

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION

STAFF SUMMARY REPORT
(Andree Breaux Greenberg & Xavier Fernandez)
MEETING DATE: March 12, 2008

ITEM: 16

SUBJECT: **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**, Bair Island Restoration Project, Redwood City, San Mateo County - Adoption of Waste Discharge Requirements and Water Quality Certification.

CHRONOLOGY: The Board has not previously considered this project.

DISCUSSION: This item would issue Waste Discharge Requirements to the Service to regulate this long-term wetland restoration project on Bair Island. The primary goal of the project is to create tidal wetlands and associated habitats from former salt ponds and agricultural lands. The project is a major step toward restoring tidal wetland habitat in the Bay Region.

Approximately 1,400 acres will be restored primarily for wildlife habitat on the three islands that comprise the Bair Island Restoration Project. While there will be impacts to the existing wetlands on the site, they will be more than compensated for by the tidal marsh restoration. Tidal exchange will be reestablished by breaching and lowering levees; excavating starter channels; and dredging and filling some areas on Inner Bair. The Project is expected to have fully developed tidal marsh approximately 50 years after 9 levees have been breached.

The Revised Tentative Order includes terms and conditions for the initial release of contents from the salt ponds at Bair Island and for future habitat monitoring. Each of the four geomorphic units will be monitored for at least 15 years after the initial restoration breach (one on Inner Bair; two on Middle Bair, and one on Outer Bair).

The only comments received during public circulation of the draft order were from the Service's consultant, who clarified some design issues; those comments did not alter the basic project and were incorporated into the Revised Tentative Order (Appendix A). Appendix B contains the comments and staff responses.

RECOMMENDATION: Adoption of the Revised Tentative Order

File No. 2178.07 (abg)

Appendix A: Revised Tentative Order

Appendix B: Staff response to comments