

San Francisco Bay Joint Venture Coordinator’s Report



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

FROM: Sandra Scoggin, Coordinator

DATE: February 15, 2022

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This report is an overview of Joint Venture activities and significant developments since the November 2021 Coordinator’s report and is compiled by SFBJV staff with contributions from JV partners.

A. News of Note from the Joint Venture

1. SFBJV Management Board Meeting - Tuesday, February 22, 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. via [ZOOM](#)

We look forward to gathering with you on February 22 to address important JV business. We have a number of action and discussion items and appreciate your review of the write ups below along with the attachments. You will also find several updates on regional programs and other important activities from the last quarter within this report.

Requested actions include the approval of meeting notes [Attachment A], adoption of the proposed budget for 2022 [Attachment C], and proposed addition of Tom Gardali, CEO of Audubon Canyon Ranch, as a new management board member [Attachment E].

In addition to the proposed actions, we will meet Dan Blake, the new US Fish and Wildlife Service Migratory Bird Chief for our region, and hear briefly about his vision for the Migratory Bird Program and working with the region’s Joint Ventures; review 2021 accomplishments and discuss what is in the works for 2022; and hear updates on our website revision, IPR and strategic planning, as well as this year’s virtual “fly in” to DC. Jeff McCreary will outline current efforts to expand migratory bird joint venture program funding and partnerships to respond to the three billion bird decline and ask you all - what might we do with increased funding? [Attachment D and news of note #7].

2. News about JV people

As you have likely heard by now, long time SFBJV partner and 2013-15 management board chair, **Amy Hutzel** [became the new Executive Officer of the California State Coastal Conservancy](#) in November. Amy has been fiercely devoted to [the mission](#) of the Coastal Conservancy throughout her two decade tenure, and has a demonstrated commitment to restoring wetlands, protecting open space and increasing access to natural areas for people living in the urban environment. Governor Newsom's 2021 budget bill assigned \$500 million for coastal resilience, to be appropriated through the Conservancy in the next two Fiscal Years. With Amy at the helm, we believe this is good news for wetlands, birds and all of us.

As of the end of January, **Mike Montgomery** has left the Regional Water Quality Control Board after 3 years serving as their Executive Officer to return to the EPA Region 9 as Director of the Superfund and

Emergency Management Division. We thank him for his engagement and contributions to the partnership during his tenure and wish him well in his new position. His SFBJV board replacement is Lisa McCann. On her Linked-in profile Lisa is described as an experienced Environmental Program Manager with a demonstrated history of working in the Environmental Regulatory and Water Resource Management industry. Skilled in Environmental Program Management, Environmental Compliance, Watershed Management, Water Quality, Stormwater Management, Stakeholder Involvement, and Collaborative Decision-Making. Keith Lichten will continue on as the Waterboard Alternate.

We're excited to welcome **Dan Blake** who became the new Migratory Bird Chief for our USFWS region as of last November. Dan is looking forward to working with all of the region's Joint Ventures to achieve our shared conservation goals. He brings nearly 19 years of federal service and an interest in working with others to support individual, team and partner success.

As you may recall, the management board created a Spirit of Conservation award to honor **Bruce Wolfe's** legacy. **Bruce** will be the first person to receive this award, in a posthumous presentation to his family in the near future. We provide more information [here](#).

SFBJV Funding News

In November, we received our official notice of award for the cooperative agreement between USFWS and Point Blue for FY21 funding to support the SFBJV program for the 2022 calendar year. We will review the award amount, other income, and proposed expenditures at our meeting.

News from DC offers hope that a FY22 budget bill will pass and may mean an increase for the program, however it remains more likely that we will be operating on a continuing resolution, possibly for up to one year.

3. SFBJV Implementation Plan Revision Update [Link below, no attachment]

Work continues on the Implementation Plan. [This update](#) covers progress since the November meeting. Chapters 3 and 4 have completed the review process. Chapter 2 and the associated Habitat Goals Appendix will be under review by the Implementation Plan Team by the time of our meeting. We are in the final stretch and expect to be able to send the plan to the copy editors by late spring 2022. In addition, we have initiated a strategic planning process to help us identify specific prioritized actions that SFBJV staff and the partnership can take over the next 2 years.

4. Annual Reporting 2021

Staff submitted progress and budget reports on our USFWS funding agreement in December 2021, covering the period of performance from January 16, 2021 to September 30, 2021. Submitted through the federal "grantsolutions" system, the reports included a [summary of activity](#) along with a [list of partner projects](#) completed during the period. IP progress summaries that fell within the reporting period were also included as supplemental information.

