

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation

September 17, 2026

**SOUTH BAY SALT POND RESTORATION PROJECT PHASE 2: EDEN LANDING IMPLEMENTATION,
OUTREACH, AND WEBSITE MANAGEMENT - AUGMENTATION**

Project No. 02-070-05

Project Manager: Laura Cholodenko

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$10,055,692 to Ducks Unlimited, Inc. which includes \$6,976,691 in funds from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, to augment Conservancy funding previously authorized for the restoration of tidal marsh and enhancement of managed ponds at the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve, \$50,000 to the Aquatic Science Center for website management, and \$50,000 to the California Wildlife Foundation to conduct outreach, all as part of Phase 2 of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project in Alameda, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties.

LOCATION: Alameda, San Mateo, Santa Clara Counties

EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1: [Project Location Maps](#)
Exhibit 2: [May 27, 2021 Staff Recommendation](#)
Exhibit 3: [June 1, 2023 Staff Recommendation](#)
Exhibit 4: [April 18, 2024 Staff Recommendation](#)
Exhibit 5: [Project Letters](#)
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RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution and findings.

Resolution:

The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes disbursement of up to \$10,055,692 (ten million fifty-five thousand six hundred ninety-two dollars) to Ducks Unlimited, Inc. which includes \$6,976,691 (six million nine hundred seventy-six thousand six hundred ninety-one dollars) in funds from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, to augment Conservancy funding previously authorized for the restoration of tidal marsh and enhancement of managed

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ponds at the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve (Exhibit 1), \$50,000 (fifty thousand dollars) to the Aquatic Science Center for website management, and \$50,000 (fifty thousand dollars) to the California Wildlife Foundation to conduct outreach, all as part of Phase 2 of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project in Alameda, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties (“the project”).

Prior to commencement of the project, Ducks Unlimited, Inc. shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy (Executive Officer) the following:

1. A detailed work program, schedule, and budget.
2. Names and qualifications of any contractors to be retained in carrying out the project.
3. A plan for acknowledgement of Conservancy funding and Proposition 68 as the source of that funding.
4. Evidence that all permits and approvals required to implement the project have been obtained.
5. Evidence that the grantee has entered into agreements sufficient to enable the grantee to implement, operate, and maintain the project.

Prior to commencement of the project, Aquatic Science Center shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy the following:

1. A detailed work program, schedule, and budget.
2. Names and qualifications of any contractors to be retained in carrying out the project.
3. A plan for acknowledgement of Conservancy funding and Proposition 68 as the source of that funding.

Prior to commencement of the project, California Wildlife Foundation shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy the following:

1. A detailed work program, schedule, and budget.
2. Names and qualifications of any contractors to be retained in carrying out the project.
3. A plan for acknowledgement of Conservancy funding and Proposition 68 as the source of that funding.

Findings:

Based on the accompanying staff recommendation and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding the Conservancy’s mandate to address the resources and recreational goals of the San Francisco Bay area.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.

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3. Ducks Unlimited, Inc., Aquatic Science Center, and the California Wildlife Foundation are nonprofit organizations organized under section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends the Conservancy authorize disbursement of up to \$10,055,692 to Ducks Unlimited, Inc., which includes \$6,976,691 in funds from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, to augment Conservancy funding previously authorized to restore tidal marsh and enhance managed ponds at California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Eden Landing Ecological Reserve (Exhibit 1), \$50,000 to the Aquatic Science Center for website management, and \$50,000 to the California Wildlife Foundation to conduct outreach as part of Phase 2 of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration (SBSPR) Project in Alameda, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties (“the project”).

Restoration at Southern Eden Landing

This authorization will support restoration and enhancement of the eleven former commercial salt-evaporation ponds that make up the southern half of the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve. The four largest ponds (1,300 acres) will be breached, returning them to full tidal action, restoring their water quality to match that of ambient conditions in the open bay. The restoration also includes construction of upland transition slopes (or habitat transition zones) along the sides of levees to increase the potential of the restored marshes to adapt to sea level rise while providing ecological benefits such as habitat complexity and high tide refugia for terrestrial wildlife. Levees will also be raised in sections to ensure that adjacent urban areas do not experience an increase in coastal flood risk when tidal flows are restored to the ponds.

The remaining seven ponds (800 acres) will be managed ponds. The project will enhance these managed ponds by replacing and adding new, more effective water control structures, which will improve circulation within the ponds by increasing the ability to move water through the ponds more effectively to meet water quality objectives and to achieve water depths that benefit waterfowl, shorebirds, and other pond-dependent wildlife. The project will also construct a section of the San Francisco Bay Trail along the edge of managed pond habitat and other public amenities like viewing platforms, interpretive signs, and benches. Please see Exhibits 2, 3, and 4 for additional information on Phase 2 of the SBSPR Project at Eden Landing.

