



South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project



May 2007

Welcome to the fourteenth issue of the quarterly electronic newsletter of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project (SBSP). The restoration process is being managed collaboratively by the [California State Coastal Conservancy](#), the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#), and the [California Department of Fish and Game](#). The purpose of this newsletter is to provide you with a brief update on our effort to restore more than 15,000 acres of former commercial salt ponds in the South Bay which were purchased by state and federal agencies in March of 2003. For more detailed information about the restoration project (or to unsubscribe from this publication) please visit our web site at www.southbayrestoration.org.

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1. Public Turns Out for EIS/EIR Meetings

In March, close to one hundred people turned out to learn more about the recently released Draft Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Impact Statement for the project. During meetings in Mountain View and Hayward, Project Managers provided a brief overview of the three restoration

alternatives contained in the documents and the “stair step” approach to restoration that will slowly transform the current landscape from a series of commercial salt ponds to a mixture of managed ponds and tidal wetlands. Following the overview presentation, members of the public were encouraged to visit one or more of the three information stations set up around each meeting room. Each station contained maps and more information on one of the three salt pond complexes that make up the 15,100 acre project.



In addition to receiving written comments during the public meetings, the project has also been collecting comments via the electronic comment form on the project web site and via regular mail. For more information please visit the [project web site](#). The comment period closed May 3, 2007. Project managers are preparing a response to all of the comments that were received and will include this response in the Final EIS/EIR due out this Fall.

Draft Schedule

May 3, 2007	Deadline for comments on Draft EIR/EIS
June and July	Geographic Work Groups Begin
Early Fall 2007	Final EIS/EIR
Fall 2007	Stakeholder Forum Meeting
Fall 2007	Record of Decision and Permitting
Phase I Implementation	2008 through 2010
Phase II Implementation	The next 30 plus years



2. Geographic Working Groups Set to Convene in June and July

Have you ever wondered what's going on in your favorite corner of the Restoration Project? Now is your chance to learn more and provide feedback about the changes taking place on the project site by attending one of three geographically based Working Group meetings this summer. The Working Groups, which will be staffed by project

managers and professionally facilitated by the Center for Collaborative Policy, are set to convene in June and July of this year and will continue to meet on an as-needed basis

throughout the implementation phase of the project.

One Working Group is assigned to each of the three pond complexes that make up the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project: the **Alviso pond complex** in the extreme South Bay; the **Ravenswood pond complex** near the Dumbarton Bridge; and the **Eden Landing pond complex** in the East Bay. The purpose of the Working Groups is to provide an active voice for local community members in planning and implementing restoration activities, flood management, and recreation and public access improvements during Phase One of the restoration which begins in 2008 and continues until 2010. Each Working Group will probably meet twice in 2007.

The Working Groups will augment the ongoing work of the Stakeholder Forum whose 30 members will convene as a full Stakeholder Forum this Fall. Members of the public are encouraged to join Stakeholder Forum members and local elected leaders and others by becoming active members of one or more of the Working Groups. For more information about meeting agendas, times and locations, and to **RSVP your attendance** for one of the Working Groups please visit the Events and Meetings Section of the Project Web Site and click on [Working Groups](#) or contact [Anna Schneider](#) at the California State Coastal Conservancy 510-286-1015.



3. South Bay Shoreline Study Update

The South Bay Shoreline Study is an inter-agency effort to develop a flood damage reduction and ecosystem restoration project in the South Bay suitable for Congressional authorization and funding. The Shoreline Study is being conducted in tandem with the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration project and will incorporate findings from the

Restoration Project into its recommendations.

In March, the Study received \$1.3 million in federal funding for the current fiscal year. These funds will support the development of the "Future Without Project Conditions" Report, slated for Spring of 2008. The report will provide detailed information about flood risks and levee conditions, and help inform habitat restoration and public access options during the second phase of the South Bay Salt Pond restoration implementation. Also in March, representatives of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Washington Headquarters and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Washington Office met to discuss interagency collaboration on the South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Study. Key policymakers agreed that all desire a successful partnership and project, and pledged to work together to that end. The meeting was the first in what we envision as a series of problem-solving strategy sessions. Other agencies present at the meeting included the Corps of Engineers San Francisco office, the California State Coastal Conservancy, the

Santa Clara Valley Water District, and the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge complex. For more information about the South Bay Shoreline Study please visit the [Shoreline Study Web Site](#)



4. Science Update: Examining the Gull Problem

One of the first adaptive management challenges facing the restoration project is how to address the impact of California gulls on other bird species. The population of California gulls in the project area is greater than 20,000, and growing. California gulls often

occupy habitats to the exclusion of other species and have been known to eat the young of other birds. These characteristics could prevent the project from supporting populations of avocets, stilts, terns and snowy plovers- a major restoration objective.

