

# Watershed

The Newsletter of Save The Bay

Winter 2001



## Taking Restoration Into Our Own Hands

Save The Bay's new Community-Based Restoration Program (CBR) brings diverse communities together to protect and restore wetlands and creeks near their homes and businesses in many areas around the Bay. CBR enlists community members to participate directly in hands-on habitat restoration projects while learning environmental stewardship values and skills.

The CBR Program is a unique collaboration among Save The Bay, local middle and high schools, community groups, corporate sponsors, private landowners, academia, local and state resource agencies, and our members.

At our Arrowhead Marsh pilot site, located in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Shoreline Park in Oakland, Save The Bay and the East Bay Regional Park District are recruiting and training volunteers to harvest local native plant seeds and plant them in greenhouses.

Each year hundreds of volunteers work at restoration sites around the Bay planting native trees and marsh plants removing invasive plant species, harvesting seeds and raising plants in greenhouses, planting mature plants in wetland areas, creating habitat for birds, animals and fish, monitoring water quality and raising oysters. With so much interesting work in the months ahead, there's truly something for everyone to do!

*See pages 4-5 for more information about our restoration projects.*

### Spend a Day Restoring the Bay

Families, individuals and couples young and old, students, teachers, service clubs, employee groups and communities—all can lend a hand, while learning more about the Bay and having fun at the same time. Save The Bay's Community-Based Restoration (CBR) projects are held year-round throughout the Bay Area.

**Come Join Us!**

*Contact Marilyn Latta at (510) 452-9261 for more information.*

**SAVE THE BAY**

Save San Francisco Bay Association

## Arrowhead Marsh: For the Birds, the Fish, and for Us

Just south of downtown Oakland, midway between the Coliseum and the Oakland Airport in Martin Luther King Regional Shoreline Park, lies Arrowhead Marsh, a wonderful wetlands complex, with a surprisingly varied mix of open bays, winding creeks, and animal life. In the distance the towers of Oakland rise above the marsh grass and pickleweed, and farther out across San Leandro Bay one can see the San Francisco skyline, Yerba Buena Island, and Mt. Tamalpais.

It seems a genuine miracle that this park is here and that such a wonderful place of beauty and wildness can be found often within quite audible range of Oakland's International Airport. Of the 2,000 acres of tidal marsh gracing San Leandro Bay in the late 1800s, only 70 remain today. Massive Bay fill projects have taken their toll here as they have in so many other parts of our vastly reduced and compromised Bay. In addition to having its outlet relocated from south to northwest, San Leandro Bay has had more than its share of industrial development, as well as the airport, freeways, and housing.

After completing a restoration project on a sunny day last winter, I took my lawn chair and binoculars out to the end of the long pier that juts into the center of the marsh. Sitting quietly here for the remainder of a pleasant afternoon, I heard an endangered California clapper rail (I've seen them several times here in the park) and observed more than twenty species of ducks and migratory shorebirds.

Near the junction where Elmhurst and San Leandro creeks empty into the Bay, I've watched American avocets, dowitchers, curlews, and numerous wading ducks feeding and resting on the protected mud flats at low tide. In other parts of the

park I've seen burrowing owls, golden eagles, ground squirrels—"fast food" for the eagles—and many other thrilling bits of the natural world tucked into this special green corner of our urbanized Bay Area.

If you take a canoe or kayak out into the waters of San Leandro Bay—which seems so small on the map when you compare it to its big sister Bay just beyond Alameda and Bay Farm Island—you'll be surprised at the immense scale of this body of water as you paddle the sometimes roiling waves and wind-blown currents.

What continues to amaze me most about this part of the Bay is just how well it continues to function as it is supposed to, in spite of all the changes we have made to it. Arrowhead Marsh is not a wilderness—it will never be restored to its former "pre-human" condition. After all, human beings have been living in the Bay Area for a long time. Nature without a human footprint hasn't been seen around these parts for at least several thousand years. But just as human beings have harmed or destroyed much of the Bay, it is also human beings who are trying to restore it—and with considerable success at places like Arrowhead Marsh.

