

San Francisco Bay Joint Venture Coordinator's Report



TO: San Francisco Bay Joint Venture Management Board Members and Alternates

FROM: Sandra Scoggin, Coordinator

DATE: August 23, 2022

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This report is an overview of Joint Venture activities and significant developments since the May 24, 2022 Coordinator's report and is compiled by the SFBJV Coordinator with contributions from JV partners.

A. News of Note from the Joint Venture

1. **SFBJV Management Board Meeting - Tuesday, August 30, 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. via [ZOOM](#)**

We look forward to virtually gathering with you to address JV business, issues, and news.

This meeting includes requested actions, exciting news, and opportunities for input. Requested actions include approval of meeting notes [Attachment A] and of our two-year Operational Plan (OP) [News of Note #6 and Attachment C]. At our last meeting, we gathered your input on the draft initiatives and operations on which we propose to focus over the next two years. Our leadership team, staff, and consultants met to further refine the OP document and we look forward to discussing and seeking your approval.

Ariana Rickard of Sonoma Land Trust will present an update on Highway 37 planning [News of Note # 7 and Attachment D] and lead a discussion about an effort by Sonoma Land Trust, in coordination with USFWS, to expand the National Wildlife Refuge boundaries [News of Note #8 and Attachment E]. You will also be asked to share announcements from your agency or organization.

2. **SFBJV Implementation Plan Update is Complete!**

I am incredibly pleased to announce the **completion and management board approval of the updated SFBJV Implementation Plan!!** The Implementation Plan Team, work teams, authors, contributors, reviewers, SFBJV staff, and many others dedicated their time and passion to producing this exciting and ambitious update to our implementation strategy that will guide our next decade-plus of urgent action. I look forward to planning an in person celebration so we can thank our community for their contributions and perseverance. The plan is now with the design team and we expect to be able to distribute it at or shortly after our meeting. We will provide a sneak preview at our meeting.

Sandra kicked off outreach about the plan with a presentation to the San Francisco Estuary Partnership Implementation Committee on August 17. We will provide more information and resources in the coming weeks about how you can share and inspire action under our new plan.

3. **New Management Board Members**

In other excellent news, we have two new board representatives joining us. As Caitlin noted at our

last meeting, the board seats for the member agencies California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) were both vacant. Caitlin and Sandra met with Jennifer Norris of CNRA and Luisa Valiela of USEPA and they each agreed to fill their agency seat.

Most members are likely familiar with Jennifer and Luisa, but briefly Jennifer Norris serves as Deputy Secretary for Biodiversity and Habitat. She leads the state's 30x30 initiative and oversees "Cutting Green Tape" in support of landscape scale habitat restoration. She has extensive experience in conservation policy, endangered species protection and ecosystem management. Luisa Valiela is an Environmental Protection Specialist, and has played a key role in bay area conservation for decades, including as a leader, funder, and key advisor for a broad range of projects and programs such as the Wetland Regional Monitoring Program, San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority, Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team, and as manager of the EPA's Water Quality Improvement Fund.

There is so much to be thrilled about at this juncture, and the addition of these two board members is no exception! We warmly welcome both of them to the SFBJV Management Board and look forward to deeper coordination and collaboration with each of them and their agencies.

4. Departing SFBJV Staff

With tremendous gratitude and well wishes, we celebrated **Caroline Warner** as she transitioned into a life after SFBJV. The event was held at the Lyford house and true to the spirit of Caroline's personal and professional enrichment of the lives of JV community members, there were stories, poems, songs, gifts, and heartfelt recollections. Caroline will be staying local and can be reached at enoughtolove@gmail.com. If you were not able to attend, you will still have a chance to wish her well at our IP release celebration and/or through other projects with which she may continue to engage. You can also read her recent [bulletin feature](#) here about her time with the SFBJV and more.

We presented a beautiful Beth Huning print of two cranes in flight on behalf of the SFBJV Management Board. Ducks Unlimited presented a beautiful full-sized canvasback decoy by Charles Jobes.



