STATE OF OUR ESTUARY

Reporting on the Health of the San Francisco Estuary

San Francisco Bay Conservation & Development Commission
February 19, 2026

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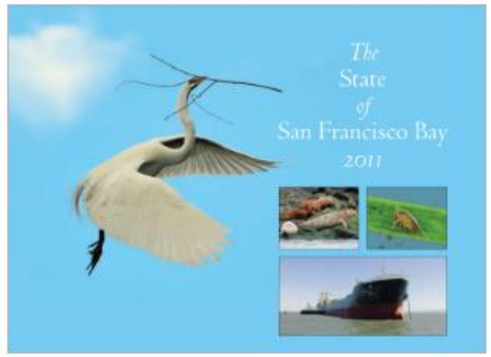
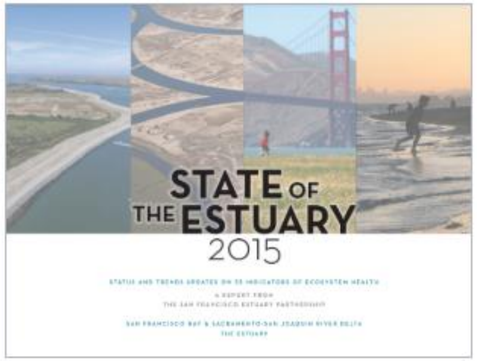
Introduction to OurEstuary.org

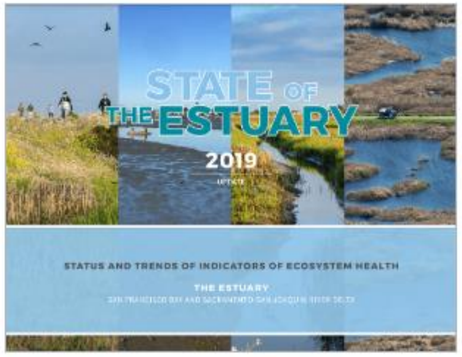
Tracking the Estuary's Health



2011 Report



2015 Report



2019 Update

State of Our Estuary website (OurEstuary.org)

