

LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL FOR SAN JOAQUIN? COURT DECISION POSSIBLE THIS YEAR

After sixteen years of legal fighting to restore flows and salmon to the San Joaquin River below Friant Dam, a court decision on the lawsuit driving the restoration effort is likely later this year.

Federal Judge Lawrence Karlton scheduled an August hearing to consider the plaintiff coalition's motion for a decision in the case, which was first filed against the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation by the Natural Resources Defense Council, TBI, and other conservation groups in 1988.

The San Joaquin runs dry 39 miles below Friant

Dam, which destroyed the state's largest spring Chinook salmon run after operations began in the 1940s. The dam violates state law that requires maintaining the river's fisheries in good condition.

Other news has been mixed. Negotiations to complete a publicly-funded, multi-million dollar San Joaquin salmon restoration study were halted last year when the Bureau and its Friant contractors pulled out. However, the new state administration has expressed interest in moving forward to complete the study.

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THE BAY INSTITUTE'S

SUMMER 2004

bayletter

HEADWATERS 2 OCEAN

ECOLOGICAL SCORECARD REACHES OUT

The Year in Water 2003 report (see insert) is only one development from TBI's Ecological Scorecard Project. This ambitious program, which created last year's San Francisco Bay Index, is active on a number of fronts in seeking to get a better picture of how well the Bay-Delta-rivers ecosystem and its management are doing. (The Bay Index evaluates eight key areas of ecological health for the Bay itself; the Year in Water looks at indicators of flow and flow management throughout the entire watershed).

TBI is working with the San Francisco Estuary Institute and the Center for Ecosystem Management and Restoration to prepare a definitive set of indicators, based on the Bay Index framework, that can be used by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and other managers to measure the

health of the estuary. The focus of the first phase is to refine the existing indicators of the Bay's habitat and water quality, and to begin work on identifying bird population indicators.



Napa Slough at San Pablo Bay

Photo David Sanger

It is also critical to get the results before policymakers, managers, and the public. TBI has been active in using the Scorecard to highlight the effects of new water projects; in sharing the results with a wider national scientific audience at numerous venues, including the 2004 National Estuary Project conference in Washington D.C., and

Estuarine Research Federation, American Fisheries Society, and San Francisco Bay Regional Monitoring Program meetings; and in exploring how to use the Scorecard as an outreach tool in classrooms and surrounding communities.

TBI Senior Ecologist **Dr. Anitra Pawley** visited Washington D.C. in March to present the National Estuary Project with an overview of estuarine indicator development and outreach using the San Francisco Bay Index (Scorecard) as an example of how to do it.

Dr. Pawley also presented a talk for the plenary session of the April 23 meeting of the American Fisheries Society in Redding where the Scorecard Fish Index was used as an example of how to develop fish indicators. Accompanying her was TBI Board Member **Hap Dunning**, who spoke about the history of "fish friendly" legislation. TBI Senior Scientist **Dr. Christina Swanson**, AFS Cal-Neva Chapter president-elect, served as program chair at the Redding conference.

Dr. Swanson also attended and facilitated an afternoon workshop organized by the Sustainable Silicon Valley Initiative on "Water Sustainability in Silicon Valley: A Vision for the Future." She is also the lead author of TBI's "The Year in Water" report, the Executive Summary of which appears in this issue of *Bayletter*.

TBI's Executive Director **Grant Davis** and Bay Restoration Program Manager **Marc Holmes** traveled to Washington, D.C. in March. The visit included meetings to address the bureaucratic logjam between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Navy that threatens to derail the transfer of Skaggs Island, a former military facility, to the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

TBI Watershed Education Director **Laurette Rogers** and project partner **Sandy Neumann** facilitated a two-day May retreat with the Rainwater Charitable Fund and the Botanical Research Institute of Texas in Fort Worth to help develop a model for collaboration between the museum and Texas schools using outdoor learning environments.

The Watershed Education Program will hold its STRAW (Students and Teachers Restoring a Watershed) 7th Annual Teacher Training Conference "Watershed Week" Monday, August 9, through Wednesday, August 11, at the Santa Sabina Center in San Rafael.

LIVE AND SILENT AUCTION TBI's Annual Fall Celebration September 23, 2004

Help us to *Celebrate Partnerships for a Healthy Bay* on September 23 by contributing items to our exciting Auction! Please think about if you have or know anyone who has...