5. New SFBJV Staff

I'm thrilled to announce that we have filled our two new positions and it is my pleasure to welcome the new members of our SFBJV Staff team:

Our new **Policy and Communications Coordinator is Nikki Roach**, who will join us on September 12. Born and raised in Oakland, CA, Nikki has spent the last decade working in conservation across

academia, NGO's, and international institutions. She holds a BS from UC Davis in Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Sciences, a MS from Clemson University in the Department of Forestry and Environmental Sciences where she led the first ever state-wide surveys for Eastern Black Rails in South Carolina, and a PhD from Texas A&M University in the Applied Biodiversity Science Program. For her PhD Nikki worked in Colombia assessing the vulnerability of threatened amphibians to climate and land use change and the sustainability of coffee farming practices. She has spent seven years working with the IUCN Species Survival Commission as part of the amphibian, small mammal, and climate change specialist groups, and is an associate scientist for international NGO Re:wild. She was a Fulbright Scholar (Colombia 2017-2018) and the Director of Communications for the Latin America and Caribbean Section of Society for Conservation Biology (2018-2020).

With a deep national and international network of colleagues and friends, Nikki enjoys exploring the world and quite literally moving through life - whether that is through dance, hiking, or yoga. She is a certified yoga instructor, heliophile, and avid animal lover, pet-sitting her way across the bay area.

Nikki recently returned to the Bay with intentions to become more involved in local conservation initiatives. After spending years working across different spatial scales she recognizes the importance of local and regional planning and action and is excited to dedicate her efforts toward the SFBJV implementation plan. Nikki is a gregarious and adaptable person and loves to meet new people from all walks of life. She is fiercely dedicated to improving equity across the conservation sector and looks forward to getting to know everyone in the partnership in these coming months! Learn more about Nikki [here](#).

Our new **Conservation Program Coordinator is Gemma Williams**, who will join us on September 26. Gemma grew up in the foothills of California just outside of the Yosemite Valley, where she developed a deep appreciation for the natural world, climbing, and getting her hands dirty helping with local environmental initiatives. Over the past eleven years, she has worked in the public, private, and non-profit sectors supporting community-based stewardship, restoration planning, and biological monitoring.

Gemma attended Cal Poly Humboldt where she graduated with a BA in Geography and Natural Resources with an emphasis in mapping sciences and cartography. She then served two terms as an AmeriCorps member with the Watershed Stewards Program placed at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, where she developed her wetland and 'stream legs' while performing amphibian and salmonid spawner surveys in north coast watersheds.

She continued with her applied stewardship work through seasonal terms with the USDA Forest Service performing both rare plant surveys and leading Youth Conservation Corps crews in invasive plant management. While at the Great Basin Institute she led a crew in ecological monitoring on BLM land in both California and Nevada in support of data-informed rangeland management.

She landed in the Bay Area six years ago to work for the Sonoma Ecology Center as a Restoration Specialist managing and implementing riparian restoration projects throughout the Sonoma Valley watershed. From there she climbed over the Mayacama Mountain range for the Conservation Program Assistant position with the Napa Resource Conservation District (RCD) where she managed

citizen science and oak woodland mapping projects, facilitated a countywide wildlife lecture series, performed fisheries and amphibian monitoring, and managed RCD outreach and volunteer event coordination.

For the past four years, Jemma has worked as a Senior Biologist for WRA Environmental Consulting where she performed wetland delineations, biological monitoring, special status species surveys, and managed regulatory permitting for tidal marsh, riparian, and wetland restoration and mitigation projects throughout the Bay Area. In this role, she often supported local government agencies with regulatory compliance and identified and monitored a variety of restoration and mitigation sites.

Outside of work she enjoys reading, digging in her garden, traveling, hiking, photographing nature/wildlife, or working with herbs and fermented foods. She is also a certified yoga teacher and is interested in the anatomy of the human body and experience.

One of her superpowers is connecting people to people as well as people to places, and she is excited for the opportunity to apply her experience in supporting the SFBJV's mission. She's looking forward to meeting and collaborating with the partners soon! Learn more about Jemma [here](#).

Thank you to the hiring team of Caitlin Sweeney, Rebecca Schwartz Lesberg, and Sam Veloz for all of their help throughout the hiring process.

6. Operational Plan [Attachment C]

Gina Morris and Andy Leider of [The Potrero Group](#), working with a leadership team comprising all current and immediate past committee chairs, board chair, IPT chair, plus our fiscal sponsor and staff, have developed a two year operational plan. This ensures that in addition to the 2022 *Restoring the Estuary*, which outlines our goals, priorities, and programs, we will also have a focused set of initiatives and actions that the partnership will implement under the new plan. Please carefully review Attachment C prior to our meeting and come prepared to discuss and vote.

