



June 15, 2004

To: South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project Stakeholder Forum
From: Mary Selkirk, Center for Collaborative Policy
Re: Outcomes from the May 25, 2004 Habitat Restoration Workgroup

1. *Welcome and Overview of the Alternatives Development Framework.*

Steve Ritchie, Executive Project Manager of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project welcomed participants. He outlined the meeting agenda, reviewed the project schedule to date, and presented an overview of the Draft Alternative Development Framework.

The framework has six objectives:

1. Create, restore, or enhance habitats of sufficient size, function, and appropriate structure to:
 - a. Promote restoration of native special-status plants and animals that depend on South San Francisco Bay habitat for all or part of their life cycles.
 - b. Maintain current migratory bird species that utilize existing salt ponds and associated structures such as levees.
 - c. Support increased abundance and diversity of native species in various South San Francisco Bay aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem components, including plants, invertebrates, fish, mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians.
2. Maintain or improve existing levels of flood protection in the South Bay area.
3. Provide public access and recreational opportunities compatible with wildlife and habitat goals.
4. Protect or improve existing levels of water and sediment quality in the South Bay, and take into account ecological risks caused by restoration.
5. Implement design and management measures to maintain or improve current levels of vector management, control predation on special status species, and manage the spread of non-native invasive species.
6. Protect the services provided by existing infrastructure (e.g., power lines, railroads).

In addition, two additional evaluation factors have been added to ensure cost effectiveness and minimization of environmental impacts.

Ritchie stated that the objective of today's meeting is to receive feedback on the opportunities presented by the objectives, conflicts between objectives, and ideas on how to resolve conflicts. He noted that the public draft would be posted and distributed on June 1, 2004. As such, it was unlikely that many of the comments sought from the Forum members and the Work Group members would be incorporated into the June 1 public draft.

2. *Question and answer session.*

Q: How will the conclusions from the Science Panel be incorporated into objectives?

A: Science will be the basis of the adaptive management strategy.

Q: Date of the next Local Government Forum meeting?

A: To be determined.

After Steve Ritchie's overview, meeting participants broke into their respective Work Groups for about ninety minutes to discuss the detailed objectives and overall evaluation approach.

After a short break, Work Group members went "on tour" to the other two Work Groups to consider the other detailed objectives and provide comments on potential synergies or conflicts across the elements of the overall restoration plan, and to make suggestions for how to resolve those potential conflicts. In addition to providing oral feedback, some meeting participants filled out worksheets that outlined a series of questions pertaining to the overall project objectives and their compatibility with one another

3. Habitat Restoration Work Group Meeting

a. Mary Selkirk, Mediator for the Center for Collaborative Policy welcomed the group and invited participants to introduce themselves. (Attachment 1 lists participants).

b. Revisions to April 15, 2004 Work Group Meeting Outcomes Memo

- One member clarified what they had meant regarding the Flood Management Detailed Objectives: Flood Management Objective is inflexible. Flood management is more than levees; floods can provide benefits as well.
- Another member clarified that the statement re recreation and habitat should state that recreation should be away from species, not vice versa.
- Objective 5: "Mitten crab" should have been added to invasive species list

c. Discussion and Feedback on Proposed Detailed Objectives, Evaluation Criteria, and Overall Proposed Evaluation Process for the Project

Ron Duke of HT Harvey noted that the detailed objectives are the objectives to be used to develop alternatives. They have to be flexible so that in the future, participants can select from various options. Detailed objectives may overlap. It is not predictable how things will change.

Mary Selkirk invited the workgroup to begin giving comments.

Objective 1A: Promote restoration of native special-status plants and animals that depend on South San Francisco Bay habitat for all or part of their life cycles. Comments offered included:

- Define "area". Emphasize that a large area is sought for habitat (not just some area) (DO1)
- Promote connectivity within an ecological area (DO2)
- Add animals and reptiles after special-status plants (DO3)
- Rewrite alternatives evaluation criteria to read "...in combination with foraging habitat (instead of assuming appropriate) (DO4)
- Add new alternatives evaluation criteria (DO5) "Taking into account sea level rise, will flood control cause negative impacts to habitats"

Comments offered to Objective 1B included:

- Add “balancing biodiversity” to the end of DO1 (don’t need to maintain current population of California Gulls)
- Add remnant structures to DO1 and DO3
- Add 4th objective “To maintain biological diversity and functioning biological ecosystem”

Comments to Objective 5 included:

- DO1 should read “Minimize potential for...”
- Will alternatives increase the need for more nuisance species management?
- Add #4 about controlling gulls, lepidium, etc. If species are not listed, then problem cannot easily be assessed and abated.
- Add “do no harm” section re vector control

There was insufficient time for the Work group to work through the detailed objectives for Objective 1C. Work Group members declined to schedule a follow-up meeting before the close of the comment period for the Alternatives Planning Framework. In concluding, Selkirk asked participants to email additional comments. The Work Group adjourned.

4. Work Group “Tours”

After a short break, members of the two other Work Groups for Public Access and for Flood management provided their thoughts and comments on the detailed objectives for habitat. They were asked to respond to the following questions in providing their comments, either verbally, or on the worksheets provided to them.

1. As you look at these detailed objectives for habitat restoration/public access and recreation/flood management, where do you see specific opportunities for mutual benefit?

