

Sediment and Beneficial Reuse Commissioner Working Group Meeting

July 7, 2026



Agenda

Beneficial Reuse Policy Development Workshop and SWAP Update

- SWAP refresher
- Bay Plan amendment policy direction
- Policy workshop feedback
- Updated timeline
- Financing strategy

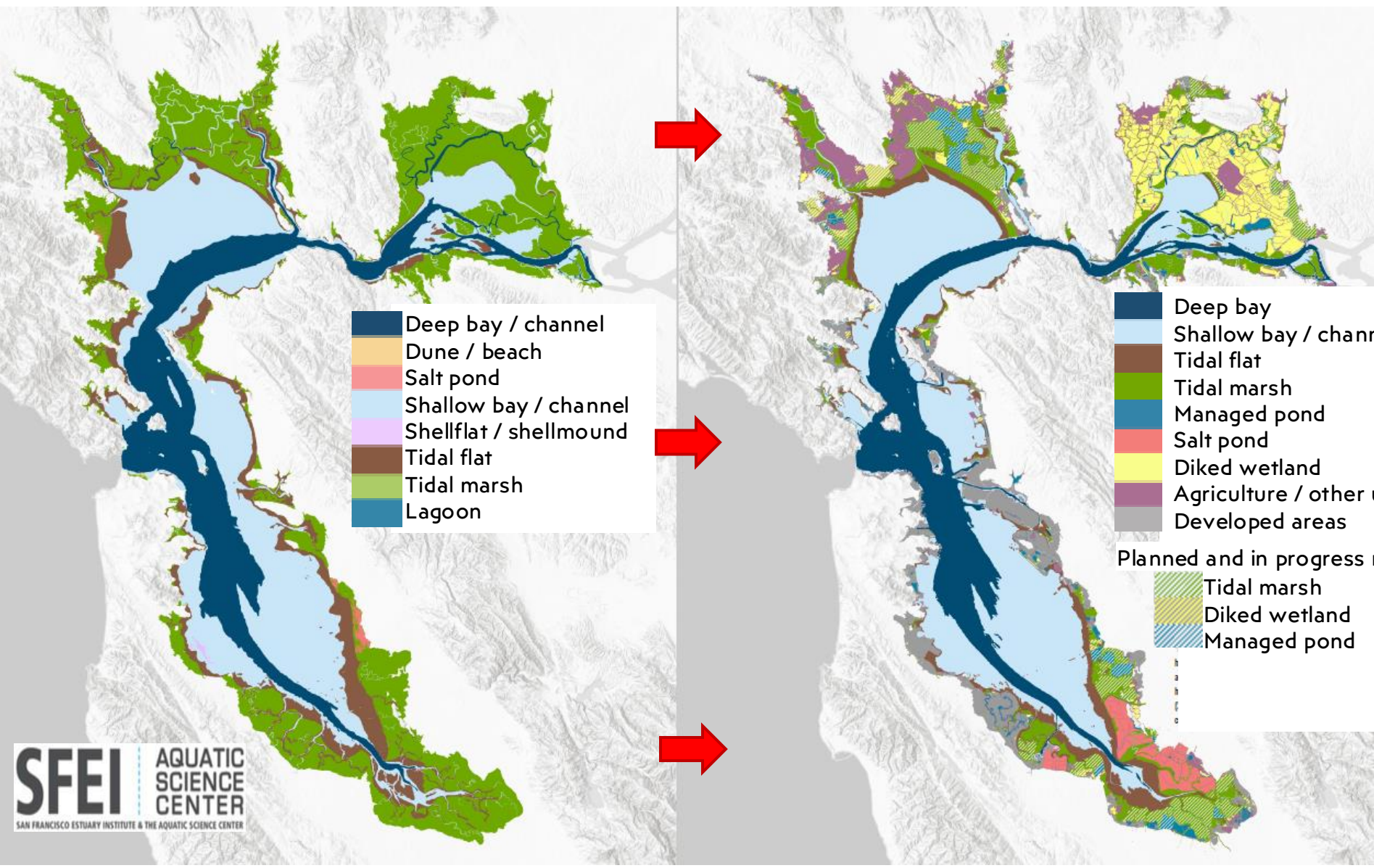
Public Comment

Adjournment

Historical Baylands Circa 1800

Modern Baylands Circa 2009

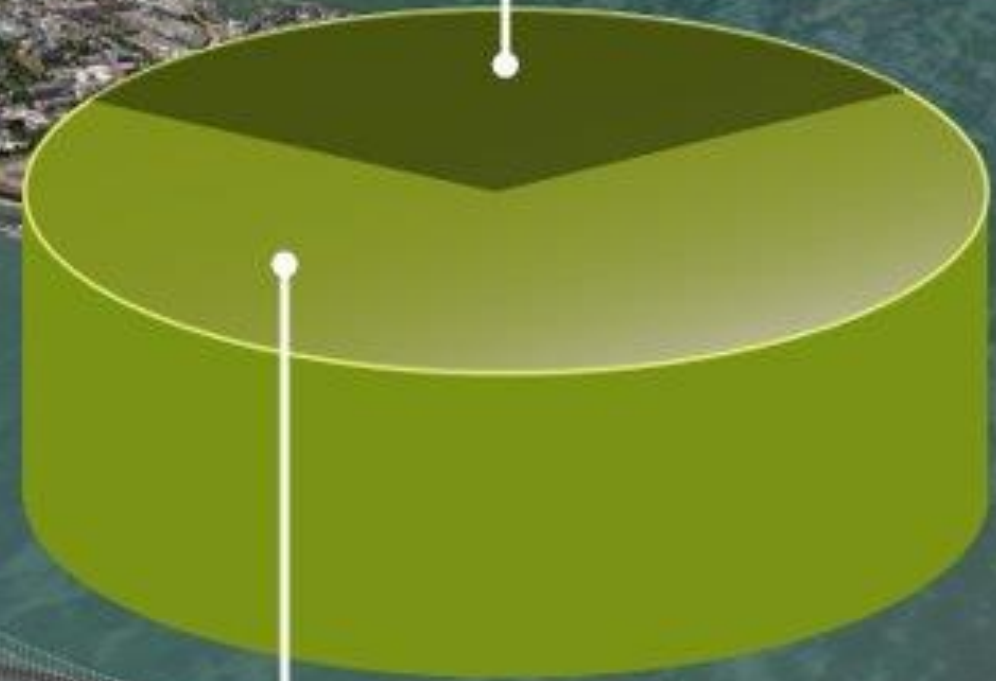
