

“A PARTNERSHIP FOR A HEALTHY BAY”

After 150 years of environmental degradation, San Francisco Bay's vital signs are not good. But the situation appears to be reversing, according to The Bay Institute's new San Francisco Bay Index, which measures the health of this unique national treasure.

The 2003 San Francisco Bay Index release on October 13 at the Aquarium of The Bay included press, other non-profit environmental groups, and supporting scientists. The first in a series of indexes planned for TBI's Ecological Scorecard project, the current work culminates a three-year effort supported by numerous funders, and sets the stage for similar

efforts planned for the Delta, San Joaquin, and Sacramento River systems.

The Index analyzes data gathered by a wide range of agencies, and was produced with the assistance of a panel of nationally distinguished estuarine scientists. It brings together critical data about the Bay in a simple and comprehensible way. Each of the eight indexes—habitat, freshwater inflow, water quality, food web, shellfish, fish, fishable-swimmable-drinkable, and stewardship—was assigned a grade, ranging from A to F.

The best score, a B-, went to the Shellfish Index

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THE BAY INSTITUTE'S

FALL 2003

bayletter

HEADWATERS 2 OCEAN

TBI INSIDE THE BELTWAY

TBI's Executive Director Grant Davis, Bay Restoration Program Manager Marc Holmes, Development Associate Delia Hitz, and new board member Jane Rogers traveled to Washington, D.C., October 16 with several colleagues to hold a reception honoring Senator Dianne Feinstein with the 2003 San Francisco Bay Wetlands Leader Award.

The reception, sponsored by TBI, the National Audubon Society, and the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture, honored Senator Feinstein for her efforts to protect and restore San Francisco Bay—in particu-

lar, her role in facilitating the South Bay Cargill salt ponds acquisition. The event was timed to coincide with the 100th Anniversary of the National Wildlife

Refuge system, October 12 – 18, 2003.

Speakers included U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Deputy Director Matt Hogan, Representatives Lynn Woolsey and Mike Thompson, Audubon President and CEO John Flicker, San Francisco Bay Joint Venture Chair Fritz Reid, and TBI Executive Director Davis.

TBI representatives also visited the National



Photo: David Scovone

TBI Executive Director Grant Davis presents U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein with a copy of San Francisco Bay: Portrait of an Estuary during a Washington D.C. reception October 16.

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CALFED Becomes Bay Delta Authority

TBI's Bay Restoration Program Manager Marc Holmes attended the first meetings of the California Bay Delta Authority August 14 and October 9 in Sacramento. The Senate Rules Committee appointed Holmes to the Authority. Other appointees include former State Senators Patrick Johnson and Jim Costa. (The full list can be viewed at www.calwater.ca.gov.)

The Authority replaces the CALFED interagency working group with a slate of delegates specified by State law. Controversy swirls around the Authority which is charged with reforming management of California's limited water supplies. Resulting from a 1986 decision by former TBI Board member Judge John Racanelli, the Authority is required to repair the damage to fish and wildlife caused by more than 60 years of water diversions while providing water for continued economic uses.

TBI in Texas

TBI Watershed Education Director Laurette Rogers took STRAW to Texas as part of the 15th annual Society for Ecological Restoration

International Conference. This year the conference focused on Restoration, Landscape Ecology, and Design.

Rogers treated the assembled ecological restoration experts, civil engineers, and land planners to a 20-minute slide show presentation outlining the important watershed education work of the STRAW Network students and teachers.

TBI at the SOE

On the heels of the San Francisco Bay Index's highly profiled release in the Bay Area the week before, The Bay Institute's Index was prominently featured during the recent State of the Estuary conference held October 21-23 in Oakland. John Hart's and David Sanger's newly published *San Francisco Bay: Portrait of an Estuary* was also highlighted during the conference.

Wetlands Restoration

A major step toward the goal of restoring 2,500 acres of wetlands occurred September 30, at Hamilton Field. Federal and state officials at a ceremony at the offices of the Marin Community Foundation in Novato turned over 630 acres of the former air base to the Coastal Conservancy.

TBI Executive Director Grant Davis hailed the achievement, which makes it possible for the airstrip to be covered with dredged materials and opened to bay waters to recreate wetlands destroyed by diking more than 100 years ago.

The entire Hamilton Wetlands Restoration Project would provide for the restoration of 1,000 acres of tidal and seasonal wetlands at the airfield and adjacent taxi areas. The potential addition of an adjoining Bel Marin Keys parcel could expand the wetlands to 2,500 acres.

The restoration will help sustain endangered species such as Chinook salmon, California clapper rail, brown pelican, California black rail, and salt marsh harvest mouse.