STATE OF OUR ESTUARY

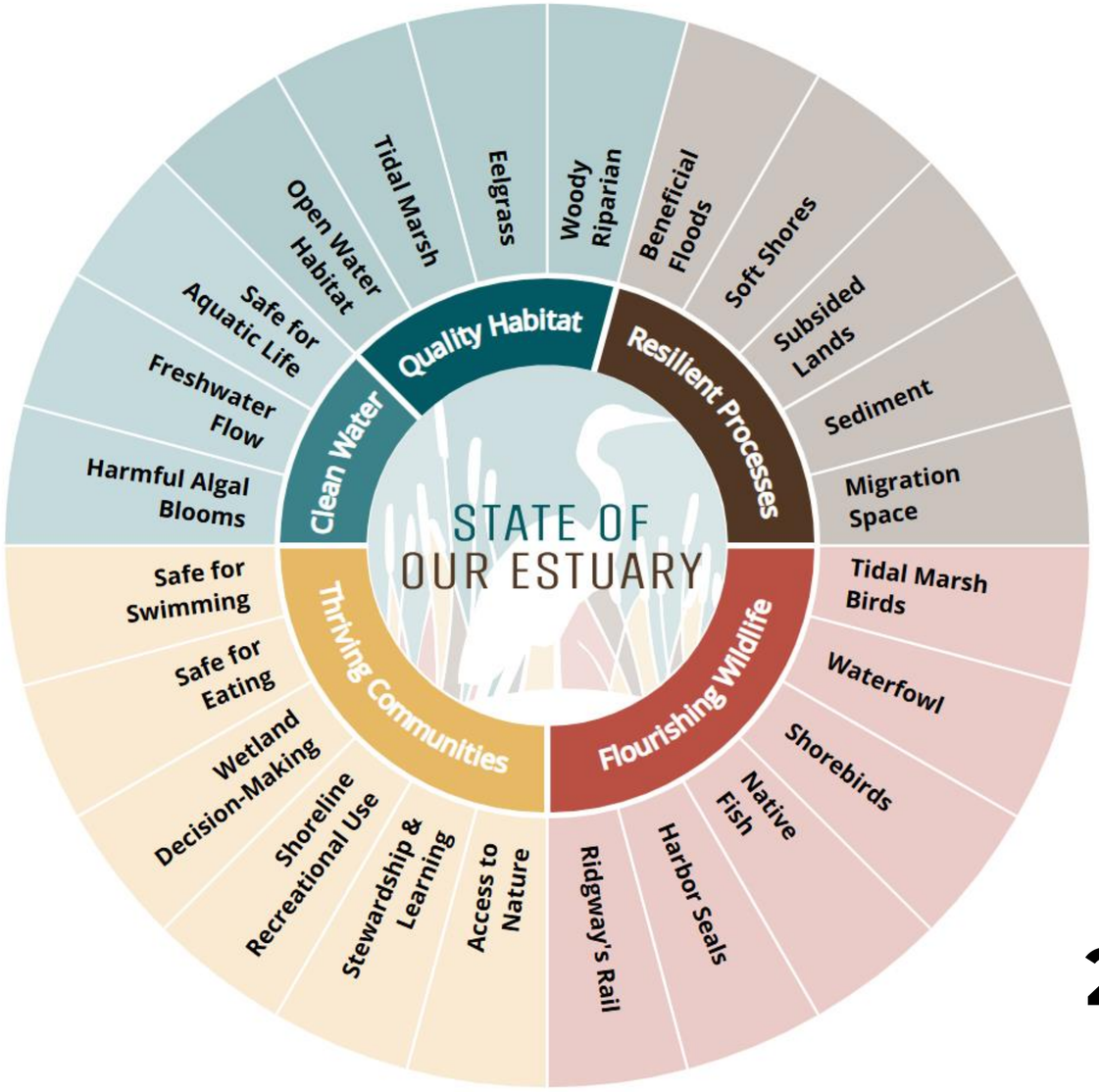
Home Indicators Resources About

About the State of Our Estuary

State of Our Estuary uses the best available scientific information on clean water, healthy ecosystems, and thriving communities to assess the health of the San Francisco Bay and Delta

LEARN MORE

How Do We Measure Estuary Health?



24 Indicators

STATE OF OUR ESTUARY

STATE OF OUR ESTUARY: 2025 Executive Summary

How Healthy is the San Francisco Estuary?

A healthy Estuary supports thriving habitats, wildlife, and communities. It sustains natural processes like floods and sediment transport, ensures clean water, and provides recreational opportunities.

The San Francisco Estuary is where t
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such as the Clean Water Act and

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Above: The waters of the San Francisco Estuary, courtesy of SFEI.

STATE OF OUR ESTUARY

STATUS: Good | Fair | Poor

TREND: Improving | No Change | Declining | Mixed | Not Available

Indicator	Definition	Status & Trend	Indicator Highlight	Last Update
Clean Water				
Freshwater Flow	Amounts, timing, and variability of fresh water flowing into the Estuary compared to the flows that would have occurred without dams and water diversions	ESTUARY ↘	1/2	Freshwater flow to the Estuary has been reduced by nearly half.	2025
Safe for Aquatic Life	Concentrations of toxic pollutants in water and fish from the Bay	BAY –		Over a hundred pollutants are routinely monitored and some are found to exceed regulatory thresholds in fish, endangering the health of the food chain.	2025
Flourishing Wildlife				
Native Fish	Abundance, species diversity, species composition, and distribution of native fishes in the San Francisco Estuary	BAY – DELTA –		Declines in native fish abundance and diversity are influenced by drought, reduced outflow, and poor recruitment for key species.	2025