As a result project managers have convened meetings of experts to review currently available data regarding California gulls in general, and in the project area in particular. The Science Team is consolidating that information into a synthesis document describing our state of knowledge regarding California gulls. Some of this information is available on the [documents](#) section of the project web site. At the same time, we are developing recommendations for management action including focused studies regarding gull behavior and consideration of alternative phasing strategies for the Phase 1 actions to minimize gull impacts on other species.



5. Putting It All Together—How Will We Fund the Restoration?

As we look forward to the first phase of restoration commencing in 2008, project managers are considering a variety of different funding sources. The construction cost for Phase I is estimated to be up to \$30 million with an additional

\$2 to \$3 million needed annually to support essential monitoring and adaptive management activities. You can view a map of the [Phase I activities](#) on the project web

site. The article below is the third in a continuing series of articles reviewing each of the potential funding sources for the project. In this issue we examine State Bonds and State Budget Allocations.

Last November, California voters passed several bond measures to improve the State's infrastructure and environment. Two of those measures, Propositions 84 and 1E present opportunities for funding elements of the Restoration Project. In particular Proposition 84, "The Clean Water, Parks and Coastal Protection Act" has several components that are relevant. These include authorizations of \$108 million for the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy, \$138 million for Integrated Regional Water Management grants for the San Francisco Bay Region, and \$135 million for Wildlife Preservation projects. These funds are administered by the State Coastal Conservancy, Department of Water Resources, and Wildlife Conservation Board, respectively. Proposition 1E, "The Disaster Preparedness and Flood Prevention Bond Act of 2006", includes authorizations of \$500 million for flood subventions and \$300 million for storm water and flood management projects, both administered by the Department of Water Resources. The State Administration and the Legislature are currently working through administrative processes and legislative proposals regarding the appropriation and expenditure of these funds. The Project's participating agencies and stakeholders are working to be sure that appropriate levels of funding from these sources are available for implementation of the Restoration Project.



6. How to Learn More and Get Involved

a. Take a docent-led walking tour: Wildlife Stewards and the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge continue to offer docent-led tours and slide presentations about the restoration project. Participants can view a thriving tidal marsh and visit a portion of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration site during a walking tour in Menlo Park. Tours are free to the public and suitable for ages 12 years and older. For a complete schedule of upcoming tours and presentations, please visit the [Events and Meetings section](#) of the project web site.

b. Watch the video: A short film by award winning filmmaker Judy Irving is now available on the project web site. The six- minute film introduces viewers to the salt pond restoration project and is narrated by Keith Fraser. The web site also includes video news coverage of recent restoration actions at the site. [Click here to view the footage](#)

c. Listen to the podcast: The project has produced two short podcasts about the project that include interviews with Executive Project Director Steve Ritchie. [Click here](#) to listen to or download the podcasts. For additional podcasts about Bay restoration, visit the [Your Wetlands web site](#) which includes information about restoration projects around the Bay.

c. Visit the interactive map: If you can't make it to the South Bay for a tour, but would like to get a virtual sense of the project, visit our interactive map on the project web site. [The map](#) enables viewers to zoom out for a regional overview, or zoom in to inspect a particular pond, slough, or other feature. Detailed aerial photography is available as an optional backdrop.

d. Attend a Work Group Meeting In June and July of this year we will launch a new series of Work Groups for each of the three salt pond complexes in the restoration area. All of their meetings are open to the public and you are welcome and encouraged to attend. For details on the next Stakeholder Forum meeting or to read minutes from previous meetings please check the [Event and Meetings section](#) of the Project web site

Photo Credits: Tracy Grubbs, Judy Irving, Eileen McLaughlin.