

SAN FRANCISCO BAY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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SYMPOSIUM REGARDING NEED FOR ATTENUATION OF WIND-WAVE ENERGY IN RESTORED WETLANDS

Issue. There is a longstanding controversy on the need for and methods to attenuate wind-wave energy in restored wetlands to enhance sediment deposition and speed colonization by wetland plants.

Importance. High wave energies potentially could delay or even preclude sedimentation and colonization by wetland plants in large restored tidal areas, reducing the value and success of restoration projects. Structures to mitigate wind-wave energy can be expensive, can act as corridors for predators and exotic species into the wetlands, and could have other unintended adverse affects on the restored marsh. In spite of its importance and the divergence of professional opinions, there has not been an organized discussion on this topic. Significant public funds and efforts are being dedicated to restoration projects in the estuary. Their design cannot easily be changed once they are restored.

Background. Landscape-scale wetlands restoration projects are in planning and construction within the San Francisco Bay and San Joaquin Delta regions. These wetlands are needed to recover species that are endangered due to lack of habitat and also to recover the health of the estuary. Wetlands restoration science, while advancing rapidly, is still in a developing stage where there is fundamental disagreement on certain key aspects. Project sponsors rely on their technical advisors, resulting in radically divergent approaches to this issue in different projects.

Goal. To provide a moderated forum to discuss the processes at play, their effects on wetlands development, potential measure to mitigate problems, and possible focused studies to inform and resolve the issues.

Format. A one-day symposium will be held which will consist of presentations, discussion panels, and open discussion. The first section will provide presentations that set the stage. The second part will be presentations of various hypotheses regarding the processes and whether and how actions to mitigate them are needed. This section will include a panel and open discussion moderated by a facilitator. The last section will address potential studies and means to accomplish them.

Presentations. Presenters will be invited who can provide both the background presentations and that also represent the range of opinion on the topic. An attempt will be made to include experts from outside the region who can provide a broader context and perspective on the issue. Likely, three to four presenters from outside the region would be invited.

Sponsors. BCDC will provide the venue (McAteer-Petris Room) and take the lead on the symposium. The Friends of the Estuary, San Francisco Bay Wetlands Restoration Program, and other sources are being requested to provide financial and logistical support.

Needed Funds. Funds are needed to pay travel costs and per diem for presenters invited from outside the region, hire a facilitator, pay for preparation of summary minutes, and provide light refreshments.



Bay Conservation and Development Commission