2. Which detailed objectives do you think may constrain one another and why?

3. How do you think these potential conflicts could be resolved in the restoration planning?

4. Are there any other thoughts regarding alternatives development that you want to share with the Project Management Team? If so, what are they?

1. As you look at these detailed objectives for habitat restoration/public access and recreation/flood management, where do you see specific opportunities for mutual benefit?

Comments by Flood Management Work Group members:

- Increased tidal marsh should decrease the need for levees.
- Need to provide sufficient high ground areas for endangered species, including harvest mouse. Levees will become habitat for nesting birds and increase bird strikes.
- By increasing tidal marshland, tidal prism will increase, which will then increase tidal channel capacity through scour action. This will improve flood conveyance and sediment transport and reduce the need for dredging channels connected to upland streams. By breaching levees sediment deposition on the marsh surface will increase, thus offsetting subsidence of the lower marsh surfaces and decreasing siltation of the Bay.

- The levees on Old and New Alameda Creek through the old salt ponds can be modified or removed, allowing more tidal action in the channels and in the ponds.
- Maintaining water quality helps infrastructure (if water quality decreases then more regulatory requirements)

Comments by Public Access Work Group members:

- The public will support money for projects: public participation creates stewards for restoration and a new generation of support
- The mix of habitats may dictate which areas receive public access

2. Which detailed objectives do you think may constrain one another and why?

- Potential constraints are the conflicts between the “urban” need for flood control and the need for natural functions to create a self-maintaining system. Muted tidal marsh systems may provide new habitat but maintaining internal dikes will minimize natural functions.
- The ability to maintain “flood” infrastructure is constrained by the federal and state permits required – a generalized permit process for maintenance would be desirable.
- Detention ponds may be good for flood control and bad for vector control

Comments from Public Access Work Group members:

- Trails may need to be set back from the Bay to allow listed species to regenerate

3. How do you think these potential conflicts could be resolved in the restoration planning?

Comments from Flood Management Work Group members:

- The restoration planning could provide the framework for a maintenance program with long-term permitting.
- Permitting is complicated – get maintenance permits to cover a variety of activities

Comments from Public Access Work Group members:

- Public Access/Use could be seasonal to reduce conflicts between people and species
- Include set back areas in minimize public access to listed species
- Limit public access for cars and other motorized vehicles
- Flood control levees can be the Bay Trail trunk line. They can also provide a transitional zone between shore and hills
- Closed loops get more use than broken loops. Making broken loops will limit access to fragile area
- Allow mixed-use transportation/recreation routes to middle of project area. These do not need to be paved.

4. Are there any other thoughts regarding alternatives development that you want to share with the Project Management Team? If so, what are they?

Comments from Flood Management Work Group members:

- Capture organic debris and matter to increase rates of deposition in areas that need sediment deposition.
- Manage sediment deposition to augment areas of high transitional marsh, which is rich in biological diversity.
- Wind is a key erosive factor: it breaks dikes, and leads to greater levels of subsidence.
- Fresh water flooding can be alleviated by deep sloughs.
- Seasonal wetlands are not self maintaining – they are expensive to maintain
- Upland and transitional areas are subsided: how to incorporate into restoration is a key concern

Comments from Public Access Work Group members:

- Maintain a connectivity of lands for the clapper rail and mouse – there is a data gap in how much connectivity is needed
- Cluster restoration projects to allow connectivity
- Note specific places/things that people want to see, i.e. historic salt works, open water, ponds, restored wetlands. Provide opportunities to see these.

Attachment 1: Meeting Attendance

Project Management Team

Organization	Representatives
California Department of Fish & Game	Carl Wilcox
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Marge Kolar, Winnie Chan
Center for Collaborative Policy	Mary Selkirk, Jennifer Krebs

Participants

Organization	Representative
Alviso Resident	Tom Laine
BCDC	Bob Batha
Castro Valley Environmental	Lowell Miller
Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge	Janice and Frank Delfino
Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge	Arthur Feinstein
Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge	Carin High
City of San Jose, Env. Services	Dan Bruinsma, Neal Van Keuren
East Bay Regional Park District	Beth Stone
League of Women Voters	Libby Lucas
Math Science Nucleus	Joyce Blueford
Mountain View Sanitary District of Contra Costa County	Dick Bogaert
Mountain View Sanitary District of Contra Costa County	Teng-Chung Wu
NASA Ames Research Center	Eric Watkins
NOAA -National Marine Fisheries Service	Brian Mulvey
PG&E	Sally DeBecker
Port of Oakland	Jim McGrath
San Francisco Bay Brands	Tom Ford
San Francisco Public Utilities Commission	Jane Lavelle
San Francisco State University	Stephen Bollens
San Jose State University	Lynne Trulio
San Mateo County Mosquito Abatement District	James Counts, Chindi Peavey
Santa Clara County Vector Control District	Daniel Strickman
Santa Clara Valley Water District	Louisa Squires
Save The Bay	Briggs Nisbet
SF RWQCB	Andree Breaux
Sierra Club, Loma Prieta Chapter	Melissa Hippard
Stevens & Permanente Creeks Watershed Council	Mondy Lariz
US EPA, Region 9	Luisa Valiela
Wildlife Stewards	Evelyn Cormier
Interested Party	Bill Bousman
Interested Party	Deborah Clark
Interested Party	Cynthia Lipford
Interested Party	Elizabeth Nixon