5. **Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful**

Work continues to develop a plan to implement 30 by 30 at the federal level as outlined in [Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful](#). An in-progress white paper highlights the fact that JVs are delivering innovative collaborative conservation and bridging science and conservation. The paper connects our work to the 8 principles of the report deemed critical to the success and durability of the national 30 by 30 effort. We will share the draft when it is available.

6. **Working across agencies to address the 3 billion bird decline**

In the fall of 2019, *Science* published a rigorous analysis showing that North America has lost nearly [3 billion birds](#) since 1970 - indicating potentially disastrous impacts to ecosystem health. However, wetlands and waterfowl were a bright spot in the report, indicating that strong partnership programs such as the Migratory Bird Joint Ventures can and do make a difference for birds. Since the release of the report, the bird conservation community has been working to develop unprecedented approaches to increase the scope and scale of bird conservation across the continent. Key strategies include expanding partnerships and leveraging additional funding. Jeff McCreary will lead a discussion at our meeting about efforts to date and what our JV may do if we receive increased funding from USFWS along with additional funds from other federal agencies.

7. **State of the Birds, SF Bay**

It has been just over 10 years since the [State of the Birds SF Bay 2011](#) report. The SFBJV and Point Blue are working with funding received from the USFWS to develop partnerships and a framework document that will outline how we can use results from wildlife monitoring to better serve the information needs of the community. An updated and dynamic State of the Birds reporting procedure for the region will inform future and existing habitat restoration, acquisition, and management practices by making actionable information accessible to those who need it. Population trends, threats, and recommended actions for land and water managers, policy-makers, non-profit conservation groups, and researchers will be included. Coordination and integration with partner monitoring and reporting initiatives is a key component of the project. The report will enhance conservation in San Francisco Bay by (1) guiding habitat restoration, management, and acquisition; (2) increasing knowledge of the population status of San Francisco Bay's birds and the threats to their habitats; and (3) influencing public policy and public awareness of bird and ecosystem conservation needs. The Scope of Work for the project can be found [here](#).

A kick-off meeting of the review team was hosted on December 10 by the JV and Point Blue (Sandra, Julian, and Sam). Participants included Letitia Grenier, John Bourgeois, Donna Ball, Barbara Salzman, Susan De La Cruz, and Arthur Feinstein. Tom Gardali and Caitlin Sweeney are also on the review team, but were unable to attend. Feedback from the meeting is being incorporated into the draft framework document.

8. **Biosolids White Paper** (with help from Kendall Webster, SLT)

At our April 2021 meeting, the SFBJV board agreed to support the Biosolids White Paper project as a reviewer, adopter, and lead sponsor with Sonoma Land Trust as the project lead.

The purpose of this document is to bring together existing knowledge of the baylands and biosolids management to highlight key gaps in our understanding and to make recommendations for future work. This document will hopefully initiate and inform a discussion and increase interaction between regulators, restoration community, landowners and farmers, and the wastewater sector. Within the last quarter, the draft white paper has undergone additional review by the SF Bay Water Quality Control Board, Bay Area Clean Water Association, and Bay Area Biosolids Coalition members and the lead authors have been refining the recommendations and conclusions section. We again thank our SFBJV review team for their contributions to this effort. The final version is expected to be completed late March 2022 and will be distributed broadly once it is available.

9. New sediment management policies for wetland restoration and climate change resilience in San Francisco Bay

A proposal to directly respond to regional demands for reuse of sediment and soil in wetland restoration projects was funded by the US EPA Wetland Program Development Grant last year and is expected to kick off within the next couple of months. This project addresses regulatory and financial barriers to further wetland restoration success. The project will help resolve the regional sediment need and increase the acreage of restored wetlands through: (1) a results chain analysis which will create a coalition of stakeholders with actionable tasks to support additional sediment use at wetland restoration sites; (2) policy improvements in a San Francisco Bay Plan amendment and issue documents; and (3) a financing strategy to support the use of sediment in restoration projects. This effort is led by BCDC and partners include the SFBJV and SFEI.

10. Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program (WRMP)

Updates on program activities most relevant to SFBJV partners will be provided bi-annually as part of this board report. The SFBJV is a funded partner for phase 2 work with a focus on outreach and user input and testing of the data management system. Sandra currently serves as Steering Committee 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. Estuary Blueprint 2022 Update

As the Estuary Blueprint update process heads into the home stretch, SFEP staff are incorporating comments from the public input period as well as final input from the work teams and steering committee to finalize the 2022-2027 Blueprint Actions. Staff expect to present the Blueprint to the Implementation Committee for adoption at their March meeting.