TIDAL MARSH

Status & Trend

Latest Update: October 2025

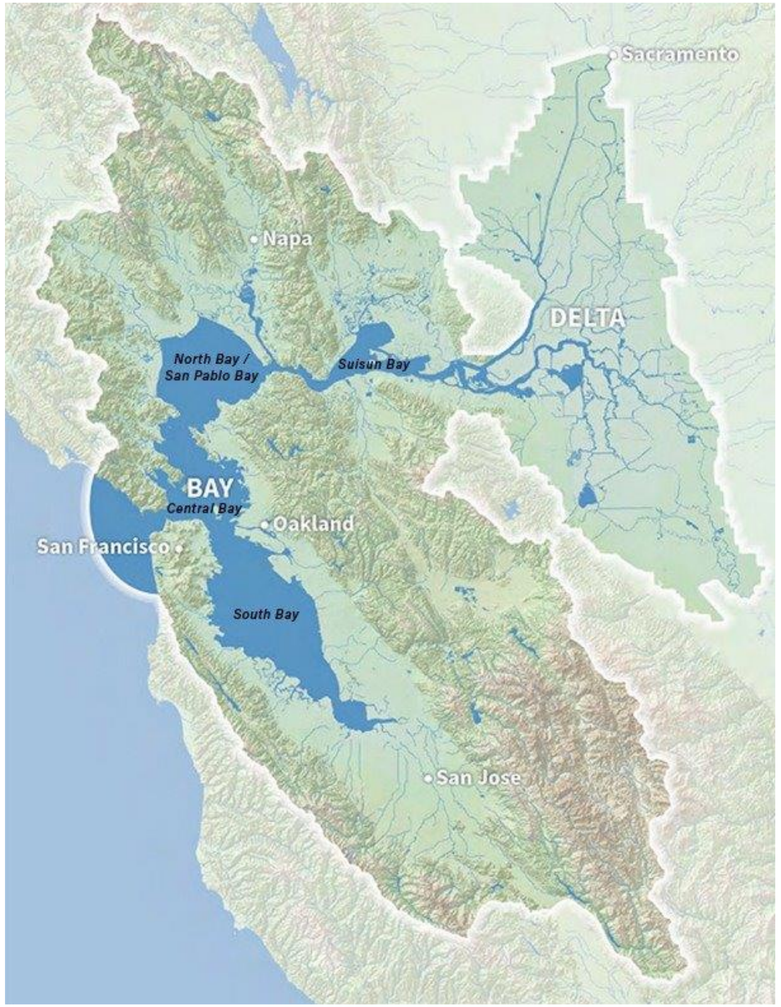
BAY DELTA

The acreage of tidal marsh in both the Bay and Delta is increasing, leading to Improving scores for both regions. The Bay is in Fair condition in terms of total acres, while there is still far too little marsh in the Delta, which warrants a Poor status. Tidal marsh extent in the Bay, including places that have been restored, has increased from about 52,800 acres in 2019 (see State of the Estuary 2019) to nearly 57,800 acres in 2024 (a 9.5% increase).

While there is far less tidal marsh in the Delta today, there has been a large increase in tidal marsh restoration in the last 5 years. The extent of tidal marsh in the Delta, including restoration projects, has increased from around 8,300 acres

