



FACT SHEET

Updated June 2011

Overview

The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority (the Authority) is a new regional government agency charged with rebuilding San Francisco Bay through the raising and granting of funds to restore the Bay's critical habitat and other ecological functions.

The Bay is a natural treasure that defines our region, provides recreation and beauty, moderates our climate and generates millions of dollars in economic benefits.

- Today, only five percent of the Bay's original wetlands remain, and the Bay is threatened every day by pollution and sprawl.
- Scientists advise that a healthy, sustainable Bay requires at least 100,000 acres of tidal wetlands. In 1999, there were only about 40,000 acres of tidal wetlands remaining around the Bay. Today, over 36,000 acres of restorable Bay shoreline is in public ownership and proposed for restoration to tidal wetlands. The ambitious 100,000-acre goal is in sight.
- Restoring the 36,000 acres currently in public ownership is estimated to cost up to \$1.43 billion over 50 years. By making this investment—the equivalent of \$4 annually for each Bay Area resident—we can establish thousands of acres of thriving wetlands on the shoreline and reverse more than a century of degradation that reduced the size of our Bay by one-third.

There is significant—but not sufficient—Federal and State funding available for these projects. The Authority's mission will be to formulate a strategy for raising local revenues to fill the funding gap. The primary source of currently available dedicated State funds is the California State Coastal Conservancy (Conservancy). Projects meeting the Conservancy's selection criteria for its San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program will be given priority. In addition, projects need to be consistent with the Bay Conservation and Development Commission's (BCDC) management program and the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture's implementation strategy. Finally, the creation of the Authority implements the primary recommendation of the report, *Greening the Bay: Financing Wetland Restoration in San Francisco Bay, 2007 (Greening the Bay)*, which was prepared by Save the Bay, sponsor of AB 2954 (Lieber), the legislation that created the Authority.

Governing Board

The Authority's enabling legislation provides for a seven-member Governing Board to be appointed by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) as follows:

- Chair: A person with expertise in the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program
- Four elected officials from bayside cities or counties (defined as having boundaries that touch San Francisco Bay), with one each from the North, West, East and South regions of the Bay Area.
- Two elected officials of either a bayside city or county or a regional park district, regional open-space district, or regional park and open-space district that owns or operates one or more San Francisco Bay shoreline parcels. These include the East Bay Regional Park District, Marin County Open Space District, Mid-Peninsula Open Space District, and Sonoma Agricultural Protection and Open Space District.

The Governing Board will explore, promote and coordinate local and regional public revenue mechanisms to help fund the restoration of wetlands on more than 36,000 Bay shoreline acres already in public ownership. The Authority may also apply for grants, fees, and allocations from public and private entities, issue revenue bonds, and receive donations. The Governing Board will develop priorities and sequencing for allocating any funds received to wildlife habitat restoration, related public access, recreation, and flood management projects, as provided in its enabling legislation. The Governing Board is in the process of reviewing and selecting appropriate revenue-raising mechanisms that may require voter approval.

All Governing Board members serve at the pleasure of ABAG. However, the term of any member who ceases to hold the elected office that qualified that member for inclusion on the Governing Board will automatically and immediately terminate. ABAG has established a term of four years for each Board member, with the understandings that ABAG retains the discretion to replace a Board member prior to the expiration of the term and that there are no formal term limits. The Governing Board has been meeting quarterly since it was constituted in early 2009.

Financial Provisions and Revenue Mechanisms

According to Save The Bay, restoration of the some 36,000 acres of Bay wetlands currently in public ownership will cost an estimated \$1.43 billion over 50 years (*Greening the Bay*). Some \$370 million has already been invested in acquisition, planning and restoration. This funding has come from State bonds, private sources, and occasional Federal appropriations and grants. An Authority-sponsored revenue-generating mechanism could serve as leverage to qualify projects for future State and Federal sources.

The Authority is empowered to levy a benefit assessment, special tax, or property-related fee consistent with Articles XIII(C) and (D) of the California Constitution, pursuant to any of the following:

- The Improvement Act of 1911;
- The Improvement Bond Act of 1915;
- The Municipal Improvement Act of 1913;
- The Landscaping and Lighting Assessment Act of 1972; and
- Any other statutory authorization.

