

The Future of Estuary News Magazine

SFEP IC Meeting

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Partnership in Action



San Francisco
ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP

ESTUARY News Magazine is the 30-year-old regional magazine of the San Francisco Estuary Partnership and its myriad partners around the Bay and Delta. Written by professional, independent journalists, it provides in-depth, silo-crossing coverage of the environmental, restoration, and climate adaptation issues of our time.



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SAN FRANCISCO WILL SOON TRANSFORM the 500-acre former Hunters Point shipyard into a mixed residential and commercial development that will include 10 acres of open space and restored wetlands. Governor Davis signed legislation approving the deal this fall while the Navy reached an agreement with the city to provide \$50.6 million for cleaning up contaminants from the shipyard, closed since 1974.

THE EUREKA CITY COUNCIL may intervene in a lawsuit by the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations and the Northwest Environmental Center against Burkle over its 10-year plan for the Klamath River. The suit claims the plan violates the Endangered Species Act and will harm coho salmon. The City of Arcata and the County of Humboldt have already agreed to support the suit (for more on Klamath River issues, see page 5) because of the economic importance of the fishery. Meanwhile, 10 environmental groups have sued U.S. Fish & Wildlife over its practice of leasing refuge lands to irrigated agriculture in the Klamath Basin. The groups want 20,000 acres restored to wetlands, which they say will free up 60,000 acre-feet of water demand on the river and improve water quality by filtering pollutants.

CHINOOK SALMON PERSEVERE this year in the Russian River despite a 60% cut in the river's flows by the Sonoma County Water Agency to conserve water. Some 5,000 fish have reached spawning grounds above Healdsburg, delighting the water agency, which was worried that the reduced flows might restrict spawning. Although this year's run is the largest on record, biologists have only been monitoring the river's Chinook for five years, after discovering the fish to be a distinct population.

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Lethal and Legal Sting?

The West Nile virus—the mosquito-transmitted disease that caused sparrows, crows, hawks, and owls to drop dead on the streets of New York City in 1999—is heading west. That it will reach California is a virtual certainty; that there are mosquito species here that can transmit it is a fact. The lowly insect may soon be reviled locally while its habitat—everything from seasonal ponds to freshwater wetlands and stormwater catchment basins—faces considerable scrutiny.

That's why the Contra Costa Mosquito and Vector Control District convened the "Wetlands Without Mosquitoes" workshop this fall for wetland designers and managers. The district's Karl Malamud-Roam told the group that recent legislation now makes it illegal to "grow" mosquitoes. "If you do, you're liable," said Malamud-Roam. Local agencies and municipalities holding stormwater permits or constructing and managing wetlands could all get stung.

The workshop made it clear that not all wetlands are mosquito factories. Salt marshes host few mosquitoes: the tidal to-and-fro flushes out eggs and larvae, disrupts egg conditioning and permits more predators. Freshwater wetlands produce more mosquitoes, but seasonal wetlands, which get wet, hold water for 10 days or so, dry out, then get wet again, offer even better conditions for the insect. One helpful hint for wetland managers is that mosquitoes like vegetation but not wind, waves, or currents. Creating openings in vegetation that face prevailing winds discourages reproduction; so does reducing vegetation.

Malamud-Roam admits that some solutions—installing plumbing, moving water into and out of a site quickly, and reducing vegetation—will compete with other wetland objectives. The district, whose mission is to protect public health, may find itself at odds with

some agencies, although Malamud-Roam assured attendees that the district will work with them.

Tom Huffman with Cal Fish & Game is undaunted by managing marshes for multiple objectives. His agency consults with mosquito districts before doing any work in or designing a wetland. He also manages vegetation with the pests (mosquitoes, not districts) in mind. "If I'm going to flood an area full of dense vegetation, I mow first," he says.

Wetland managers won't be the only ones impacted by the new regulations. For example, the Contra Costa Clean Water Program's municipal stormwater permit, up for amendment, essentially mandates creation of mosquito habitat by requiring on-site water retention features like catchment basins and swales. The vector control district has proposed that the amendment be deferred, but the S.F. Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board's Christine Boschen says the agency is unwilling to do so. The Board is considering making some mosquito-related changes based on comments filed by the district and others.

At the workshop's close, Malamud-Roam recommended what the district had been practicing all day: proactive public relations. West Nile virus is not a huge threat to human health. The number of people who pick it up is likely to remain small, and 80% of those who do will develop immunity without even feeling it. Only the elderly and immunocompromised are at risk for the severe neurological damage the disease can cause. Horses are also susceptible, but neither they nor humans appear to be reservoir hosts (capable of carrying the virus at high enough levels to pass it on), as birds are.

Malamud-Roam pledged to hold follow-up meetings with sewer, stormwater, waterfowl, and marsh managers. One uninvited party may be present too: the mosquito.

Contacts: Karl Malamud-Roam (925)685-9301x107; Christine Boschen (510)622-2346 AH

San Francisco Estuary Partnership

There was no sign of shirking when 50 school kids began digging holes and planting buckeye saplings at the former Hamilton airbase. These kids weren't just playing at restoration, they were actually doing it.... see p.3



SCIENCE • RESTORATION • WATERSHED • POLITICS • SPECIES • BAY

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SAN FRANCISCO

Outer Limits of Delta Science:
Can we recover salmon, capture carbon, live with the Russian thistle?

Three Young Scientists
with Eclectic Priorities

State Waters Down
Flows Agreements &
Fast-Tracks Restoration



WATER
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ONLINE FEATURES
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San Francisco
ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP



Ariel Rubissow Okamoto **ESTUARY News Founding Editor** **and current Editor-in-Chief**





Distribution and Readership

- **Print = 1800**
-Reduced bulk mailings during Covid
- **Email = 5000-5500**
-25% open rate
-20% click rate





Cost and Funding

- **Cost Per Year = ~\$168,000**
 - Four Print Issues, four Pearls, cross-posting stores online, limited extended online content
- **2022 Contributions = \$136,500**
 - \$48,000 (SFEP)
 - \$88,500 (Partners)



Recommendation

1. Release final issue in February 2023
2. Archive and post online select stories
3. Discontinue production of ESTUARY News as of June 30, 2023