The Estuary Scorecard

The Estuary and its Watershed



Map Credit: US GAO

Reading the Scorecard

Good

Fair

Poor

Improving

No Change

Declining

Mixed

Not Available

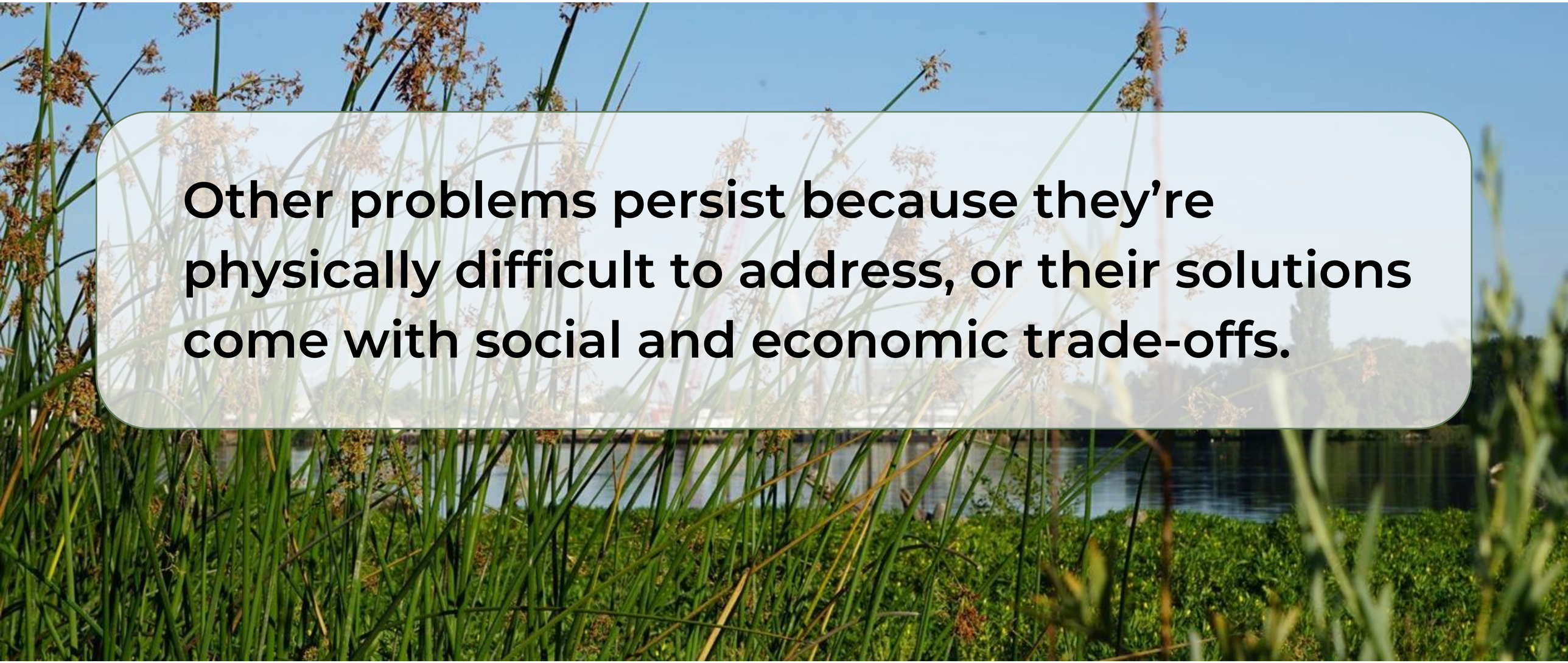
Key Takeaway

Where the approaches to restore ecosystem health are well-understood and managers have taken action on the ground, results are visible.

Photo Credit: Shira Bezale

Tidal Marsh and Marsh Birds

Key Takeaway



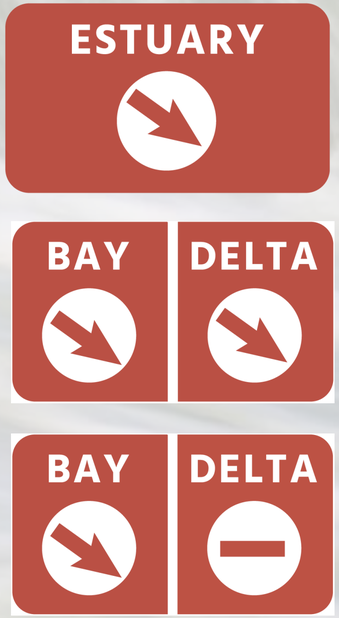
Other problems persist because they’re physically difficult to address, or their solutions come with social and economic trade-offs.

Photo: Kate Roberts

Freshwater Flow

Open Water Habitat

Beneficial Floods




Safe for Swimming
BAY
Safe for Aquatic Life
BAY
Fish Safe for Eating
BAY
DELTA

Key Takeaway

Most Bay indicators are in Fair condition and stable, while most Delta indicators are in Poor condition and declining.

Key Takeaway

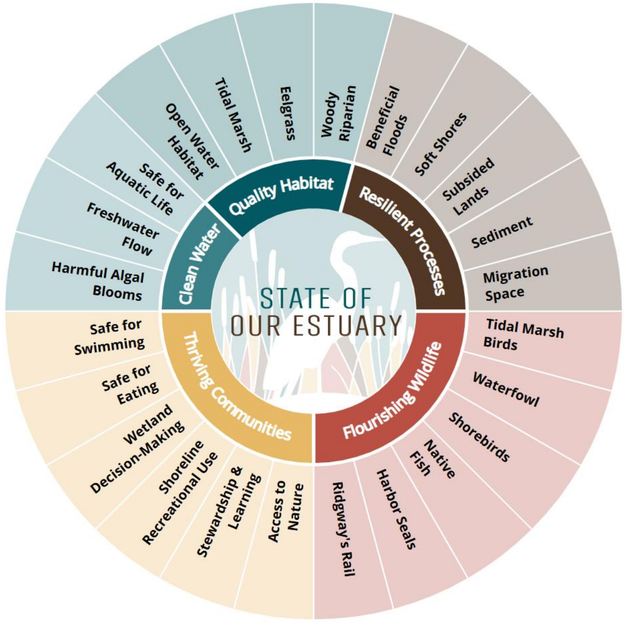
Better (and worse) trends become apparent when looking at finer-scale data. These trends provide insight into what the ecosystem needs.

