

Beneficial Reuse Bay Plan Amendment No. 1-26 Public Hearing

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Rachel Cohen, Project Manager
Sediment for Wetland Adaptation Project
rachel.cohen@bcdcc.ca.gov



Materials mailed on September 11, 2026

- Staff report containing policy analysis, preliminary staff recommendation, and draft environmental assessment.
- Appendix 1: proposed Bay Plan changes.
- Appendix 2: memo regarding beneficial reuse considerations.
- Appendix 3: memo regarding public trust findings.
- Appendix 4: environmental analysis CEQA checklist.

Agenda

- Timeline to adoption
- Background
 - Regional sediment needs
 - Sediment for Wetland Adaptation Project (SWAP)
- Policy development process
- Proposed policy overview
 - Dredged sediment
 - Navigation dredging
 - Flood protection dredging
 - Excess upland soil
- Next steps

Bay Plan Amendment Process

- The Commission voted to initiate BPA 1-26 on May 7, 2026 after a 3-year long stakeholder engagement process to develop policies.
- Today we're having a public hearing only.
- The Commission will vote at a later meeting after receiving staff's final recommendation and final environmental assessment.



Background

- Regional Sediment Needs
- Sediment for Wetland Adaptation Project (SWAP)

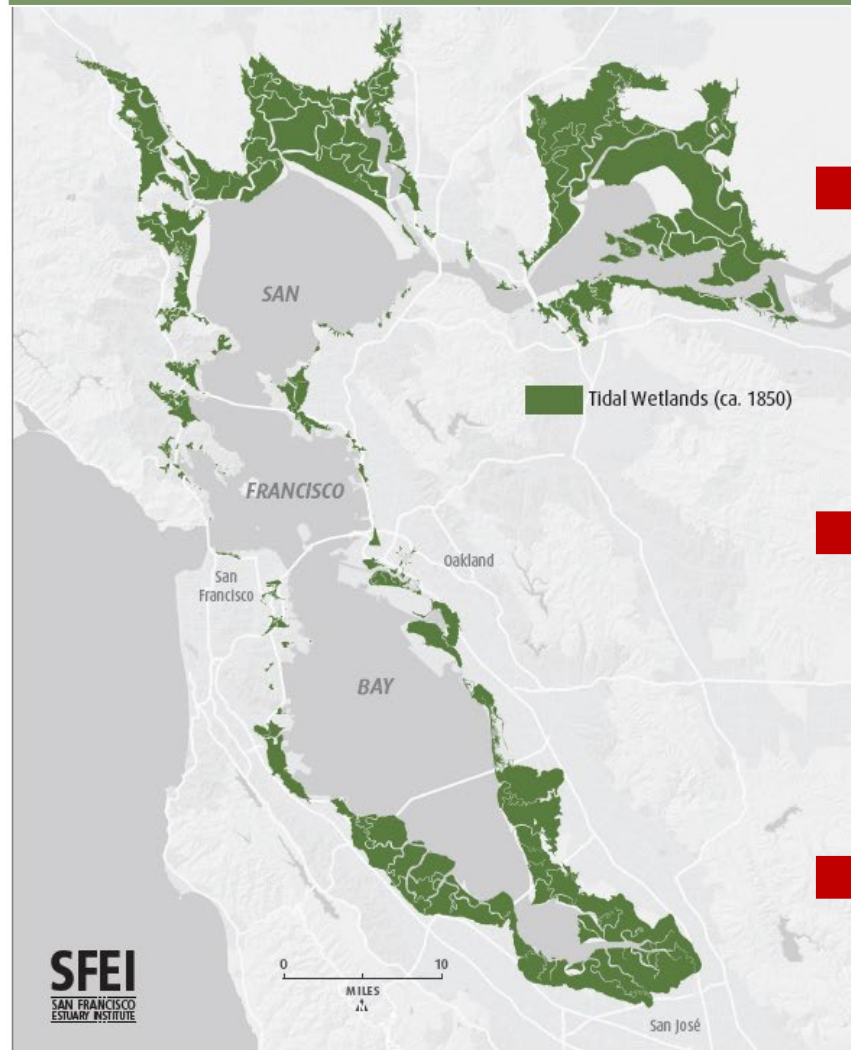
Historical Tidal Wetlands (1850)