I'm proud of the work Save The Bay has been doing for the past forty years to help protect and restore some of these special places around the Bay, and I hope you'll join us on an exploration to some of them in the coming year as we begin our new "Discover the Bay" Program.

Restoration is, ultimately, for all of us. The fish and birds need these places, and so do we.



*Paul Revier*  
*Communications Director*

*"It seems a genuine miracle that this park is here...such a wonderful place of beauty and wildness..."*

### Feather River Salmon Trip Kicks Off New Save The Bay Program

The first outing in Save The Bay's newest education program – *Discover the Bay* – was a great success, with 26 adventurers setting off in canoes to explore the Feather River and to catch a glimpse of migrating Chinook salmon.

This gentle river trip, to the north Central Valley area between Oroville and Gridley started off on a Friday evening at a riverside campsite. Under a star-filled sky and around a crackling fire, Save The Bay's Josh Bagnato started the evening with a fascinating discussion about the salmon life cycle and the natural history of the area of the Feather River Canyon.

On Saturday morning, refreshed after a night's sleep alongside the river (where several of us were

awakened by the early-morning slap of a Beaver's tale on the water), our group headed down the clear-running river to see how many salmon we could spot. We weren't disappointed. Huge Chinooks, some nearly three feet long passed by our canoes as we drifted downstream with the current. Occasionally, several of them rocketed past, causing a splashing commotion with their rapid advances up the river. We saw evidence of just how arduous this trip can be, as there were many salmon carcasses in the water; the end came early for some of these weary travelers.

Along the way we had a refreshing swim in the cool green water and a picnic lunch on a sandy island. Floating along we contemplated the salmon's long journey home. Passing under the Golden Gate Bridge and up through the Delta, swimming along the Sacramento River shoreline near the State Capital, these Chinook swam northward through the agricultural heart of California until they reached the junction of the Feather River at Marysville where they headed upstream to their spawning area. Many obstacles and dangers had been overcome, yet here they were, once again. We were thrilled to be there to watch them.



*Chinook salmon on the Feather River near Oroville*

Each year, salmon migrate from the rivers and streams along the western coasts of Canada and the U.S. to the Pacific Ocean.

Simultaneously, others leave the ocean and return to freshwater to spawn and repeat the cycle. Within the last one hundred years the number of salmon making their trip home from the sea began to decline all along the Pacific Coast. By the 1970s the rate of decline had dramatically increased, and by the 1990s the U.S. Endangered Species Act listed 26 kinds of salmon as endangered or threatened.

Over the past 150 years, mining, livestock grazing, timber harvesting, agriculture as well as recreational and urban development have eliminated or substantially reduced salmon habitat.

The general needs of these fish are really quite simple: they must have plenty of gravel in which to spawn; they need enough clean, cool water to swim, escape predators and find food; and they require sufficient vegetation along the river banks to protect the stream bed from excessive erosion or sedimentation, to add nutrients to the water and to provide woody debris as shelter from strong currents.

*Information excerpted from: American Scientist May/June-2001  
"Preserving Salmon Biodiversity" by Phillip S. Levin and Michael H. Schiewe*



For more information about Save The Bay's new *Discover The Bay* Program, please contact Eric Vance at 510/452-9261, or email him at: [evance@savesfbay.org](mailto:evance@savesfbay.org)

## What is Habitat Restoration?

Habitat restoration means the process of returning a habitat to an approximation of its condition prior to human disturbance. Restoration activities may include, but are not limited to: the re-establishment of habitat structure – be it chemical, biological, or physical. This may include re-establishing or maintaining hydrology, whether by re-establishing river or tidal flow, restoring flood regimes, or re-establishing topography. Control of exotic, non-native or invasive species of plants or animals. Re-vegetation through native plantings or natural succession. Removal of barriers or construction of fish ladders to provide passage for spawning or migrating fish. Controlling, reducing, or eliminating other specific adverse impacts such as controlling polluted runoff.

