



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:  
Jessica Castelli  
510-452-9261 x104  
[jcastelli@saveSFbay.org](mailto:jcastelli@saveSFbay.org)

## **COME OUT AND GARDEN... IN YOUR WETLANDS! SAVE THE BAY SEEKS HUNDREDS OF VOLUNTEERS TO PLANT 25,000 SEEDLINGS THIS WINTER**

*Healthy Wetlands Protect Communities from Sea-level Rise and Provide Habitat for Bay Wildlife*

**OAKLAND, CA – December 10, 2009** – As the largest regional organization working to protect and restore San Francisco Bay, Save The Bay is focusing winter efforts on restoring more Bay wetlands to provide natural flood control, buffers against sea-level rise and vital habitat for Bay animals. Save The Bay is seeking hundreds of volunteers to help meet its ambitious goal to plant 25,000 native wetland seedlings along the beautiful Bay shoreline in Oakland, Hayward and Palo Alto. Planting during the wet winter season ensures that the young plants, such as California aster, California poppy and lupines, get into soft soil and have the water they need to grow and thrive.

"People in the Bay Area understand that a thriving Bay is vital for our region's quality of life and economy; and this deep support from volunteers and the larger community is a critical asset in making the Bay healthier for people and wildlife," says David Lewis, Executive Director for Save The Bay.

### **Wetlands Are Vital Habitat**

Wetlands are home to endangered species, such as the California clapper rail and salt marsh harvest mouse. They keep the Bay healthy by filtering runoff pollution to improve water quality. Additionally, they act as a sponge, providing flood control when water levels are high and create a protective buffer for communities threatened by rising sea levels associated with global warming.

As a result of development and fill, only ten percent of the Bay's original wetlands remain. Yet, scientists say the Bay needs 100,000 acres of healthy wetlands to maintain a sustainable eco-system. Save The Bay is working toward this goal by stopping inappropriate shoreline development and protecting, restoring and enhancing this vital habitat.

### **Volunteers Have Planted More than 100,000 Seedlings in the last Decade**

Save The Bay's *Community-based Restoration Program* uses innovative scientific techniques, a highly skilled staff, and 5,000 trained volunteers annually to restore the Bay. Volunteers have helped plant more than 100,000 native plants along the shoreline since 2000. Save The Bay uses scientific methods to develop best practices that re-establish and enhance wetlands efficiently, and continually hones techniques based on careful site-monitoring data. Save The Bay is a pioneer in restoring upland transition zones — narrow areas of vegetation located between water and land that are critical rare plant and wildlife habitat, and important flood buffers.

"We are relying on the encouraging Bay Area community to provide volunteer support during this winter planting season. Establishing more native vegetation is crucial to ensuring a reliable food source and resilient habitat for sensitive species during high tide and storms," says Darcie Goodman Collins, Ph. D., Habitat Restoration Director for Save The Bay.

Save The Bay is seeking volunteers to help out at the following sites:

- **Eden Landing Ecological Reserve** in Hayward/Union City is a 6,000-acre complex of former salt ponds and is also part of the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project. Restoring the wetlands here will provide local recreational opportunities for residents and habitat for endangered shorebirds, waterfowl, and fish. This work also helps to stabilize levees at this site. *Save The Bay is in need of volunteers for planting events on December 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. Save The Bay hopes to have 60 volunteers each day planting 500 plants per day.*
- **San Francisquito Creek** in the **Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve** is a restoration site located adjacent to a highly populated urban area, providing a natural space for residents to visit, view wildlife, and get away from the hustle and bustle of city life. Unlike other creeks in the area that have been confined to pipes over

portions of their length, San Francisquito is the last South Bay creek that runs above ground. This site hosts one of Save The Bay's Native Plant Nurseries.

- Another urban wetland – the **Martin Luther King Jr. Shoreline** – has some of the last remaining natural tidal marsh in the East Bay. Five major creeks flow into this 50 acre marsh, providing important sanctuary for a variety of animals, including the burrowing owl and the endangered California clapper rail. The MLK Jr. Shoreline also hosts a Save The Bay Native Plant Nursery.

### **How to Volunteer**

Save The Bay is in need of corporations and community groups for private, weekday volunteer opportunities, which are great team-building events! Join the Redford Center, Emeryville Coast Guard, Yahoo!, Audubon, Marriott, SAP, and VM Ware, who are making a commitment to the Bay and have already scheduled private restoration programs. **To schedule a private restoration event, contact Natalie LaVan, Restoration Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator, at [natalie@savesfbay.org](mailto:natalie@savesfbay.org) or (510) 452.9261 x109.**

**To sign up to volunteer for a public event, visit [www.saveSFbay.org/bayevents](http://www.saveSFbay.org/bayevents). All volunteer restoration programs are free, but an RSVP is required.**

### **About Save The Bay**

Save The Bay is the largest regional organization working to protect, restore and celebrate San Francisco Bay. As its leading champion since 1961, Save The Bay protects the Bay from pollution and inappropriate shoreline development, making it cleaner and healthier for people and wildlife. We restore habitat and secure strong policies to re-establish 100,000 acres of wetlands that are essential for a healthy Bay. We engage more than 25,000 supporters, advocates and volunteers to protect the Bay, and inspire the next generation of environmental leaders by educating thousands of students annually. [www.saveSFbay.org](http://www.saveSFbay.org)

### **Save The Bay's Site Partners**

Save The Bay's volunteer projects are made possible through partnerships with local, state, and federal resource agencies with the goal of engaging student and community volunteers in wetland restoration. Partners include:

Eden Landing Ecological Reserve: California Department of Fish and Game [www.cdfg.ca.gov](http://www.cdfg.ca.gov)

San Francisquito Creek/Palo Alto Baylands: Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve [www.cityofpaloalto.org](http://www.cityofpaloalto.org)

Martin Luther King Jr. Shoreline: East Bay Regional Park District [www.ebparks.org](http://www.ebparks.org)

###