Modern Tidal Wetlands (2020)

**90% of wetlands
lost due to
human activities**

Wetland services:

- Improve air quality
- Improve water quality
- Buffer storms
- Absorb flood water
- Support biodiversity
- Enable recreation



CITATION - Monroe, M et al. 1999. *Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals*. U. S. EPA and S.E. Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board. (Map developed by SFEI). (www.stel.org)

CITATIONS - WRMP. 2025. *Tracking Tidal Wetland Extent in San Francisco Bay: A 2020 Mapping Update*. SFEI. (www.wrmp.org)
- SFEI. 2025. *Baylands Habitat Map: Mapping Methods and Standards for Wetlands in the San Francisco Bay*. SFEI. (www.stel.org)

Sediment in service

- Supports plants and microbes
- Stabilizes wetlands
- Promotes ecosystem diversity



Clamshell dredging at Pier 9, San Francisco



Sea levels are rising

Restoring wetlands and mudflats and **adapting them to sea level rise through 2100** will require much more sediment and soil than currently supplied.



Beneficial Reuse

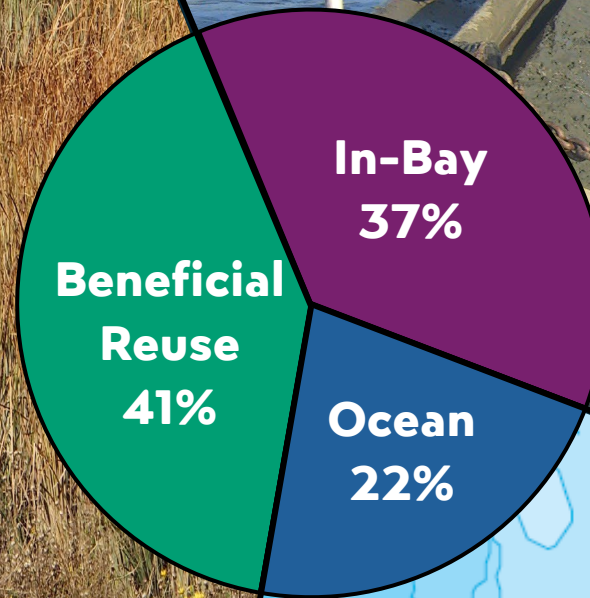


Sediment dredged from Bay, flood control channels, streambeds, marinas



Sediment reuse in Deer Creek, Novato

Average Dredged Sediment Placement & Disposal 2013-2024