In May 2021, the Conservancy authorized funding to initiate construction of the project at Eden Landing (Exhibit 2). Ducks Unlimited has used a portion of the funding to complete improvements to the bayfront levee and to stockpile coarse sediment on site for use in constructing bird nesting islands. In 2023 and 2024, the Conservancy authorized additional funding for Ducks Unlimited to construct the project and to revise the project designs so that the breach locations could be moved to the bayfront levee (Exhibits 3 and 4). Ducks Unlimited is now in the process of finalizing those designs and applying for permits that will allow for completion of the work at Eden Landing in 2030. Conservancy authorized funding from 2021

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will be used for early construction actions such as removing unused utility lines and improving levees; whereas the 2024 funding and the current proposed authorization will be for later construction actions such as excavating channels, breaching levees, and building the public access trail. Additional funding to complete the project is expected to come from federal or local sources including the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Website Management and Outreach

This authorization will provide funds to the Aquatic Science Center for management of the SBSPR Project website. The website is where the SBSPR Project participants (scientists, landowners, funders, etc.) share and archive data, science reports, project monitoring reports, and permits. The website also facilitates restoration by providing information on public access during construction.

This authorization will provide \$50,000 to the California Wildlife Foundation to continue the SBSPR Project public outreach program. Given the complexity of the SBSPR Project and the impacts on the public and adjacent communities, an outreach program is necessary for successful project implementation. Outreach activities include stakeholder engagement, development of content for social media and website posts to keep the public updated on project progress, coordination of public events (e.g., tours and presentations) that engage the public in restoration and adaptive management, and strategic planning for future phases of the SBSPR Project.

Site Description: see May 27, 2021 Staff Recommendation (Exhibit 2).

Grant Applicant Qualifications: See April 18, 2024 Staff Recommendation (Exhibit 4).

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA: See June 1, 2023 Staff Recommendation (Exhibit 3).

PROJECT FINANCING

Eden Landing Restoration

Coastal Conservancy (this authorization)	\$3,079,000
Coastal Conservancy (April 2024 authorization)	\$500,000
Coastal Conservancy (May 2021 authorization)	\$7,605,000
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (this authorization)	\$6,976,691
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	\$3,940,911
Wildlife Conservation Board	\$2,832,000
Additional Anticipated Grant Funding	\$8,112,309

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Total Costs

\$33,045,911

Website Management and Outreach

Coastal Conservancy (this authorization)

\$100,000

Funds for the recommended authorization include an awarded \$6,976,691 grant to the Conservancy from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for the project at Eden Landing. The remaining funds are anticipated to come from the fiscal year 2019 appropriation to the Conservancy from the "California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018" (Prop 68, Public Resources Code Division 45, Chapters 1-13, Sections 80000-80173). In particular, Chapter 9 of Prop 68 allocates funds to the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program for projects that enhance and protect coast and ocean resources including projects that are consistent with the purposes of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program at Division 21 of the Public Resources Code. (Pub. Res. Code sections 80120 (c) and (d)). As defined by Proposition 68, the term "protection" includes actions that will improve access to public open-space areas and actions to allow the continued use and enjoyment of property and natural, cultural, and historic resources. (Section 80002(l)). The project is consistent with these requirements because it will restore tidal wetlands, create transition zone habitat for tidal marsh dependent species, and provide public access along the shoreline of San Francisco Bay.

Prop 68 funds for the San Francisco Bay Program were designated in the 2019 Budget Act specifically for wetland restoration in the Bay Area, consistent with subdivision (c) of Section 80120 of the Public Resources Code. All of the activities covered by the recommended authorization will support the wetland restoration and enhancement activities of the SBSPR Project.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION: See May 27, 2021 Staff Recommendation (Exhibit 2).

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S [2023-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN](#) GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S): See June 1, 2023 staff recommendation (Exhibit 3).

CEQA COMPLIANCE:

Actions included in this proposed authorization were evaluated in the Final Environmental Impact Report, South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project, Eden Landing Phase 2 (Final Eden Landing Phase 2 EIR) which was certified by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife in May 2019 pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"). The Conservancy made findings on the Final Eden Landing Phase 2 EIR at its May 16, 2019 meeting as part of an authorization of funding for design and permitting of the Phase 2 SBSPR Project at Eden Landing. The actions proposed in this authorization remain consistent with those findings.