The 32 Actions from the 2016-2021 Estuary Blueprint were consolidated and reworked into 25 priority Actions for 2022-2027. The updated Actions maintain the comprehensive suite of priorities from previous versions of the Blueprint, with a more streamlined focus.

SFBJV partners and staff have been involved in this work through the steering committee, work teams, and the SFEP Implementation Committee over the last couple of years. Many Actions overlap with our priorities and are noted with a leadership or coordination role for the SFBJV in their

implementation. These Estuary Blueprint actions will be considered within the SFBJV process of prioritizing actions for our two-year Operational Plan.

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

The Measure AA 2021 Grant Round and Community Grants Program: The Restoration Authority received 18 applications for Grant Round Five, which had a deadline of October 7, 2021. A preliminary list of six recommended projects will be announced at the February 25 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 [Lower Walnut Creek Restoration Project](#), funded by the Restoration Authority, held a breach ceremony on October 29. The Restoration Authority awarded approximately \$3 million to the San Francisco Estuary Institute for the [Science Elements of the Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program](#) in December. The board also authorized funding to Sonoma Land Trust for [Camp 4 Ranch Acquisition and Stewardship Project](#), Phase 2 of the [San Pablo Baylands CPR Project](#), in December. Participants in the West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project's [Oakland Shoreline Leadership Academy](#), funded by the Restoration Authority, presented the project concepts they developed through the program at an event on December 11, 2021.

SFBRA Other Updates: The audit firm and Treasurer of the Restoration Authority presented [Audited Financial Statements and Reports for Fiscal Year 2020-21](#), giving the Authority a clean bill of health. The Restoration Authority's equity recommendation call for the board, Advisory Committee and staff to visit economically disadvantaged communities to better understand issues and opportunities. Given the difficulty of organizing tours during the pandemic, Restoration Authority staff presented a memo on [Upcoming Public Events in Economically Disadvantaged Communities along the Shoreline of San Francisco Bay](#) to the board in December. More information about the Restoration Authority can be found [on their website](#).

13. State Route (SR) 37 Baylands Group *(from Jessica Davenport, State Coastal Conservancy)*

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 January 6. The agenda and materials are [here](#).

- MTC’s consultant presented the [US 101 to SR121 – Design Alternative Analysis \(DAA\) Wrap-up](#), which concluded that a causeway on the current alignment was the Stakeholder Working Group’s preferred alternative.
- Caltrans provided an [update on the Planning and Environmental Linkages \(PEL\) Study](#).

SR 37 Sears Point to Mare Island Improvement Project (Interim Project/Congestion Relief):

- The Draft EIR/EA was released on January 13 for 45-day review and can be located [here](#).
- A virtual public meeting was held on Feb. 2. Information is posted [here](#).
- MTC is seeking SB 1 funding for the project. A [Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan](#) was completed Fall 2021 and allows MTC to apply for SB 1 funding.

SR 37 101 to 121 Flood Reduction Project:

- Several Baylands Group members submitted comments in December on the [Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Document](#), expressing concern about Caltrans’ decision to propose a 14-foot-high embankment as an “interim project” with the narrow purpose of flood reduction and no reference to the need to integrate ecological protection and restoration of the surrounding landscape.
- Caltrans subsequently stated in January that all the alternatives are on the table. Although Caltrans presented the embankment at the November 2021 public meeting, they will consider the causeway and other smaller scale solutions, too. The project will need to address flooding from rain and high tide flooding with sea level rise.
- The EIR for this project will align with DAA results and PEL study analysis
- The Draft EIR is anticipated summer 2022.

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](#).

14. Motus towers *(with help from Katie LaBarbera, San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory)*

The Motus network is a global network of automated radiotelemetry receivers that track wildlife movements in real time. The worldwide Motus array comprises over 900 stations operated by more than 800 collaborators. Since 2013, more than 20,000 animals of more than 200 species have been monitored using the system. SFBBO and their partners are in the process of installing three receiver stations in the south San Francisco Bay area to join the Motus network. A typical station includes one or more antennae on a tower or existing structure, a receiver that records data from tagged animals and transmits that data to a central database, and some source of electricity, either existing on site or a solar panel and battery.