In-Bay disposal

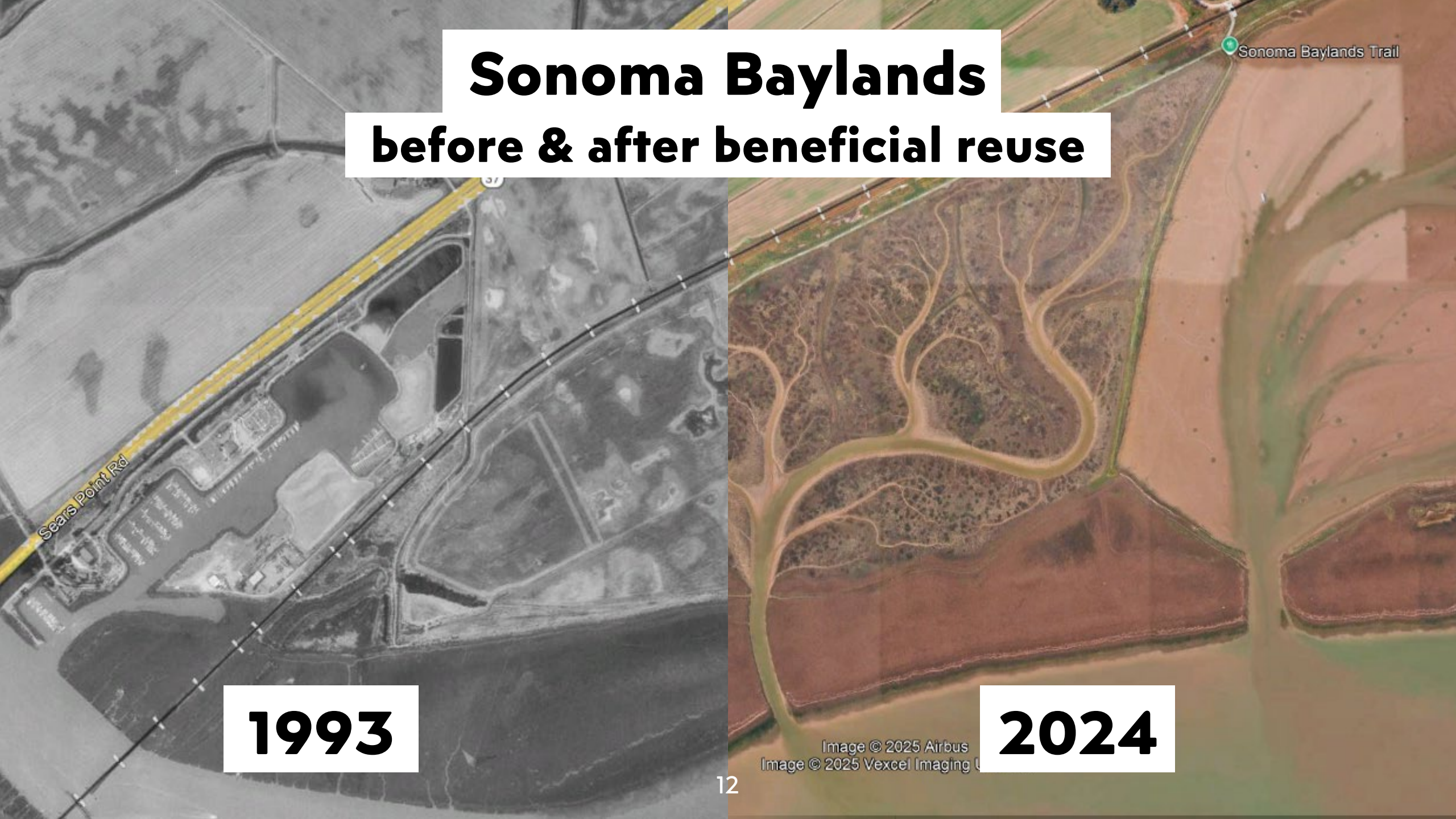


Ocean disposal site 55 miles west of SF

Montezuma Wetlands, Solano County

Sonoma Baylands

before & after beneficial reuse



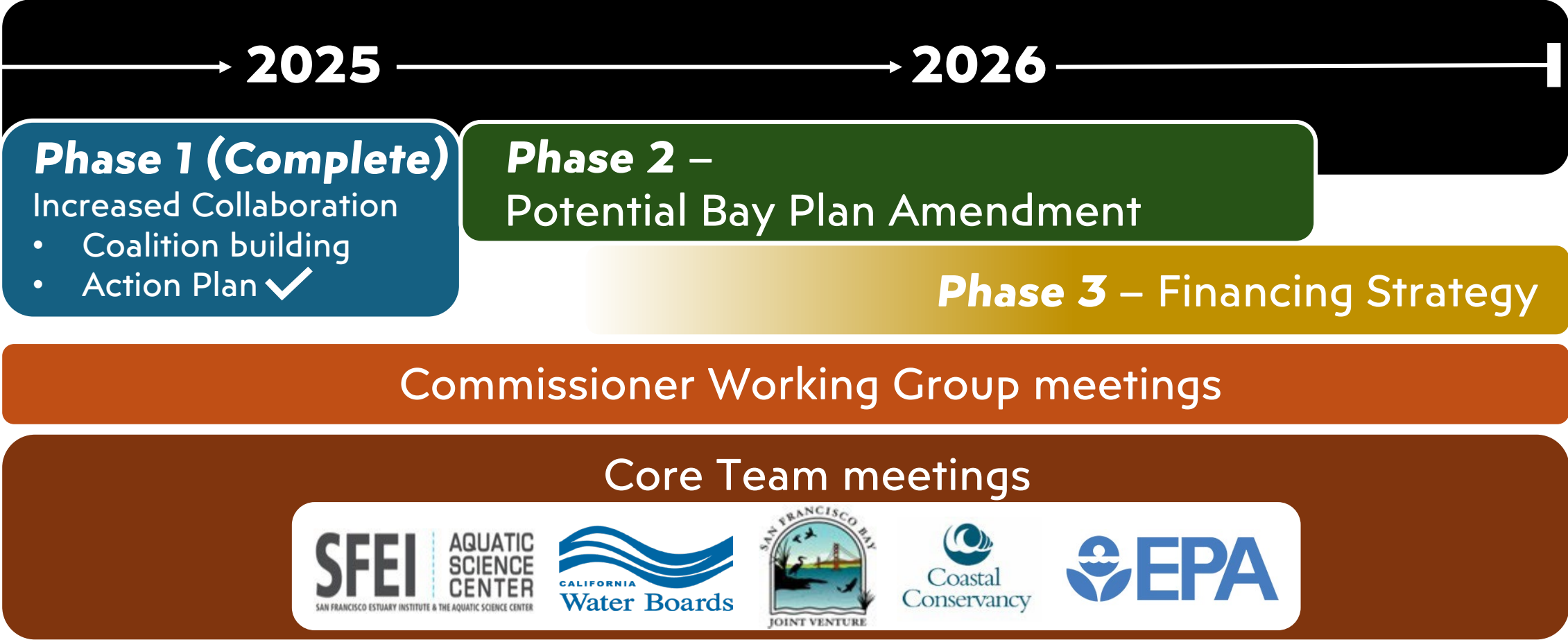
1993

2024

The Sediment for Wetland Adaptation Project

Project Goal: Increase beneficial reuse of sediment and soil for wetland habitat restoration, resilience, and sea level rise adaptation in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Funders:  + 



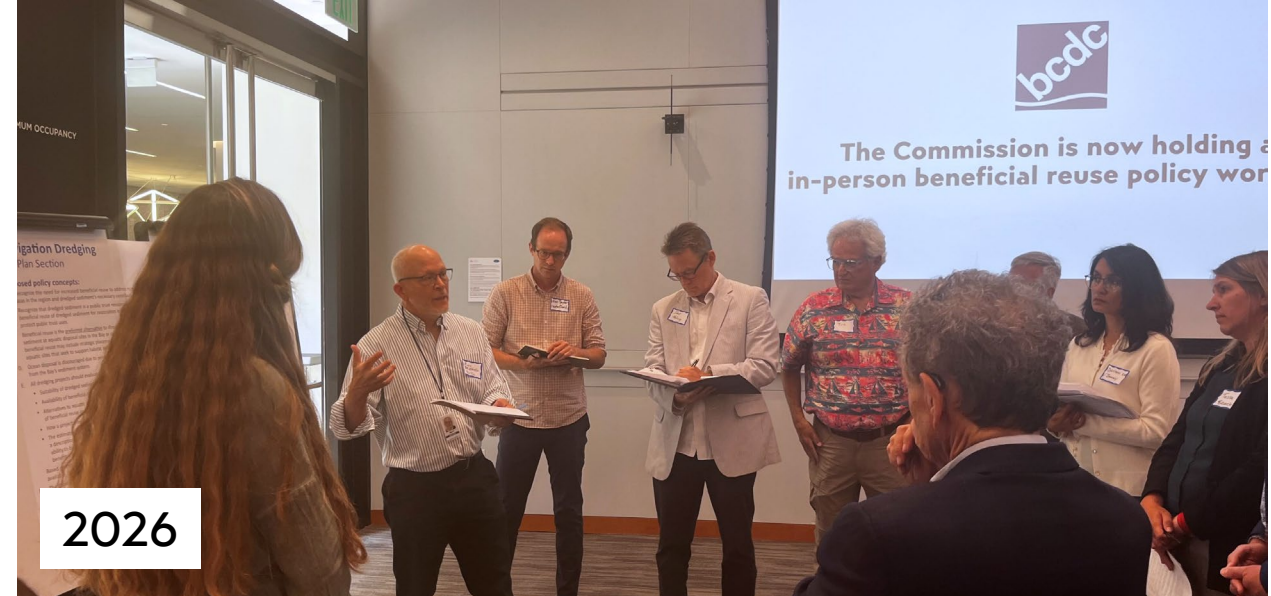
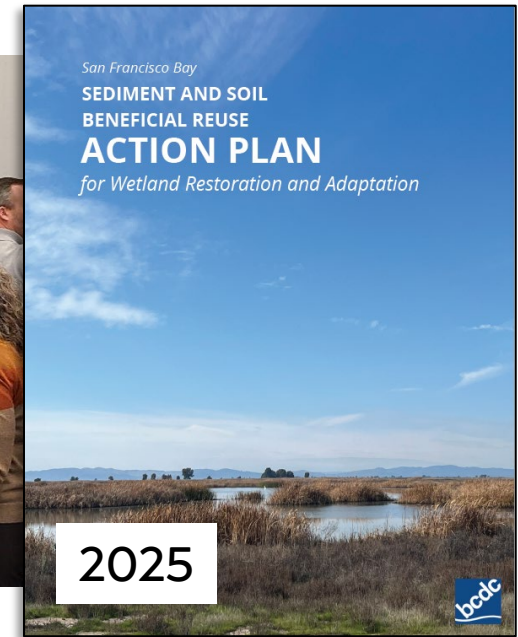
Policy development process

