

**Officials At Groundbreaking Event Announce
South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project to Receive Economic Stimulus Funding to
Help Restore San Francisco Bay**

Infusion of New Investment Will Create New Jobs in San Francisco Bay Area

FREMONT, CA, JAN. 13, 2010 — Today the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced that the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project will receive support from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to create new jobs and restore coastal habitats in and around San Francisco Bay. Today's celebration at Pond A8 near Alviso heralds the next step in transforming the San Francisco Bay's South Bay salt ponds into wetland habitats. This work is being conducted as a collaborative partnership between by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the State Coastal Conservancy, the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD), and other local partners.

"The immediate impact of this funding will generate construction-related work for approximately 100 employees at organizations working on the project," said John Bourgeois, Executive Project Manager, South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project. "These jobs will make it possible to restore former industrial salt ponds to wetlands habitats — while helping the local community with additional new job creation."

Work at pond A8 is made possible by a generous federal stimulus fund grant administered by NOAA, as well as by funds from the SCVWD, the SF Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the State Water Resources Control Board. Restoration work at this site marks another important step in Phase One of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Plan, the largest tidal wetland restoration effort on the west coast. When completed, the Salt Pond Restoration Project will restore more than 15, 000 acres of former industrial salt ponds to a rich mosaic of wetland habitats. It will also expand recreational opportunities in the South Bay and increase the flood flow capacity of Alviso Slough.

Working in partnership with the Santa Clara Valley Water District, the Restoration Project will break ground this month at Pond A8 near Alviso. When the work at A8 is completed, this former salt pond will be connected to the tidal waters of Alviso Slough, creating 1,400 acres of open water habitat for a variety of species, including fish, pelicans, cormorants and ducks. Depending on the outcome of contaminant and levee scour monitoring, the pond will eventually become salt marsh, creating habitat for the endangered California clapper rail and other wildlife.

An event scheduled for this morning near the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge's Environmental Education Center features remarks by honored guests and, weather permitting, an opportunity to view the pond and the construction site before it is transformed into tidal habitat. In the event of rain, it will be held inside the South Bay Yacht Club in Alviso.

About the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project

The South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project is the largest tidal wetland restoration project on the West Coast. When complete, the restoration will convert thousands of former commercial salt ponds to a mix of tidal marsh, mudflat, managed pond, and other wetland habitats. The project will also provide flood management and opportunities for wildlife-oriented public access and recreation. The 15,100 acre property was purchased from Cargill in March of 2003 using state and federal funds, as well as private funds from the Hewlett, Packard, Moore, and Goldman Foundations. The newly acquired lands are managed by the California Department of Fish and Game as part of the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Shortly after the property was purchased, the California Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the State Coastal Conservancy launched a five-year public process to design a restoration plan for the property. The final plan was adopted in 2008 and the first phase of restoration started later that year. For detailed information about the project, please visit: www.southbayrestoration.org.