The SFBJV provided a small amount of project support funding in 2021, which combined with funding from other partners, is supporting the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory with their efforts to install Motus towers within our region at three sites: Coyote Creek Field Station, Cooley Landing and US Fish & Wildlife Headquarters.

All three towers are close to installation. Due to global supply chain issues, the 9-element and omnidirectional antennae are on backorder and not expected until March-April 2022. As these antennae are a critical component of the towers, this unfortunately delays the installation of the Cooley Landing and US Fish & Wildlife Headquarters towers to March-April 2022 as well. We anticipate that the remaining preparations for these towers—making coax cables and finalizing the MOU with East Palo Alto—will be completed within the next month, so that installation can commence as soon as the backordered antennae arrive. The Coyote Creek Field Station tower has been approved by Valley Water and installation is underway; although it also awaits a backordered antenna, we can install it with its two 7-element antennae and then add on the remaining antenna when it arrives. We expect to have it operating with the available antennae by early March.

15. Shoreline Adaptation Project Mapping Program *(from Todd Hallenbeck, BCDC)*

There is a recognized challenge of advancing the San Francisco Bay Area’s progress towards sea level rise resilience because comprehensive information about existing and planned shoreline adaptation projects in the region does not exist in an easily accessible, updateable, or sharable forum. This poses a challenge to coordinating adaptation towards a regional strategy, ensuring equitable outcomes for adaptation, and communicating the region’s need for resources. Extensive progress has already been made in tracking information on restoration projects, many of which include adaptation and flood risk reduction goals, utilizing the platform [EcoAtlas](#). The models and workflows in EcoAtlas that identify, catalog, and map this information serve as a template for how information about other adaptation efforts can be included and integrated with restoration tracking to develop a comprehensive picture of shoreline adaptation. The Shoreline Adaptation Project Mapping Program (SAPMAP) aims to spatially track adaptation projects, communicate regional progress on shoreline resilience goals, and support a living network of community-based partners poised to lead adaptation planning, construction, and monitoring.

The SAPMAP has made progress towards these goals over the last two years by coordinating and convening regional partners, recommending and implementing technical enhancements to EcoAtlas, researching and inputting adaptation project data, and formalizing data entry requirements through existing funding and permitting programs.

In the first real proof of concept, the data collected through the SAPMAP will be utilized by MTC this spring to help inform the Sea Level Rise Funding and Investment Framework of Plan Bay Area 2050. The SAPMAP will be critical in the implementation of actions called for in [Bay Adapt: Regional Strategies For a Rising Bay](#) and as such BCDC has committed staff capacity and is seeking additional funding to continue serving in its coordination, administration, and data management roles. SFBJV staff and partners have been involved with BCDC in this project since inception and continue to coordinate on its development.

16. SFBJV Letters of Support

The SFBJV sent the following letter which is available upon request.

- Support for the Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program (WRMP) Funding Proposal to the SF Bay Restoration Authority. Letter dated November 17, 2021.

B. Joint Venture Working Committee Summaries

1. Conservation Committee (CC) – Julian Wood, Chair

The Conservation Committee met on November 12, 2021. In attendance: Julian Wood, Chair (*Point Blue*), Donna Ball (*South Bay Salt Pond Project*), Erika Castillo (*Mosquito Abatement Districts*), John Coleman (*Bay Planning Coalition*), Jessica Davenport (*State Coastal Conservancy*), Laura Hollander (*State Coastal Conservancy*), Maggie Jensen (*Prunuske Chatham, Inc.*), Cole Jower (*San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory*), Eric Lynch (*San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory*), Karen McDowell (*San Francisco Estuary Partnership*), Ben Pearl (*San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory*), Jessie Olson (*Save the Bay*), Barbara Salzman (*Marin Audubon*), Rebecca Schwartz Lesberg (*Coastal Policy Solutions*), Renee Spent (*Ducks Unlimited*), Matt Stone (*Petaluma River Park Foundation*), John Takekawa (*Suisun RCD*), Linda Tong (*State Coastal Conservancy*), Natalie Washburn (*Ducks Unlimited*)

SFBJV Staff: Sandra Scoggin, *Coordinator*

The agenda included several project adoption presentations that were subsequently sent as a supplement to the management board meeting packet, with all projects approved at their November 15 meeting. The projects considered and recommended for adoption at this meeting were Richardson's Bay Adaptive Eelgrass Restoration Project - planning phase; Eden Landing Snowy Plover Enhancement - full project; Petaluma River Park - planning phase; Rehabilitating Essential Fish Screens of Suisun Marsh for Habitat Resiliency - full project.