BPA 1-26 Roots

- **2016:** Identified as a Commission priority.
- **2021:** Federal court decision that some dredging policies unenforceable under CZMA.
- **2024:** Identified as a necessary action in workshops with interested parties.
- **2025:** Action Plan Action 2.4.2

Assess San Francisco Bay Plan findings and policies regarding sediment supply and beneficial reuse to identify necessary improvements and propose amendments.

- **2025:** Internal staff review of Bay Plan to create policy concepts.
- **2025:** Circulated policy concepts with Core Team, Commissioner Working Group, Commission, and interested parties.
- **2026:** Commission workshop in June.



Dredgers

United States
Army Corps
of Engineers

Tribes

Restoration
practitioners

LTMS
Management
Committee

BCDC
Staff

EPA

Ports

Water
Board

Dirt
brokers

Commissioner
Working Group

State Coastal
Conservancy

Environmental
interests

Who's been involved?

Local
governments

EJ Advisors

Construction project
managers

Marin Audubon

Bay Planning
Coalition

Community-based
organizations

Commissioners
and Alternates

Flood protection
managers

Fishers

San Francisco
Estuary Institute

State Lands
Commission

San Francisco Bay
Joint Venture

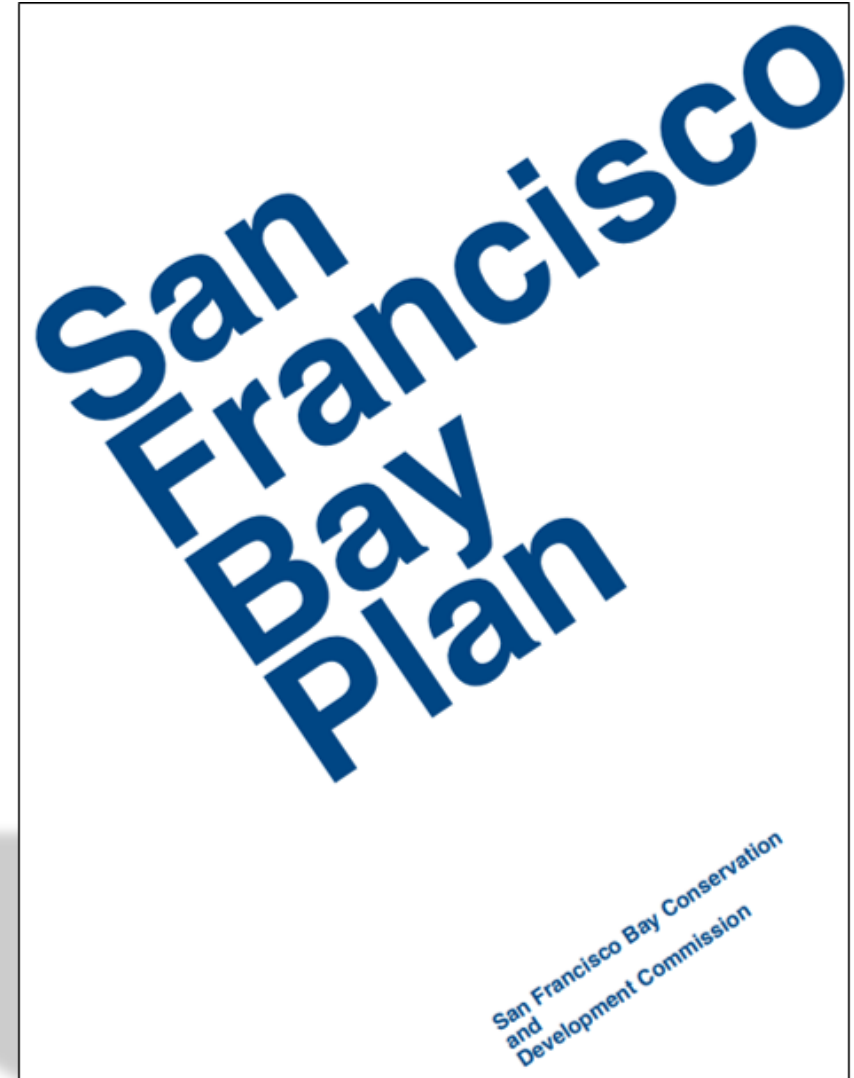
McAteer-Petris Act, San Francisco Bay Plan, CZMA

- McAteer-Petris Act:
 - Permit required for placing fill and extracting materials. (66632(a))
 - Allows commission to permit and condition dredging and fill projects. (66632(f))
 - Calls for beneficial reuse and partnership w/ LTMS. (66663-66666)
 - Fill, including placement of dredged material, is authorized when there is no alternative upland location available and the fill is the minimum amount necessary.
- Permits issued for projects that are consistent with McAteer-Petris Act and San Francisco Bay Plan policies.
- Bay Plan policies are amended periodically for regional needs.
- Coastal Zone Management Act: Allows BCDC to review certain federal activities, including federal dredging projects.
Enforceable policies in the Bay Plan included as part of coastal management program.



Bay Plan gaps

- Sediment descriptions do not match value and need.
