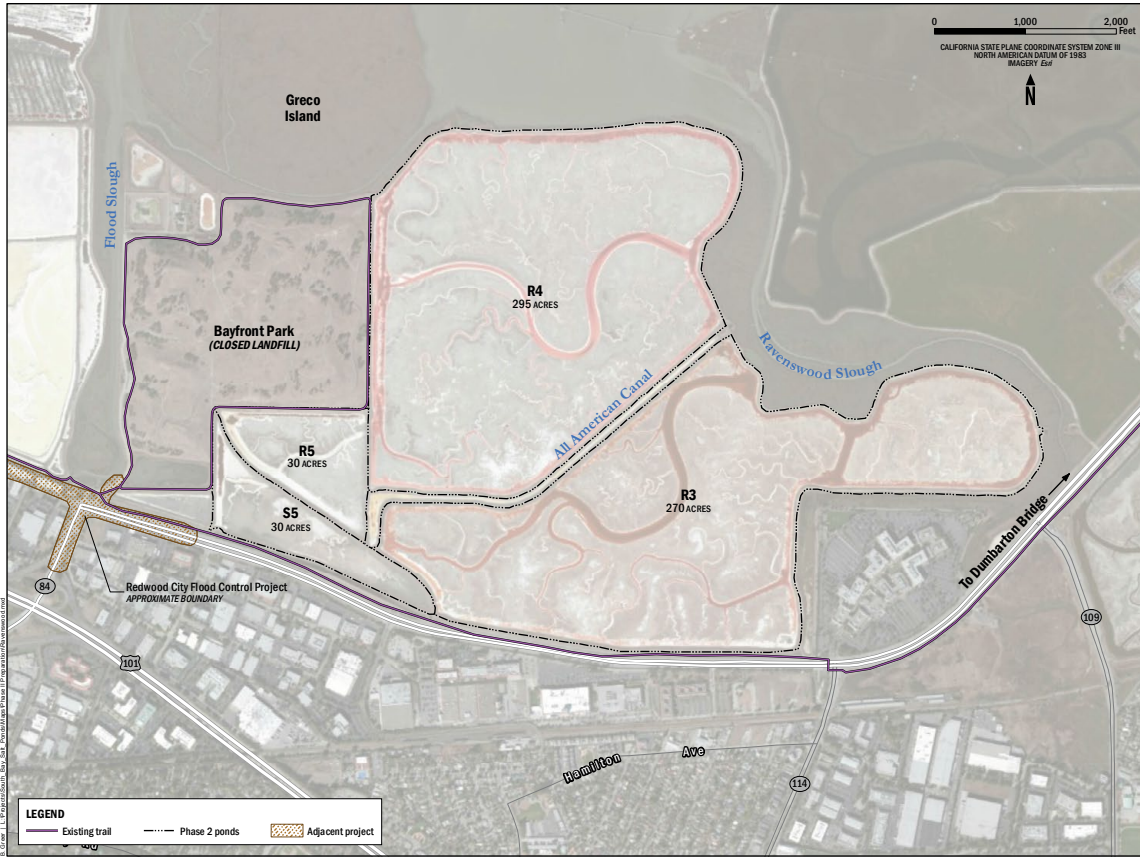


Figure 4
Alviso Pond Complex - Mountain View Ponds



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Figure 5
Ravenswood Ponds