



# South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project



## July- August 2005

Welcome to the eighth 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 please visit our web site at [www.southbayrestoration.org](http://www.southbayrestoration.org). If you would like to unsubscribe from this quarterly update please contact [tcorrigan@scc.ca.gov](mailto:tcorrigan@scc.ca.gov).

### 1. Project Revises 2005 Schedule—Public To Rank Alternatives in October



Project Mangers have pushed the schedule back a few months so that the consultant team can integrate new data and data corrections into the landscape assessment for the project. Under the revised schedule, the Stakeholder Forum and other interested members of the public will meet in October to compare the draft project alternatives with the initial objectives for habitat restoration, public access and recreation and flood control. The

Project Management Team expects to refine the project alternatives by the end of November in time for the Stakeholder Forum to develop consensus on the alternatives by their meeting in December. The final Project Alternatives Report will be released in January of 2006, with a thorough NEPA/ CEQA environmental review process beginning shortly thereafter.

Revised Project Schedule		
September 8, 2005	Stakeholder Forum & Work Groups	Provide feedback on the Adaptive Management Plan
October 14, 2005	Stakeholder Forum	Perform weighting and ranking exercise and provide feedback on project alternatives.
November /December, 2005	Project Management Team and Consultants	Refine project alternatives
December 14, 2005	Stakeholder Forum	Seek consensus on project alternatives
January, 2006	Project Management Team and Consultants	Release final project alternatives report

## 2. Stakeholders and Local Government Leaders Continue to Provide Input to the Restoration Design



The 28-member Stakeholder Forum met in Hayward in May and Mountain View in July to review the latest information from technical consultants and the science team about the landscape assessment, data collection and adaptive management planning. The Forum, which represents an array of local interests including environmentalists, local business owners, community activists and recreation advocates,

continues to meet every few months to provide critical feedback to the planning process. This year we welcomed some new faces to the Forum as three long standing members were replaced by alternates. Our new members include Marilyn Latta from Save The Bay, Geoff Crockwell from Senator Mike Honda's office, and Brenda Torres-Barreto from the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society. For a complete list of Forum members go to [http://www.southbayrestoration.org/structure/Stakeholder\\_Members.html](http://www.southbayrestoration.org/structure/Stakeholder_Members.html).

All Forum meetings are open to the public and you are encouraged to attend and/or to contact Forum members with your questions and concerns.

On July 7th, about twenty local government leaders gathered at the Milpitas City Hall to for the fourth in a series of local government forums about the restoration. Members of the Project Management briefed attendees on the Initial Stewardship Plan and the current status of the draft project alternatives. In addition to hosting these semi-annual forums, the project is also making presentations to local governments including boards of supervisors and local planning commissions. If you would like to schedule a presentation, please contact Austin McNerny at 510-981-1124 or [amcinerny@ccp.csus.edu](mailto:amcinerny@ccp.csus.edu).

## 3. Science Team Releases Adaptive Management Plan



Contrary to popular belief, the learning process does not end with completion of the restoration plan; it continues far into the implementation phase of the project. Adaptive management is a systematic way of capturing lessons learned on the ground and folding them into future management practices. Because the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project is so large, adaptive management is a critical

component of implementation. Each phase of the implementation must include an adaptive management design element in order to proceed. The *Draft Adaptive Management Plan*, developed by the Project's Science Team, describes the Project's approach to generating information (through monitoring and applied studies) and then outlines a way to apply that information to the decision-making process. The science section of the *Draft Plan* outlines a series of restoration targets that could be used to

measure the project's success in achieving its objectives. For example one of the project objectives is to assist with the recovery of Western snowy plovers. The *Adaptive Management Plan* includes a restoration target for this objective as 125 breeding snowy plovers. The *Draft Plan* also includes monitoring parameters for the target. The monitoring component of adaptive management is obviously critical because it enables project managers to document progress toward goals and to learn from surprises along the way. The second half of the document discusses the proposed decision-making structure. Because we will never know everything we would like to know about the South Bay system, the proposed decision-making structure will enable project managers to move forward in the face of uncertainty. The *Draft Adaptive Management Plan* is available for review on the Project website at [www.southbayrestoration.org](http://www.southbayrestoration.org). The Stakeholder Forum will hold a special meeting to provide feedback on the Adaptive Management Plan. The public is encouraged to attend. Please check the project web site for the exact date and location.

#### 4. Initial Stewardship Update: Levee Breaches and Solar Bees



The goal of the Initial Stewardship Plan (ISP) is to gradually reverse the salt making process at the salt ponds, in preparation for the launch of the first phase of restoration in 2008. For the past two years, US Fish and Wildlife Service and CA Department of Fish and Game managers have been opening tide gates and changing water flows to meet the goals of the ISP. In April, the CA Department of Fish and Game completed the first of three levee breaches required to introduce tidal action to 835 acres of the Eden Landing restoration site. After digging through the levee walls with a backhoe, DFG managers connected the south end of the North Creek channel to Old Alameda Creek, allowing water to flow from this channel through Old Alameda Creek and finally to the Bay. This restored approximately one mile of historic slough, which ultimately will provide tidal action to the south half of the original Eden landing restoration site. To

view a video clip of this historic event, visit the project web site at [www.southbayrestoration.org](http://www.southbayrestoration.org)

As part of their ongoing effort to maintain a healthy level of dissolved oxygen in the discharge from the salt ponds in the southern part of the project area, the US Fish and Wildlife Service installed a series of Solar Bees in pond A7 (pictured below). The Bees aerate the water by providing a steady mixing action in the pond. They were put in place in response to measurements taken this year near the pond's outflow pipe. Those measurements indicated that the dissolved oxygen level occasionally dropped below the standards set by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. If left, unchecked, the release

of water with low dissolved oxygen could affect the health of fish and other aquatic species.

As the Initial Stewardship Plan moves forward both DFG and the US FWS are learning valuable lessons about the pond system that can be applied to the actual restoration. The dissolved oxygen issue reinforces the lesson that managed pond systems require active monitoring and management to ensure that there is enough oxygen for aquatic life in the Bay. You can find more information about the status of Initial Stewardship Plan activities by reading the Initial Stewardship Status Report and the annual self monitoring reports prepared by the USFWS and DFG on the project web site at <http://www.southbayrestoration.org/ISPNews.html>



##### **5. Learn More About The Project: Take A Virtual or Physical Tour of Project Site!**

For those who would like a closer look at the restoration site, Wildlife Stewards continues to offer docent-led tours and slide presentations about the 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. Please visit the project web site for a schedule of tours and call the Refuge Visitor Center at 510-792-0222 to reserve a spot.

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 new interactive map on the project web site. The interactive nature of 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. To reach the map, go to <http://www.southbayrestoration.org/interactivemap>