2. Science Committee (SC) – Renee Spent, Chair

The Science Committee did not meet this quarter. Work focused on the Implementation Plan habitat goals.

3. Outreach & Communications

In addition to ongoing and essential tasks related to Bulletin production, keeping our website current, and other communications, Caroline has been involved with tasks related to the Implementation Plan revision and the strategic work planning efforts, as well as several other administrative and committee meeting related tasks typically handled by a third SFBJV staff team member.

Status of Website overhaul

With content revisions completed, our soon to be SFBJV wordpress website is now in the hands of [CryBaby Design](#), for the creation of design comps. Once those are developed, SFBJV partners will be needed to “test drive” the new site to comment on design elements, help work out any navigational glitches, and assess content before the site can go “live” and become our official new online home. Please let Caroline know if someone from your organization might be able to help with this important phase of website development.

Sediment Messaging Campaign update

While strides were made and much learned in discussions related to a regional team messaging campaign on behalf of the goal to increase the beneficial use of sediment, Caroline and others realized more regional coordination among Bay Area leadership is needed before this effort can move forward. There is definitely regional agreement that more sediment can and should be beneficially used in

restoration projects, but clearer next steps need to be agreed upon by involved stakeholders before a targeted messaging campaign can be developed and of benefit. Basically it comes down to who shall we target with this campaign and what is the ask? The communications effort is therefore on hold until then. Some suggestions for what is needed, garnered from multiple conversations include:

- identify leadership and create a regional sediment strategy to follow up SFEI's [sediment for survival report](#) such as a sediment goals project
- facilitate a stakeholder process that brings together all the players - implementers, regulators, permittees, dredgers, modelers and project managers - with a goal of collaborating to see the “whole picture” (since most carry just one piece of the puzzle)
- continue to pilot new approaches to beneficial use in addition to the current strategic placement and in-bay placement

We will continue to engage and coordinate with partners to identify leads and opportunities to advance action and strategic communication toward this timely issue.

Regional Communications Team

The Regional Communications team will meet on March 31 to consider ways in which we may (or may not) work more proactively to promote shared goals, projects, and/or messages for the benefit of not just the team members but also their respective organizations. We want to determine to what extent the team can be relied on for strategic communications related to our respective organizations and particularly promotion of the Implementation Plan and Estuary Blueprint, when completed.

4. Policy Committee – Rebecca Schwartz Lesberg, Chair

The Policy Committee met twice this quarter on December 21, 2021 and February 1, 2022.

In attendance on December 21: Rebecca Schwartz Lesberg (*Chair*), Jeff McCreary (*Ducks Unlimited*), Mike Lynes (*Audubon California*), Jim Cogswell (*Central Valley Joint Venture*), Lily Douglas (*Central Valley Joint Venture*), Mark Smith (*CVJV - California Waterfowl Association and Grassland Water District*), Ariana Rickard (*Sonoma Land Trust*), Caroline Warner (*SFBJV*)

In attendance on February 1: Rebecca Schwartz Lesberg (*Chair*), Jeff McCreary (*Ducks Unlimited*), Mike Lynes (*Audubon California*), Ariana Rickard (*Sonoma Land Trust*), Mary Deschene (*SF Bay Wildlife Society*), Warner Chabot (*San Francisco Estuary Institute*), Casey Arndt (*Audubon California*), Chris Barr (*US Fish and Wildlife Service*), Arthur Feinstein (*Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge*), Xavier Fernandez (*SFB Regional Water Quality Control Board*), Tom Kendall (*US Army Corps of Engineers*), Mark Smith (*CVJV - California Waterfowl Association and Grassland Water District*), Caroline Warner and Sandra Scoggin (*SFBJV*)

Both meetings focused on planning for the annual “fly in” to DC. The Fly-in will be held as a virtual event again this year during the week of February 28-March 4. The group also discussed state funding opportunities and regional issues. Notes are available upon request.

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

This committee was established by the management board on November 15 (see Attachment A) based on Casey's presentation of [this charter](#). The committee is still taking shape and did not meet this quarter. Rebecca Schwartz Lesberg, Steve Goldbeck, and Erika Castillo have volunteered to join the committee.

C. Packet Attachments

- A. Meeting notes from the November 15, 2021 Management Board meeting
- B. Coordinator's Report
- C. Proposed SFBJV 2022 Budget
- D. AJVMB 3BBD Funding Request Letter to Acting Director Williams
- E. Tom Gardali/ACR Letter of request to join the SFBJV Management Board and Resume