Between 1880 – 1998,
~90% of wetlands
were lost due to
human activities



VOLUME OF SEDIMENT NEEDED FOR TIDAL WETLANDS AND MUDFLATS BY 2100

450–650 million metric tons

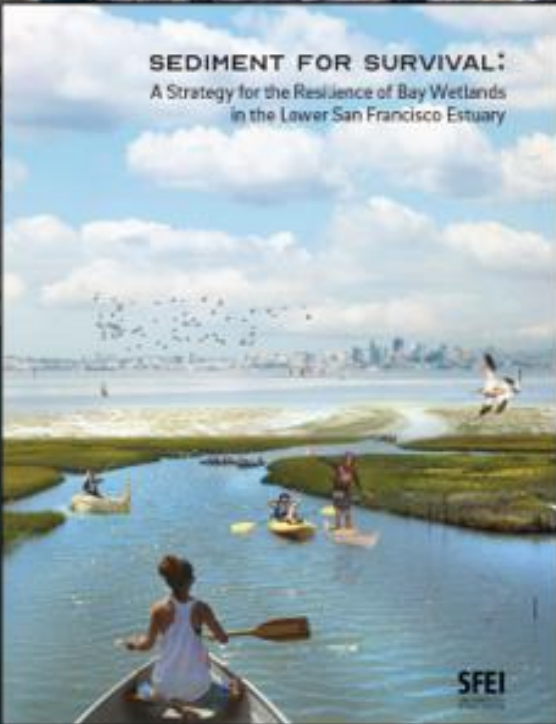
Amount of sediment that can be
supplied by nature and current
management approaches



The sediment need that could be met by
changing management practices to access
more in-bay and watershed sediment

SEDIMENT FOR SURVIVAL:

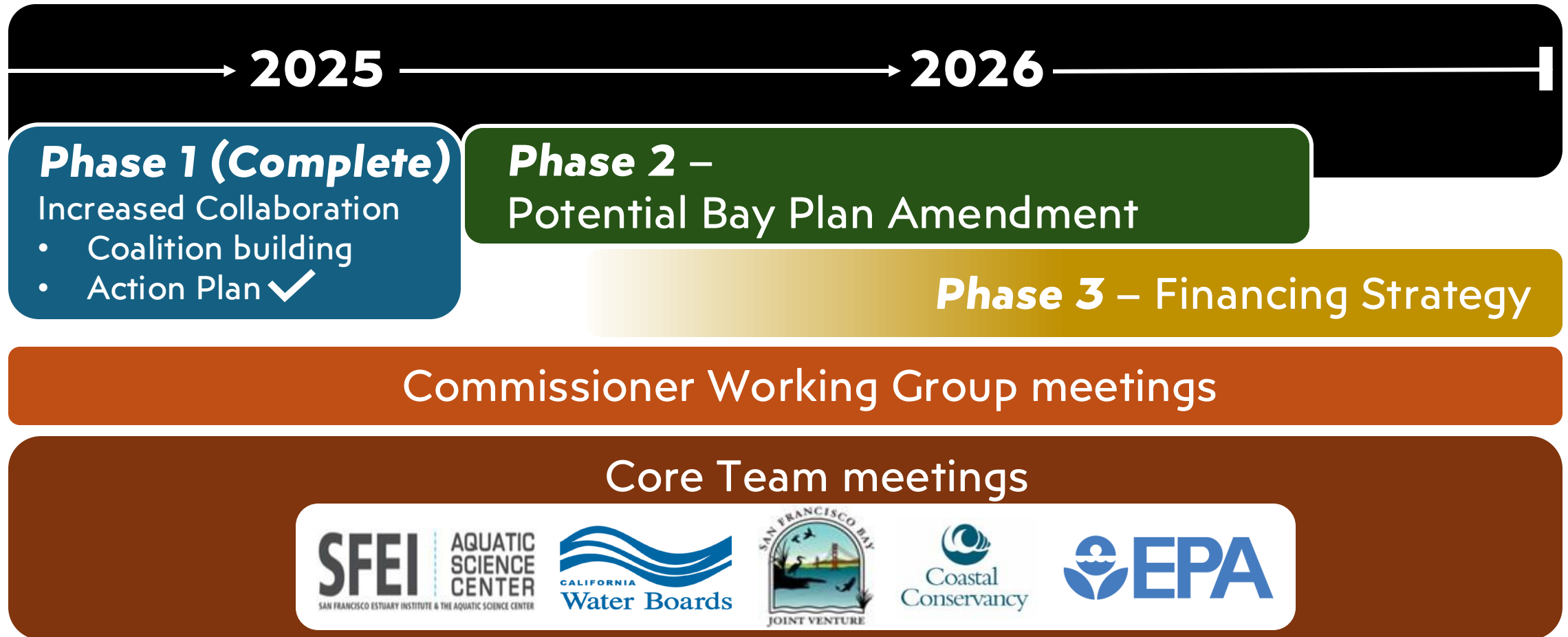
A Strategy for the Resilience of Bay Wetlands
in the Lower San Francisco Estuary