*“...in the long run the health of an ecosystem is going to depend on the people who inhabit it.”*

*William R. Jordan*

## Why Grow Native Plants?

Propagating and planting native plants to help restore habitats around the San Francisco Bay provides a very real solution to some of the Bay’s biggest restoration challenges. The invasion of non-native species has caused a drastic reduction in native plant populations around the Bay. This results in decreased habitat and food supplies for native organisms, disrupting the natural food chain and delicate ecological balance of Bay communities.

*“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.”*

*Marcel Proust*

**Even though the Bay’s water appears cleaner than at Bay’s salt marshes, eelgrass beds, and historic fish now to restore these vital habitats.**

**There’s truly something for everyone to do...**



More than at any time during the past 30 years, the historic fish runs are disappearing. We need to act



## Why Are Wetlands So Important?

### Water Quality

The cleansing capabilities of wetlands are important for filtering out chemical and other water-borne pollutants.

### Recreation

Wetlands serve as recreation areas for hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, photography, and wildlife observation.

### Habitat and food web support

Wetlands provide essential habitat for hundreds of plant and animal species. Wetlands also support the food web, both by providing food for fish and wildlife and by exporting nutrients to downstream areas.

### Open space and aesthetic values

Wetlands are areas of great diversity and beauty, providing open space for recreational and visual enjoyment.

### Economic value

Wetlands provide millions of dollars of economic benefits to California communities and to the public at large, by performing a number of functions such as flood control and water purification as well as recreation, ecotourism and fishing jobs.

### Water Supply

Wetlands are increasingly important for the recharge of both ground and surface water because of the growth of urban centers and dwindling ground and surface water supplies.

Source: *Save The Bay, 2000. Protecting Local Wetlands.*

*“To achieve, one must dream greatly, one must not be afraid to think large thoughts.”*

*Rachel Carson*

### San Franciscans Vote To Protect The Bay Landmark Bay Protection Passes by 3 to 1



*David Lewis, Save The Bay's Executive Director, addresses a Proposition D rally*

On Tuesday, November 6, San Francisco voters sent a strong message: ***Don't Mess with Our Bay***. The passage of Proposition D once again demonstrated the deep love Bay Area residents have for our region's most valuable natural resource and showed that San Francisco residents don't trust the airport commission and other political appointees to protect it.

Proposition D requires that any City of San Francisco-sponsored project that requires 100 acres or more of Bay fill be subject to a citywide vote. The only project that comes close to the 100-or-more-acre marker is SFO's massive plan to fill up to 1,000 acres to reconfigure its runways.

Proposition D is a strong mandate for protecting San Francisco Bay, and thanks and congratulations to all of you who helped make it happen!

### SFO Pushes Forward With Plans To Pave The Bay

With the dramatic drop in air travel since September 11, delays have virtually disappeared at SFO, and airport officials predict more than a \$100 million shortfall in revenue this year. Nevertheless, the airport plans to run full speed ahead with plans to fill up to 1,000 acres of the Bay to reconfigure its runways. Not only does SFO plan to move forward, recent indications suggest they plan to propose that the reconfigured runways are necessary for security—an argument they have never used before.

More than ever before it seems clear that SFO's runway plans are reckless, in addition to being unnecessary and harmful to the Bay. To those who still believe that SFO expansion proponents are waiting until the research studies are completed before stating their recommendations, here's what the airport's chief runway champion, San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown said in a recent speech to local union leaders: "There ain't no way but to pave the bay!"

Save The Bay is currently working to inform Bay Area residents about the impacts SFO's runways would have on the Bay. We are also urging the airport to look at alternatives to runway reconfiguration, more efficient use of the current runways, new guidance technologies, and regional transportation planning: all reasonable approaches which should be thoroughly evaluated before filling the Bay is considered.

If you wish to stay up to date with the latest events surrounding SFO's on-going runway plans, please call Dirk Manskopf at 510.452.9261 or contact him at [dirk@savesfbay.org](mailto:dirk@savesfbay.org).