Vacation homes, resort stays, frequent flier mileage ♦ Tickets (baseball, opera, theatre, movies) ♦ Ability to host a cocktail party, picnic, or dinner ♦ Boat trips, wine, meals with celebrities, and activities "Out on the Town" are also good! And any other fun items...

Call Auction Committee Co-Chairs Nancy and Christian Werner at (415) 566-3152 or Carol Lind at (415) 789-0892.

Thank you for your help!

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IN MEMORIAM

NANCY SWADESH ENVIRONMENTAL INTERNSHIP

Nancy Swadesh was a prominent environmentalist and educator passionately dedicated to improving the human condition through civic and political action.

She studied journalism as an undergraduate, was deeply involved in community affairs and electoral politics throughout her life, and served as vice chancellor for Academic Affairs at City College of San Francisco during the 1980s.

As a much-beloved member of the Board of Directors of The Bay Institute (TBI) for eleven years and nine months (serving as Chair for four), she was instrumental in creating TBI's Watershed Education Program.



Photo: TBI

Nancy Swadesh
(1921-2003)

After she passed away in December of 2003, the Board created a memorial fund to honor her deep interest in and commitment to environmental issues. The memorial fund will be used to pay for an environmental internship at TBI for college or university students attending school within the San Francisco Bay watershed.

Please consider perpetuating Nancy's legacy by making a contribution to the Nancy Swadesh Environmental Internship fund.

To make a donation please contact TBI Office Manager Ann Dickinson at (415) 506-0150, or by mail at The Bay Institute, Suite 200, 500 Palm Drive, Novato, CA 94949.

END OF THE TUNNEL

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Even worse, when TBI sponsored the premiere of "Tales of the San Joaquin," a new documentary that uses interviews and old photographs to tell the story of the river that was, two Valley Congressmen complained to Governor Schwarzenegger that the film, made with state environmental education funds, was anti-agriculture propaganda. But the secret is out: the film was shown twice on public TV in Fresno. 



Photo: Madera County Film Commission

Upper San Joaquin River


DELTA PUMPING PROPOSAL MOVES FORWARD

A proposal to increase pumping in the Delta is moving forward as a key element of the joint state-federal CALFED Program, while legislative battles are being fought in Washington and Sacramento over how to fund and implement the entire CALFED plan for managing the Delta's waters.

The plan includes increasing the state's Delta pumping from 6,680 to 8,500 cubic feet per second. Government agencies would also agree to use the State Water Project (SWP) pumps to convey federal water supplies, prevent increased salinity intrusion, and implement as-yet-undetermined environmental protections.

Initial studies show that increased pumping would violate current endangered species and south

Delta salinity control protections. In late May the California Senate passed SB 1155, State Senator Mike Machado (D-Linden)'s bill mandating a salinity control compliance plan. TBI is also concerned about flow violations in the south Delta, the ability to avoid endangered fish take, and broader ecosystem impacts up- and downstream of the pumps.

Meanwhile, the House and Senate are working to reconcile conflicting bills to fund CALFED, so far mostly underwritten by the state. Senator Dianne Feinstein's S1097 simply authorizes funding CALFED activities, while Rep. Ken Clavert's HR 2828 would speed approval of new reservoirs and hinder acquiring land for habitat restoration. Write or call your Representative urging them to support S1097 and oppose HR 2828. 

SKAGGS ISLAND—LOST IN TRANSMISSION?

In 1994, the U.S. Navy vacated 3,300-acre Skaggs Island, a military communications facility dating from World War II. The island, south of Sonoma, is a former San Pablo Bay tidal marsh drained for agricultural purposes in the late 1880s. Following its abandonment by the Navy, the island had been scheduled for transfer to the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) for restoration. Situated in the heart of the Napa-Sonoma Marshes, the island's rejuvenation is vital to the success of the Napa-Sonoma Marsh restoration plan.

Since then, however, the Navy has ended talks with the FWS in a dispute over legal terms of the pending transfer, leaving the federal General Services Administration (GSA) in control of the property. The GSA has the authority to put the property up for public auction, should the state of California—as the next government entity in line to receive it—decline to take title.

Although the State recently sent a letter to the GSA expressing interest in the island, State ownership



Photo David Sanger

Sunrise, in the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge

is contingent upon resolution of the question of liability for potential contaminants found on the site in the future, an issue that remains unresolved.

Write or call Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey (D-Marin) and Congressman Mike Thompson (D-Napa) and urge them to help save Skaggs Island.

(See "H₂O" section in this issue of Bayletter for more about TBI's efforts on behalf of Skaggs's Island)



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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2004

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