- Beneficial reuse requirements are unclear.
- Dredging policies focus only on navigation dredging, and not flood protection channels and streambed maintenance.
- There are no policies supporting stockpiling and use of upland soil in wetland restoration.



Bay Plan Cover

Policy development principles

1. Policies should be **flexible**.
2. New requirements can streamline processes and improve transparency and consistency.
3. Policies must be **enforceable**. 
 - To be certified as part of BCDC's CZMA Program and apply to review of federal projects, policies must "not discriminate against a particular type of activity or entity." 15 C.F.R. § 923.84(b).
 - Policies should apply universally to different project types (public and private, small and large).

Proposed policy overview

Policy: Beneficial reuse is BCDC's priority

- The proposal describes the crucial roles of sediment and beneficial reuse.
- The proposal recognizes sediment management in the context of the public trust doctrine.
 - **Existing policy:**
 - When the Commission takes any action affecting lands subject to the public trust, it should ensure that the action is consistent with the public trust needs for the area.
 - Prioritizes ocean disposal over in-bay disposal.
 - **Proposal:**
 - Sediment is a public trust resource and beneficial reuse meets public trust needs.
 - Beneficial reuse of sediment dredged from public trust lands is the Commission's priority.
 - Aquatic disposal would still be allowed when justified.



See Appendix 3 for more information.

Policy: Beneficial reuse requirement

- Beneficial reuse is the preferred alternative to aquatic disposal.
- A dredging project would be required to evaluate:
 - Sediment quality;
 - Beneficial reuse site availability;
 - Alternatives to aquatic disposal, including a comparison of costs of beneficial reuse and aquatic disposal;
 - Dredging and offloading equipment;
 - Cost and regional benefits of the dredging project; and
 - Agreements between co-applicants to support the project.
- Based on this evaluation, beneficial reuse would be required if it is reasonably capable of being done.
 - Would only apply to dredging projects proposing any aquatic disposal.