*Photo by Chris Baker*

**DISCOVER THE BAY - WINTER OUTINGS**

**January 19** Flyway Festival paddle trips at the annual Northern San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival  
**9:00 – 12:30** Bull Island (Napa River near Vallejo)  
**9:00 – 12:30** Petaluma Marsh (Lakeville Rd. near Hwy. 37)  
*(Special Flyway Festival rate - \$20.00)*

**OTHER OUTINGS AROUND THE BAY**

**January 26** Learn, Bird and have fun as we walk along Tolay Creek, a newly restored wetland in the North Bay. 9:30 am – 1:30  
**February 2** Bike and Bird along the Hayward shoreline and view San Francisco Bay's migratory birds. 9:00 am – 1:00  
*(The fee for the above outings is \$5.00, and includes maps and interpretive information.)*

To reserve your spot on these outings, please call Jocelyn at 510.452.9261 or [jhittle@savesfbay.org](mailto:jhittle@savesfbay.org)



*Exploring Rush Ranch on Suisun Bay*

**Parks Bond On The March Ballot**

On March 5, 2002, California voters will decide whether to approve \$2.6 billion in general obligation bonds to be paid over the next 25 years. If approved, AB 1602 (Fred Keeley-D) will provide funding to many important San Francisco Bay-Delta watershed protection and restoration projects.

*If you're interested in doing more! Look for updates on this issue in the coming months as the March election approaches.*

**TAKE ACTION FOR THE BAY**

Please send a letter to encourage the Regional Water Quality Control Board to start mandated water-quality restoration efforts for dozens of Bay Area creeks and Bay segments. The Clean Water Act requires the Board to list water bodies that are polluted and start comprehensive cleanup processes (TMDLs) to ensure restoration. While this mandate has been ignored for decades, state regulators are finally starting this process under pressure from local, regional and national environmental groups. Bay Area municipalities are resisting efforts to expand the list of restoration projects. The Regional Board also appears to be accommodating these interests by ignoring polluted water bodies in and around the Bay. Please let Board know that we expect it to implement the Clean Water Act!

*Send your comments to:*

**SFBRWQCB Region 2**  
**1515 Clay Street, Suite 1400 – Oakland, CA 94612**  
**Phone 510.622.2300 Fax 510.622.2460**

**Will Your Company Match Your Gift To Save The Bay?**

Your company may want to help you support Save The Bay. Please check with your Human Resources Department to find out if they have a matching gift program. The following companies are just a few places that already have matched gifts to Save The Bay.

- Adobe Systems Inc.
- AIG
- American Express
- Anchor Brewing
- Autodesk, Inc.
- Becton Dickinson
- Boeing
- Bank of America
- Cadence Design Systems, Inc.
- Charles Schwab
- Cisco Systems
- Clorox
- Capital Group
- EBay
- Fleet
- Gap Foundation
- IBM
- Marin Community Foundation
- McGraw-Hill
- Microsoft
- National Semi-Conductor
- PG&E
- Platinum Technologies
- Prudential Foundation
- SAFECO
- Silicon Graphics
- Sun Micro - systems
- Transamerica
- Washington Mutual

# SAVE THE BAY

*Save The Bay has been working for four decades to protect and restore the San Francisco Bay-Delta and to improve public access to its shoreline. We are committed to keeping the Bay alive, healthy, and beautiful.*

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*Brooks Island*

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## **Need a Speaker?**

**S**ave The Bay's Speakers' Bureau gives talks to community associations, civic groups, environmental clubs, boating clubs, garden clubs, fishing groups or *any* organization concerned about the future of San Francisco Bay. We have speakers available in most parts of the Bay and with four weeks' notice will try to accommodate your group

Contact Paul Revier [previer@savesfbay.org](mailto:previer@savesfbay.org)  
or (510) 452-9261 for more information

## **Forgotten Who Your Legislators Are?**

**L**ook them up on the internet at [www.state.ca.us](http://www.state.ca.us), or call or e-mail Dirk Manskopf at Save The Bay for legislative information as well as updates on action needed to achieve bill passage at [dirk@savesfbay.org](mailto:dirk@savesfbay.org) or (510) 452-9261.

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