Tales of The San Joaquin Premier

Tales of The San Joaquin, a half-hour documentary by Emmy-Award winning environmental filmmaker Christopher Beaver exploring the San Joaquin's history and current condition as well as citizen efforts to improve the River, premiers Thursday, February 5, at the Aquarium of The Bay in San Francisco, and Friday, March 5, at the Oakland Museum.

Board of Directors Robert J. Erickson, Chair; Ozell Austin; Bruce Bochte; Arthur Brunwasser; Nancy Carlson; Harrison C. Dunning; Carol Lind; Karen E. Losee; John C. Racanelli; Jane Rogers; Anthony Sandberg; C. John Suen; Nancy Swadesh; Nick Wilcox.

The Bay Institute

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TBI WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The Bay Institute Board of Directors and staff congratulate and welcome three new board members, Jane Rogers, Anthony Sandberg, and Nick Wilcox.



Jane Rogers

Jane Rogers, a Mill Valley resident, has had three careers—as urban planner, environmental policy expert, and in philanthropy as an officer of the San Francisco Foundation. There she designed and managed the Foundation’s environmental grant-making program to advance the preservation and restoration of the San Francisco Bay ecosystem as well as environmental health and justice concerns.

Earlier she served as Chief of Policy and External Relations for the national Coastal Resources Management Program at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Washington, D.C., and as Director of Metropolitan Growth Policy for the Metropolitan Washington (D.C.) Council of Governments.




Anthony Sandberg

Anthony Sandberg, founder of the Berkeley-based Olympic Circle Sailing Club, has been an active sailor since childhood, having sailed the waters of the South Pacific, the Caribbean, Central America, the Mediterranean, Africa, and Asia. He has dedicated his life to getting people out into nature, particularly San Francisco Bay, and encouraging them to not only enjoy its beauty but to care for it.



Nick Wilcox

Nick Wilcox, of Penn Valley near Grass Valley, is a specialist in water rights in the Sacramento-San Joaquin watershed, with more than 10 years experience in planning, evaluation, program development, and implementation of water resource projects with the State Water Resources Control Board. He represented the Board on the CALFED Operations Group and was one of the major authors of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Implementation of the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan. He retired from state service in September this year. 

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as a result of slowly increasing crab and shrimp numbers, despite a still less than robust commercial fishery. Some of the worst scores, for the Freshwater Inflow and Food Web Indexes, reflect the critical state of the Bay’s upper, brackish water portions, where native plants and animals have been most heavily affected by upstream water diversions and alien species invasions.

The short term trends, representing the past 5-10 years, illustrate a situation that is slowly improving. Though health has declined from historic periods for all indexes, the short-term trends are “stable” or

increasing in nearly all cases except freshwater flow. These trends reflect improvement in water quality, increased habitat acquired for restoration, and improvements in our stewardship of the Bay. If current conservation and restoration efforts continue, the Index is expected to depict upward trends and improved grades in the next several years. The Scorecard release launches our “Partnership for a Healthy Bay,” and sends a message to individuals and decision-makers that their actions can make a difference. See www.bay.org for the full Bay Index report.



SKAGGS ISLAND UPDATE

The clock is ticking on the chance to include a keystone portion of San Pablo Bay wetlands in the major restoration plans for the region. Once a top-secret military communications facility, the Navy closed the doors at Skaggs Island in 1994, leaving behind about a hundred abandoned buildings on this 3,300-acre former tidal marsh near Sonoma Creek.

Invisible from Highway 37 at this remote location, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) wants to restore the wetlands from which the site was “reclaimed” more than 100 years ago. But in order to do so, the Navy must transfer title to the FWS. But time is running out.

4 The FWS has until next July to take title and begin demolition of the buildings, or it will forfeit \$8 million to finance the operation.



Photo California Department of Fish & Game

Skaggs Island San Pablo Bay. Buildings in center of photo to be demolished.

TBI suggests you send a letter or an email to your elected representatives about the Skaggs Island project to ensure the timely transfer of the property to FWS.



Photo David Scavone




Senator Dianne Feinstein accepts a photograph during the Washington, D.C. reception held in her honor. From left front, Marge Kolar, US Fish & Wildlife Service; Beth Huning, San Francisco Bay Joint Venture; Sen. Feinstein; Rep. Zoe Lofgren; Rep. Lynn Woolsey; Rep. Mike Thompson; Grant Davis, TBI; John Flicker, Audubon; (rear from left) Fritz Reid, Ducks Unlimited; Rep. Dennis Cardoza; Marc Holmes, TBI; Michael Sellors, Audubon; Wendy Pulling, PG&E; Dianna Ross-Leech, PG&E.

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Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, and met with the Bay Area Congressional delegation.