7. State Route (SR) 37 Baylands Group (Ariana Rickard, Sonoma Land Trust) [Attachment D]

The SR 37-Baylands Group is made up of North Bay wetland land managers, ecological restoration practitioners, and other stakeholders with a long-term interest in the conservation and restoration of the San Pablo Baylands, including SFBJV staff and several partners. The group formed in 2017 with the goals of creating and promoting adoption of guiding principles, developing an ecological landscape vision, and exploring funding and policy options. Activity over the last three months included the following:

SR 37 Policy Committee Meeting:

- The Policy Committee met on June 2. The agenda and materials are [here](#).
- The packet includes updates on
 - SB 1050, the State Route 37 Toll Bridge Act, introduced by Senator Dodd
 - SR 37 Sears Point to Mare Island Improvement Project (Interim Project/Congestion Relief)
 - SR 37 101 to 121 Flood Reduction Project

- Planning and Environmental Linkages Study (PEL)
- SMART (Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit) – SR 37 improvements White Paper

Baylands tour with Congressman Huffman:

- On June 30, Sonoma Land Trust co-hosted a Baylands tour with Congressman Huffman with over 40 participants, including Congressional representatives (Huffman and Thompson), Supervisor David Rabbitt, and other decision makers and stakeholders.
- Tour participants visited wetland restoration and climate resilience opportunities in the San Pablo Baylands along the State Route 37 Corridor.

Baylands Group SR 37 Position Paper - July 2022

- The Baylands Group and other stakeholders produced a position paper supporting a pile-supported causeway along the current alignment [Attachment D].
- The position paper was shared widely, and is on the State Coastal Conservancy [website](#) and the Sonoma Land Trust [website](#).

Marin IJ article and ABC news piece

- The Marin Independent Journal published an article on August 1 on SR 37 and how plans to improve the highway will impact our ability to implement North Bay wetland restoration plans. Read the article [here](#).
- The article contains quotes from SFEI, the Water Board, Sonoma Land Trust, Rep. Huffman, other elected officials, Caltrans, and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.
- On August 10, ABC news aired a piece on how our wetlands restoration work will provide habitat and human community resilience to sea level rise and how these plans tie in with SR 37. See the segment [here](#).
- The story includes interviews with Sonoma Land Trust, SFEI, and Rep. Huffman.

For more information, visit Caltrans' [website for SR 37 projects](#), and the Sonoma County Transportation Authority's public engagement [website for Resilient SR 37 planning](#).

8. San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge Acquisition Boundary Expansion (Sonoma Land Trust) [Attachment E]

Sonoma Land Trust (SLT) will lead a discussion about this effort. They strongly support the expansion of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge acquisition boundary as part of their campaign to protect and restore 20,000 acres of tidal wetland habitat in the San Pablo Baylands, helping to meet state and federal 30 x 30 goals. Review **Attachment E** for additional background.

9. 2023-2027 State Coastal Conservancy Strategic Plan Development Process

The Conservancy is updating its Strategic Plan for 2023-2027. A draft is available for public review [here](#). They invite public comments on the draft plan between now and October 1, 2022 through [this](#)

[form](#). They intend to bring a final version of the plan to their Board in December. Visit their [website](#) for additional updates.

10. Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program (WRMP)

The SFBJV is a funded partner for phase 2 work with a focus on outreach and user input and testing of the WRMP data management system, currently focused on geospatial data. The SFBJV and the SF Bay NERR worked with SFEI on functional requirements of a GeoBlacklight Data Catalog. SFEI built the online catalog and the team is now working on user training and input sessions for those expected to both be inputting and accessing data through the data catalog.

Other activity in recent months includes updates to the program charter and development of the data management and delivery system and SOPs for Indicators 1 and 3 (baylands, transition zone, and migration space habitats).

Sandra currently serves as Steering Committee Chair and SFBJV Management Board member Erika Castillo serves as Vice Chair. More information about the WRMP development process is available on their [website](#) where you can also subscribe to their newsletter at the bottom of the page.