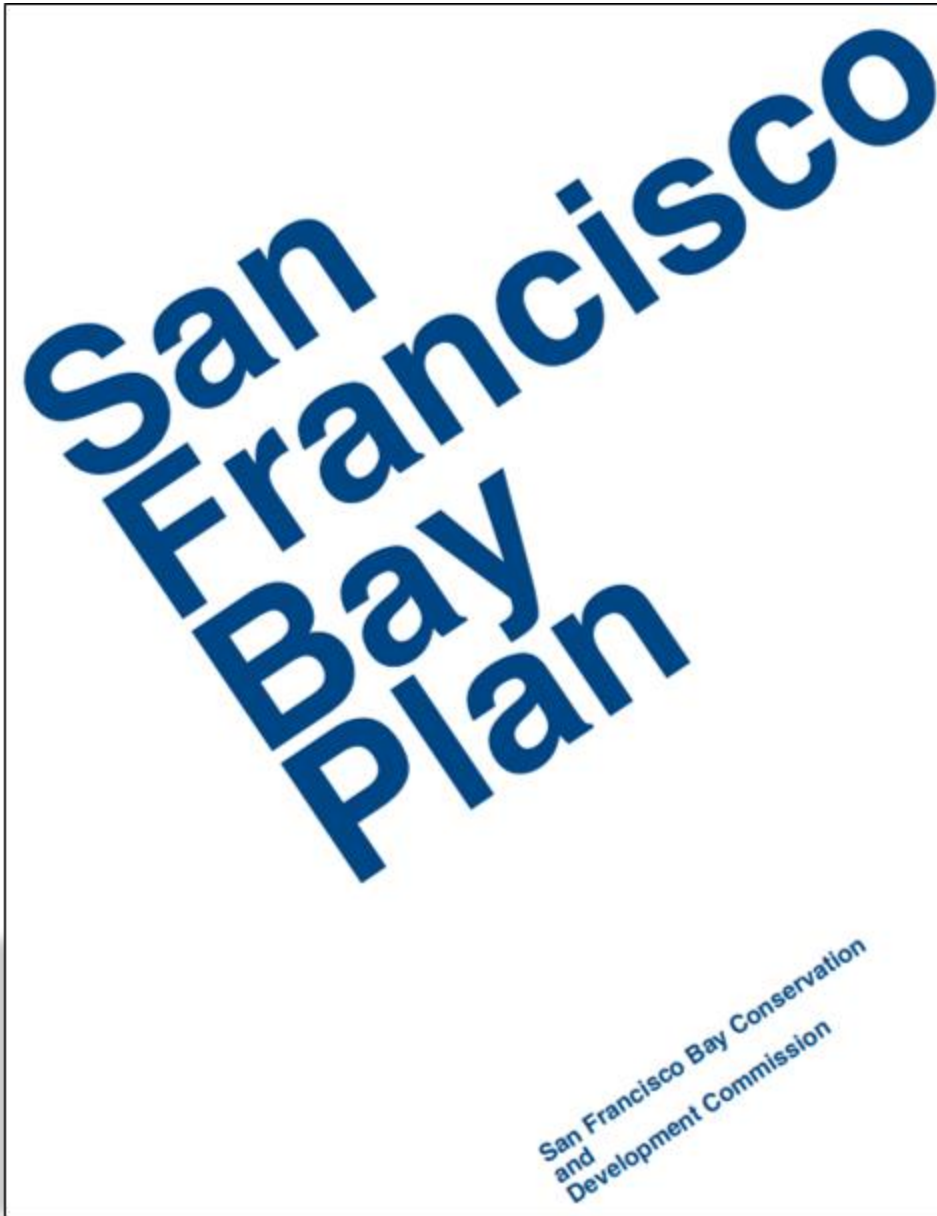


The Sediment for Wetland Adaptation Project

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:  + 





Bay Plan Cover (Source: BCDC)

San Francisco Bay Plan

- Guides the review of projects under the McAteer-Petris Act.
- Policies related to:
 - Protection of the Bay as a Resource
 - Development of the Bay and Shoreline
- Policies are updated periodically for regional needs.
- Permits issued if consistent with McAteer-Petris Act and San Francisco Bay Plan policies.

Bay Plan Amendment Goals

1. Acknowledge sediment as a critical Bay resource and a public trust resource.
2. Make beneficial reuse BCDC's priority for sediment and soil.
3. Address sources of sediment and soil other than navigation dredging.
4. Encourage local connections and innovation.



Policy Workshop

June 4, 2026

Goals

1. Learn about the sediment problem, BCDC's role, and the Sediment for Wetland Adaptation Project.
2. Help shape Bay Plan policies that would increase beneficial reuse of sediment and soil for wetland restoration as part of Bay Plan Amendment 1-26.
3. Build on previous work that resulted in the Sediment and Soil Beneficial Reuse Action Plan which BCDC published last year.



Who attended?

✓ members of the public

✓ restoration practitioners

state and federal
regulatory agencies ✓

environmental interests ✓

construction project
managers ✓

project applicants ✓

development interests/
industry ✓

local governments ✓

**beneficial
reuse**

dredgers

dirt
providers

tribes

fishers

These groups were less
represented at the workshop.
Staff are reaching out to
them separately.