Their message focused on the urgent need to transfer Skaggs Island from the Navy to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. They also stressed the importance of increased funding for the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, the National Estuary Program, support for restoring 25,000 of salt ponds in the north and south bay as well as acquisition opportunities through the San Pablo Bay Watershed Restoration Program.

The program is a joint effort of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California State Coastal Conservancy, and TBI. 



TBI, COAST MIWOK TEAM FOR RESTORATION

Last April, the Federated Indians of the Graton Rancheria (Coast Miwok) announced plans to build a casino and resort on a 2,000 acre site at the intersection of Highway 37 and Lakeville Road in Sonoma County. The proposal unleashed criticism from environmentalists, including The Bay Institute (TBI), who had long planned to restore tidal wetlands that once existed on the property.

For many years TBI has been working to restore the San Pablo Bay watershed where thousands of acres of tidal wetlands once flourished until about the 1870s. The goal of restoring this area recently received an unexpected boost.

On November 10, following a welcome reversal of the original proposal, the Tribe donated its entire

Photo UC Digital Library



Clapper Rail

financial interest in the property for restoration purposes. The first phase of that donation is a \$4.2 million option on 1,700 acres given to the Sonoma Land Trust. The Tribe

also announced that it later intends to donate approximately 321 acres that it owns outright.

Tribal Chairman Greg Sarris announced that once the Tribe learned of the sensitive ecological nature of the lands, it decided to search for an alternative location to build the casino-resort.

Photo Tom Rountree



Avocet

After the announcement of the donation, representatives of The Bay Institute met with the Tribal Council and Sonoma Land Trust officials to

discuss establishing a partnership to acquire additional funding to complete the purchase and develop restoration plans.

It is noteworthy that the Tribe donated the option regardless of whether they are successful at




Photo Marc Holmes

Breaking the dike at Tubbs Island in San Pablo Bay

securing an alternative site for their development. Chairman Sarris declared that the Highway 37 lands should be restored and remain undeveloped for all time.

Because the site includes both lands that were once wetlands as well as rolling hills, it presents a unique opportunity to restore a variety of habitat types. Not only can tidal wetlands be restored, but native grasslands can also be rejuvenated on the hillsides.

Native purple needle grass was used historically by the Miwok to weave intricate and beautiful baskets. Conversion of the grasslands to grazing and the introduction of exotic plants eliminated most of the native grasses. Tribal members have been teaching the art of basket weaving, and restoration of the site will enable them to expand the limited tracts of purple needle grass that remain. 

A BAY INSTITUTE WISH LIST

The TBI Board and staff wish this Holiday Season to be a joyful one for all. We are also hoping our generous supporters can find the time during the holidays to stuff TBI's Wish List stocking with donations, including the following:

- File Cabinets
- Sturdy Book Shelves
- Liquid Crystal Display Projector
- Full-sized refrigerator
- 2 tables with collapsible legs
- Laser printers



“BAY BOOK” PERFECT HOLIDAY GIFT

San Francisco Bay: Portrait of an Estuary made a big splash this fall complete with reviews and articles in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Mercury News*, the *Marin Independent Journal*, the *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, and *The Fresno Bee*.

Written by John Hart, with photographs by David Sanger, the 194-page book is a journey through San Francisco Bay’s history, introducing its native cultures, describing its ecology, and tracing its urban and industrial development.

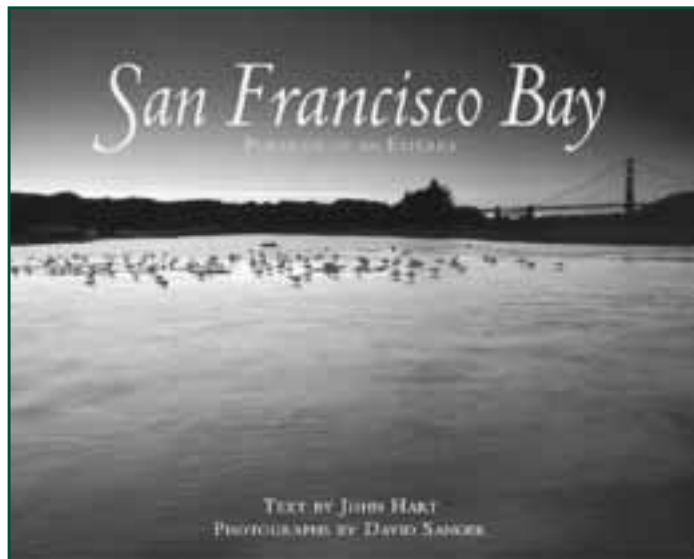
Images from the book can be purchased at sfbayphotos.com, with proceeds funding a photography exhibition at the Oakland Museum of California.