11. SF Bay Restoration Authority *(from Jessica Davenport, State Coastal Conservancy)*

The Measure AA 2022 Grant Round and Community Grants Program: The Restoration Authority's preliminary list of recommended projects for Round 6 (2022) will be announced at the October 14 board meeting. The Restoration Authority's Community Grants Program, which funds projects led by community-based organizations in economically disadvantaged communities, is accepting applications on a rolling basis. See the links below for more information:

- [Grant Round Page](#)
- [Community Grants Page](#)

SFBRA Projects: The Restoration Authority board authorized funding for the following projects in June:

- [De-Pave Park Project](#), City of Alameda
- [Baylands Habitat Restoration and Community Engagement in East Palo Alto](#), Grassroots Ecology
- [SAFER Bay Planning Project](#), San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority
- [Regionally Advancing Living Shorelines](#), San Francisco Estuary Institute

SFBRA Other Updates: The Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team presented its [annual performance assessment](#) in June.

More information about the Restoration Authority can be found [on their website](#).

12. SFBJV Letters of Support and Comment

The SFBJV sent the following letters which are available upon request.

- Letter to the National C-CAP Project Manager, NOAA Office for Coastal Management, in support of alliance level vegetation mapping of the tidal wetlands to support Wetland Regional Monitoring Program goals. Signed by JV Coordinator as WRMP Chair. Letter dated August 2, 2022.
- Baylands Group SR 37 Position Paper in support of the recommendation that all interim projects be low-cost, low-impact fixes or serve as initial phases of the ultimate project. Letter dated July 22. [Attachment D]

B. Joint Venture Working Committee Summaries

Working committee activity was less than typical this quarter as partners and staff have focused on completion of several significant projects, including the Implementation Plan Revision, Operational Plan, and Website Revision, along with staff transitions that included a long-time staff departure and intensive hiring process. We expect committee activity to pick up once new staff are onboard and implementation of our new plans ramps up.

- 1. Conservation Committee (CC) – Julian Wood, Chair**
- 2. Science Committee (SC) – Renee Spent, Chair**

Neither the Conservation nor the Science Committee met this quarter. Work by chairs, members, and staff focused on completing the Implementation Plan and Operational Plan.

3. Outreach & Communications

In addition to Bulletin production, web maintenance, IP editing and design, other highlights include:

Website overhaul

Work continues with [CryBaby Design](#). Input from a review team of a half a dozen partner volunteers was shared with the designers prior to Caroline’s departure. CryBaby is also the design team for the IP and they are currently focusing on that project, but will turn their attention back to the website work once the IP design is complete.

SediMatch website update

SFBJV staff are working with SFEI to update the [SediMatch page](#) which was last updated in 2017. The new home will be modeled after their [Adaptation Atlas](#) and include information about the SediMatch program and webtool, link to all related reports, and include contacts. The new site will be available at [this link](#) once it is finalized. SFEI staff hope to publish the site by the end of the month, so check back in early September. It is expected to include an overview that expresses the value of sediment to wetlands, habitat, and our built environment. This closes out our EPA Water Quality Improvement Fund work on the Healthy Watersheds, Resilient Baylands Grant.

Regional Communications Team

The Regional Communications Team met on May 26 to consider the next steps of this group, given Caroline’s departure from the SFBJV. Caroline co-lead this team alongside Darcie Luce of SFEP for many

years. The team had a productive discussion on the future of the group and put in place a short-term plan to keep the group running while the SFBJV hires for two new positions. The group will self-organize for now and regroup after the SFBJV new hires come onboard. There was strong consensus that the group provides a benefit and should continue.

The short-term plan is to continue to meet quarterly for skillshares, check-ins, and mutual assistance with campaigns. They will rotate leads and supports, which will be self-designated. Meeting leads can decide whether they want to host a skillshare or just hold a check-in.

In attendance: Caroline (SFBJV), Sandra Scoggin (SFBJV), Darcie Luce (SFEP), Diana Fu (SFEP), Tony Hale (SFEI), Mark Prado (Bay Area Metro), Aimee Good (SFSU/NERR), Beth Slatkin (Bay Nature), Ariel Ambruster (South Bay Salt Ponds), and Zachary Warnow (Point Blue)

4. Policy Committee – Rebecca Schwartz Lesberg, Chair

The Policy Committee did not meet this quarter.

5. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee - Casey Arndt, Chair

The EDI committee did not meet this quarter. As a reminder, this is a new committee as of November 2021 and is guided by [this charter](#).

C. Packet Attachments

- A. Meeting notes from the May 24, 2022 Management Board meeting
- B. Coordinator's Report
- C. SFBJV Operational Plan
- D. Baylands Group Position Paper, July 2022