Waterfowl

Fueling Regional Action

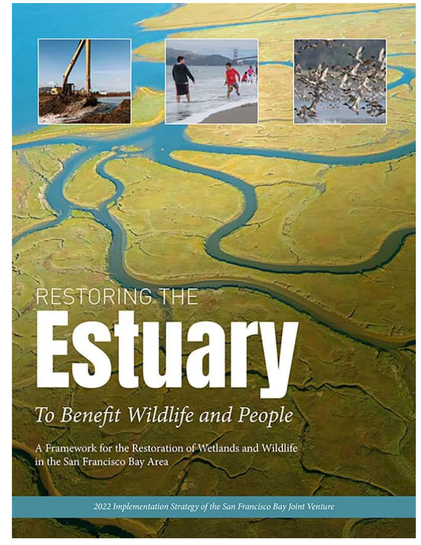
Photo: Shira Bezalel. Editing: Vanessa Lee, SFEI

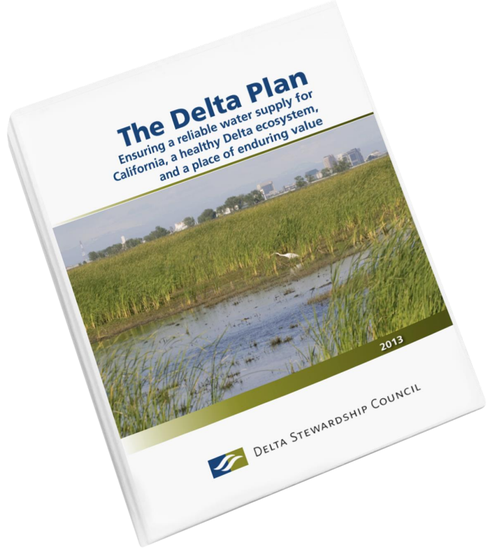
Fueling Regional Action

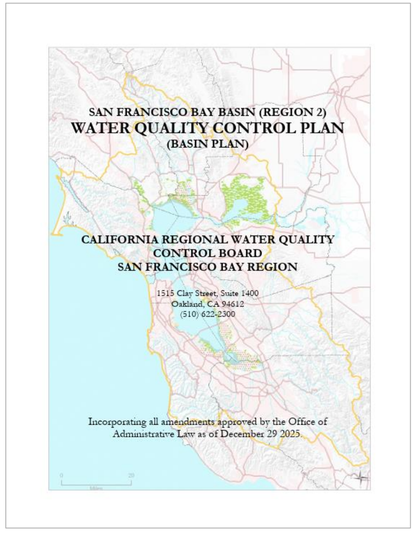


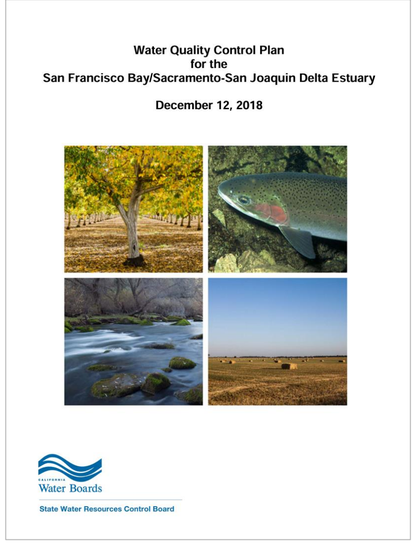
San Francisco Bay Plan

San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission









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Thank You!

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SFEI San Francisco Estuary Institute

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Delta Stewardship Council

A CALIFORNIA STATE AGENCY

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