Autographed books can be purchased through The Bay Institute website at www.bay.org for \$29.95. Orders of between 10 and 19 books are \$26.95 each. 20 or more \$24.95 each. Add \$3.00 for each book for tax, shipping, and handling. Proceeds will benefit The Bay Institute. Environmental firms, agencies, and organizations receive a discount when buying ten or more books.

To place an order, contact Delia Hitz, Development Associate, The Bay Institute, (415) 506-0150 x 24.



Photo: David Sanger



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SAN FRANCISCO BAY: PORTRAIT OF AN ESTUARY ORDER FORM

\$32.95 (total per book) x _____ (number of copies) = \$_____ (total enclosed)

I am including my check made payable to “The Bay Institute”

Please charge my _____ Visa _____ MasterCard

Credit Card #: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Signature: _____

SHIPPING INFORMATION:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

e-mail: _____



STRAW STARTS NEW SEASON

With the onset of winter rains in November, The Bay Institute's STRAW (Students and Teachers Restoring a Watershed) Project started its 12th season with a highly successful restoration on the Joe and Kathy Tresch Ranch in the Two Rock Valley northwest of Petaluma.

Third, fifth, and sixth-graders from the Dunham and Two Rock Schools took part in the activity.

More than two dozen similar restorations on private ranches and publicly owned parcels are scheduled to take place this school year.


Each new school year begins with Watershed Week, a professional development institute for teachers, followed by STRAW Network dinners and a year-end Summit.

Last year, the STRAW Project completed 21 restorations with 45 Marin and Sonoma County classes and restored 9,550 linear feet of creek bank. STRAW trained 1,176 students, 222 parents, 110 volunteers, and 80 teachers to plant 2,748 native plants. Thirty-five different species from containers and 1,500 willow trees were planted on the banks of nine creeks and along the San Joaquin River near Fresno.



Photo: George Snyder

Novato Loma Verde Elementary School teacher Jenni Beck (center) shows students how to plant native species during a STRAW Restoration on the George Grossi Ranch earlier this year.

STRAW partners include the Marin Resource Conservation District, the Marin Conservation Corps, PRBO Conservation Science, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, MCSTOPPP (Marin County Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program), and Prunuske Chatham, Inc., as well as many other supporters and funders. 

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SUPPORT TBI'S VITAL PROGRAMS

The Bay Institute is a non-profit 501(c)(3) that welcomes contributions from individuals, foundations, agencies, and corporations. Donations support our scientific, policy, and educational programs to protect and restore San Francisco Bay, the Delta, and the rivers and streams tributary to the Estuary.

Please consider a year-end contribution to TBI. Contributions are tax-deductible and may be made through workplace giving programs, on a monthly or quarterly basis, or by using the enclosed remittance envelope. All donors receive *Bayletter*. Those who contribute \$100 or more during the next two months will receive a complimentary copy of *San Francisco Bay: Portrait of an Estuary*.



Photo: David Sanger

Forster's Tern

LEAVE A LEGACY

Please consider including TBI in your will. Consult with your attorney, accountant, or financial planner to understand the tax advantages your beneficiaries may enjoy as a result of a charitable bequest.



FALL EVENT A GREAT SUCCESS


The Bay Institute celebrated its 12th annual Fall Event on October 9 at Tiburon's Corinthian Yacht Club as a capacity crowd of 250 supporters, donors, and friends honored TBI's 22 years of protecting and restoring San Francisco Bay's estuary and watershed.

The night's special events included the awarding of the 2003 Harold Gilliam Award for Excellence in Environmental Reporting...from the Sierra to the Sea, by Harold Gilliam himself to Paul Rogers, environmental writer for *The Mercury News*, for his extensive reporting on the important acquisition of the Cargill salt ponds in southern San Francisco Bay, and other environmental issues.

Special Guest Belva Davis, host of KQED's *This Week in Northern California*, presented the 2003 Carla Bard Bay Education Award to John Hart and David Sanger, author and photographer of the highly successful *San Francisco Bay: Portrait of an Estuary*.



Left to Right: State Senator Bruce McPherson (R-15th District), TBI Executive Director Grant Davis, TBI Board Chair Bob Erickson, hydrologist Phil Williams, and TBI Founder Bill Davoren look on as Mercury News writer Paul Rogers shows off his Certificate of Recognition presented by Senator McPherson

Also honored were community leaders featured in the book, including Sylvia McLaughlin, a co-founder of Save The Bay, long-time Palo Alto conservationists Florence and Philip LaRiviere, whose activism has resulted in the protection and restoration of large wetland tracts in South San Francisco Bay, hydrologist Phil Williams, and TBI founder Bill Davoren. 

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