Revenue bonds may be issued for any of the Authority's statutorily authorized purposes, and the Authority may incur bond indebtedness. The Authority may not purchase or own real property.

The Authority may also apply for and receive grants from Federal and State agencies, solicit and accept gifts, fees, grants, and allocations from public and private entities, and use interim or temporary staff provided by appropriate state agencies or ABAG. The Authority is set to "sunset" as of December 31, 2028.

The Importance of Wetlands

Wetlands are the lungs of the Bay, giving life to hundreds of fish and wildlife species that depend on them for survival and billions of small organisms that thrive in Bay mud to form the base of the food chain. In addition to providing vital habitat for fish and wildlife, wetlands provide major benefits to the community:

- Clean water
- Economic benefits
- Global warming offsets
- Flood and erosion control

Wetlands play a central role in the battle against global warming, and scientists from the United Nations to the White House have identified wetland restoration as a priority strategy in fighting global warming. Scientists have found that tidal salt marshes capture carbon from greenhouse gases in the air efficiently and effectively, helping to counter global warming. Healthy tidal marshes act as natural flood control by absorbing excess water and may adjust to rising sea levels—building themselves higher with sediment inflow as the water level rises and also absorbing water that would otherwise require expensive levees or seawalls.

Wetland restoration has also provided an important benefit to Bay-related industry and the regional economy, with "beneficial reuse" of dredged sediment from critical Bay ports playing a role in restoration projects around the Bay.

Advisory Committee

In accordance with the Authority's enabling legislation, the Governing Board has convened an Advisory Committee to assist and advise it. The legislation provides for broad representation of community and agency interests, with membership to include, without limitation, representatives from the following:

- Department of Fish and Game
- State Coastal Conservancy
- San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)
- Open space and park districts that own or operate Bay shoreline parcels;
- San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board
- San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission
- San Francisco Bay Joint Venture
- San Francisco Bay Trail Project
- San Francisco Bay Estuary Project
- Non-governmental organizations working to restore, protect, and enhance San Francisco Bay wetlands and wildlife habitat
- Members of the public from bayside cities and counties in the Bay Area

The Governing Board made appointments to the Advisory Committee in October 2009 and July 2010. As of this writing, the following are the appointed members of the Advisory Committee:

Steve Abbors	General Manager, Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District
Josh Arce	Executive Director, Brightline Defense Project
Dion Aroner	Partner, Aroner, Jewel & Ellis
Cindy Chavez,	Executive Officer, South Bay Labor Council
Patrick Congdon	General Manager, Santa Clara County Open Space Authority
Grant Davis	Assistant General Manager, Sonoma County Water Agency
Beth Huning	Coordinator, San Francisco Bay Joint Venture
John Coleman	Executive Director, Bay Planning Coalition
Jerry Kent,	Former Acting General Manager, East Bay Park and Recreation District
David Lewis	Executive Director, Save The Bay
Sally Lieber	Community Advocate; Sponsor of AB 2954
Cynthia Murray	President/CEO, North Bay Leadership Council
Steve Ngo	Trustee, San Francisco City College District
Rahul Prakash	President, Earth Aid Enterprises
Bruce Raful	Proprietor, Raful & Associates
Curt Riffle	Program Operations Manager, Conservation and Science, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
John Rizzo	Trustee, San Francisco City College District
Patrick Rutten	Implementation Team Chair, NOAA Restoration Center
Bob Spencer	Economist/Financial Consultant
Mendel Stewart	Project Leader, Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge
Laura Thompson	Manager, San Francisco Bay Trail Project
Will Travis	Executive Director, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission
Kate White	Executive Director, Urban Land Institute



GOVERNING BOARD

May 2011

Chair

Samuel Schuchat
Executive Officer, California State Coastal Conservancy

West Bay

Phil Ting
Assessor and Recorder
City and County of San Francisco

East Bay

John Gioia
Board of Supervisors
County of Contra Costa

North Bay

Keith Caldwell
Board of Supervisors
County of Napa

South Bay

Rosanne Foust
City Council
City of Redwood City

Bayside City/County

Dave Cortese
Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Clara

Bayside City/Park District

John Sutter
Board of Directors
East Bay Regional Park District