Current practice

To meet LTMS goal of **40% beneficial reuse**, projects usually submit information regarding:

- ✓ Dredging area
- ✓ Sediment quality
- ✓ Dredging and offloading equipment
- ✓ Impacts to Bay resources
- ✓ Total project cost

Proposed practice

To **maximize beneficial reuse**, projects would additionally submit information regarding:

- + Beneficial reuse site availability
- + Cost of beneficial reuse compared to disposal
- + Benefits of the dredging project
- + Partnerships between co-applicants

You might be wondering...



- Would new requirements apply to all dredging projects?
 - No, only to dredging projects proposing any aquatic disposal.
- Would beneficial reuse be required of every dredging project?
 - Beneficial reuse would only be required when the Commission determines it's reasonably capable of being done.
- What about sediment quality?
 - All dredged sediment is tested for pollutants. If it's too contaminated, beneficial reuse would be found not reasonably capable of being done.
- What about pilot projects?
 - Pilot projects are already supported under existing policies, including strategic placement of dredged material. *Sediment Management Policy 8* supports them explicitly.
- How would this new framework impact the LTMS?
 - The LTMS would have follow same review process but have more information to make decisions.
 - *Sediment Management Policy 12* continues collaboration with the LTMS.

Policy: Sediment from flood control channels and upland soil to support beneficial reuse

- **Flood control channels**

- Most flood control dredging happens below head of tide, within BCDC jurisdiction.
- Over 60% ends up disposed of as waste.
- Sediment Management Policy 7 would apply to flood control channel dredging.
- Proposed policies would require flood protection and streambed maintenance projects to consider and, where possible, reconnect or realign tidal creeks to wetlands.

- **Excess upland soil**

- Available for beneficial reuse at about half the volume of dredged sediment.
- Proposed policies would encourage the use of clean, excess upland soil in wetland restoration, and creation of a regional stockpile system.
- Proposed policies would require assessment of potential trucking impacts on socially vulnerable communities.

Other key policies proposed

- The proposal encourages local jurisdictions preparing subregional shoreline adaptation plans pursuant to the RSAP to identify opportunities for beneficial reuse.
 - The Commission would maintain a list of sites, capacity, and status to facilitate connections.
- No new requirements for restoration projects; instead, we removed duplicative policies that could stand in the way of restoration.
- Minor changes to findings throughout Bay Plan to update science and align language with amendment.

Environmental assessment

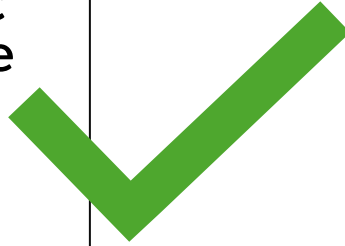
BCDC Staff assessed possible indirect environmental impacts and prepared a draft environmental assessment and CEQA Appendix G (Appendix 4).

Conclusion: BPA 1-26 will not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts.

- This amendment updates a plan; it doesn't authorize a specific project.
- Any future projects will need to undergo environmental review and mitigate environmental impacts.

What this BPA would do

- Acknowledge sediment as a public trust resource and beneficial reuse as meeting public trust needs.
- Establish beneficial reuse as the Commission's priority.
- Create clear framework to consider whether beneficial reuse should be required on a project-by-project basis.
- Allow flexibility and discretion.
- Increase transparency.
- Support wetland restoration through increased beneficial reuse.



What this BPA wouldn't do

- Create new restoration sites.
- Provide funding for beneficial reuse projects.
- Require soil use in wetlands.
- Create a formula for when beneficial reuse is required.
- Address adaptation needs for upland development.



Next steps

- After the Commission closes the public hearing, staff will revise the policy proposal and environmental assessment based on feedback received.
- We'll circulate a final recommendation and final environmental assessment 2 weeks before the Commission votes.
- The vote is tentatively scheduled for December 3, 2026.



Thank you!