

20/20 Vision: Past Reflections, Future Directions

Session Title: Day 1 Plenary Session

Moderator Biography: Andrew Gunther has studied the Bay since receiving his Ph.D. from UC Berkeley (1987). He was an environmental scientist (1986-1991) with the San Francisco Estuary Institute (then AHI), author for two Status and Trends Reports during development of the CCMP, and the original manager for the Regional Monitoring Program (1993-1996). He served as Assistant Chief Scientist for the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Restoration Program (1992-2002), Program Coordinator for the Clean Estuary Partnership (2001-2006), and Project Leader for the 2011 State of the Bay report. He is now Executive Coordinator for the Bay Area Ecosystems Climate Change Consortium. He is Executive Director of the Center for Ecosystem Management and Restoration and a member of the Board of Directors of the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Speaker Biography: Julie Pierce is the ABAG Vice President, Mayor of the City of Clayton, and a member of the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA). She has worked on transportation and growth management policy issues for 25 years, beginning in 1987 when she was appointed to Central Contra Costa Regional Transportation Planning Committee. She has served on the Clayton City Council since 1995 and the CCTA since 1992, and chaired CCTA in 1995 and 2003. Julie was recognized by the Contra Costa Council for her leadership as chair of the CCTA in 1995 for the adoption of the very first Contra Costa Countywide Comprehensive Transportation Plan. The San Francisco Chapter of the Women's Transportation Seminar honored her with their 1998 Woman of the Year award. Julie currently serves as the CCTA delegate to the California Council of Governments (CALCOG). She also serves as the Northern California Transportation agencies representative on the Executive Committee for CALCOG. Julie was elected ABAG Vice President in January 2012. Julie is the Contra Costa Mayors' Conference delegate to the ABAG Executive Board. She also represents the Contra Costa cities on ABAG's Regional Planning Committee.

Speaker Biography: Jared Blumenfeld was appointed by President Barack Obama to serve as EPA Regional Administrator for the Pacific Southwest in November 2009. EPA Region 9 is home to more than 48 million people in California, Arizona, Hawaii, Nevada, the Pacific Islands, and 148 tribal nations. Mr. Blumenfeld has spent two decades on the front lines of protecting the environment both at home and internationally. His priorities at EPA include strong enforcement, environmental justice, protecting and restoring our air, land and waters, building strong federal, state, local and tribal partnerships, and taking action on climate change.

Speaker Biography: Steven Ritchie is Assistant General Manager of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), Water Enterprise, responsible for overseeing water system operations and planning from Hetch Hetchy through the Regional Water System to the City Distribution Division and managing SFPUC lands and natural resources. He was SFPUC's Manager of Planning from 1995 to 1998. Prior to that, he managed the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project, to restore 15,100 acres of habitat in South San Francisco Bay while providing flood risk management and public access. He has worked in management positions at the S.F. Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (1987-1995), the CalFed Bay-Delta Program (1998-2000), and URS consultants (2000-2004). He has a B.S. and M.S. in Civil Engineering from Stanford University.

Climate-Smart Estuary: Nature-based Solutions to Secure Our Future

Ellie Cohen, President and CEO of Point Blue Conservation Science

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Since the last State of the Estuary conference in 2011, atmospheric CO₂ exceeded 400 parts per million for the first time in human history; Arctic summer ice was at its lowest extent and volume ever recorded; and, extremes such as heat waves, drought and storms continued to break records across North America. January- June 2013 was one of the driest ever in the Bay Area, stressing ecosystems already challenged by habitat degradation, development, pollution and other more.

With increasingly severe ecological changes projected, it will become ever more difficult for our region's ecosystems to sustain their many benefits including providing food and habitat for wildlife, water storage, flood control, carbon sequestration and recreational opportunities. To minimize the potentially severe ecological, economic and social consequences in the face of these hard to predict changes, natural resource managers and decision makers are urgently requesting guidance for adaptation planning and effective management. This is especially challenging with diminishing public budgets and traditional conservation focused on discreet acres disconnected from larger ecosystem processes.

Nature-based solutions—using natural processes to reduce the impacts of climate change while also sequestering carbon—are key to sustaining ecological communities and functions needed to make our region more resilient to climate change. We will discuss examples of this approach in a climate-smart conservation framework and what this means in practice. We will provide a vision for advancing the health and resilience of SF Bay Estuary ecosystems over the next 20 years to benefit wildlife and people in our rapidly changing world.

Keywords: Climate-Smart, Conservation, Nature-Based, Climate Change, Ecosystem Services, Economic, Future, Security, Resilience

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Speaker Biography: Ellie Cohen, President and CEO of Point Blue Conservation Science (pointblue.org), is a leader in catalyzing nature-based solutions to climate change. She along with Point Blue's 140 scientists work hand-in-hand with public and private resource managers to reduce environmental change impacts on nature for wildlife and people. An honors graduate of Duke University and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and recipient of the Bay Nature 2012 Environmental Hero Award for her climate change leadership, Ms. Cohen serves as vice chair of the California Landscape Conservation Cooperative (californialcc.org), co-founder and chair of the Bay Area Ecosystems Climate Change Consortium (baecc.org), and chair of the Central Valley Joint Venture (centralvalleyjointventure.org). She is an invited member of the National Wildlife Federation's Climate-Smart Conservation Team (nwf.org) and serves on the SF Bay Joint Venture's Executive Committee. Ms. Cohen is a mother of 2, ages 8 and 11.