New “Sediment Management” Section

Overarching findings

- Sediment as a valuable & public trust resource
- Human activities, sediment management, use

Subsections

1. Navigation dredging
2. Flood protection channels & streambed maintenance
3. Upland soil, stockpiling

June 4 Poster Topics

Bay Plan Policy Discussion

- Navigation dredging
- Channel & streambed maintenance
- Upland soil

Brainstorming Regional Actions

- Restoration incentives
- Funding beneficial reuse
- Action Plan implementation

Policy Concept: Navigation Dredging

- Beneficial reuse is the preferred alternative to aquatic disposal.
- A dredging project is required to evaluate:
 - Suitability of dredged sediment for beneficial reuse;
 - Availability of beneficial reuse sites;
 - Alternatives to aquatic disposal, including a comparison of costs of beneficial reuse and aquatic disposal;
 - Benefits of the project.
- Based on this analysis, beneficial reuse would be required if a site is available, the sediment is suitable, and the reuse is capable of being done.

What we heard: Navigation Dredging

- Concern around use of “practicable,” and “feasible” language.
- Economic analysis should account for project costs and benefits.
- Burden could be higher for resource-constrained entities.
- Interest in creating simple guidance or standards to reduce case-by-case uncertainty and administrative burden.
- Support for defining sediment as a public trust resource.
- Support for emphasizing sediment’s valuable role in flood protection, shoreline resilience, and restoration.
- Need for sediment placement that supports the broader Bay system.

Policy Concept:

Channel & Streambed Maintenance

- Require beneficial reuse of sediment dredged from channels and creeks to support habitat restoration.
- Evaluate reconnection and realignment of creeks and waterways to tidal and seasonal wetlands to supply fresh water and sediment to these areas, as well as increase flood absorption.

What we heard:

Channel & Streambed Maintenance

- Desire for a single, consistent sediment quality testing framework, but unclear which entity should develop it.
- More clarity needed on creeks and channels in BCDC's jurisdiction, including how much material is available from them.
- Incentive-based language may be more effective than a new requirement.

Policy Concept: Upland Soil

- Clarify in policy that use of suitable soil is encouraged in local restoration projects.
- Create standardized testing program to determine suitability of upland soils in restoration projects, particularly those in need of specific geotechnical qualities.
- Encourage local governments and public agencies to support a regional stockpiling system.

What we heard: Upland Soil

- Stockpiling
 - Should be allowed near restoration sites, within the shoreline band.
 - Ideal for a stockpile to support multiple soil sources and restoration sites.
 - Costs must be competitive with landfill disposal.
 - Must consider testing, oversight, security, and management.
- Reuse incentives must target the entities making excavation and disposal decisions, not just the permitted developer.
- Upland material includes not only construction-site material but also nontidal creek soil outside BCDC jurisdiction.

Funding and Financing Beneficial Reuse

- Beneficial reuse is typically more expensive than aquatic disposal. We asked what strategies the region can use to overcome the barrier of increased cost.

Ideas from workshop:



Beneficial reuse
credit system



In-Bay disposal
tipping fee



Regional beneficial
reuse funding pool

SWAP Phase 3: The Financing Strategy

- Interviews with dredgers and consultants last summer.
- Creating a report of funding challenges.
- Researching potential financing and incentive structures brought up during workshop.
- Potentially investigating contracting process with local jurisdictions that hire dredging consultants.

What we heard: Restoration Incentives

- Support innovation, pilot projects, strategic placement, nearshore placement and hydraulic dredging where appropriate.
- Increase outreach to cities, agencies, and the public on reuse benefits.
- Make projects more visible to taxpayers and decision-makers.
- Incorporate avoided costs, resilience benefits into funding decisions.
- Improved sediment matching/tracking system, one entity coordinating.
- Reform permitting to be faster, easier, and more flexible.
- Mitigation credit system to enable developers to pay for beneficial reuse.

What we heard: Action Plan Implementation

- Stockpiling: Explore potential locations, aquatic vs. upland storage, managing separation of materials, security, and testing.
- Permitting: Streamline permitting through programmatic permits and coordinated approvals.
- Governance: Identify a lead agency or coordinated system across regulatory agencies, municipalities, and others.
- Consider a beneficial reuse credit or in-lieu fee program for smaller dredgers to contribute to a shared fund that could support larger-scale beneficial reuse efforts.

Tentative BPA Timeline

Initiate amendment - May 7

In-person policy workshop - June 4

Commissioner working group - July 7, 1:00-3:00pm

Mail preliminary staff recommendation - September 1

Public comment period - September 1 – October 1

Public hearing - October 1, 1:00pm

Vote - November or December

Mail final staff recommendation - About 2 weeks before vote

OAL and NOAA review - Following vote

Public Comment

