



Enforcement News

East Palo Alto couple to pay \$1.7 million for destruction of tidal wetlands

In addition to the penalty, couple must restore habitat

April 20, 2023

Contact: Blair Robertson – [Information Officer](#)

OAKLAND – The Solano County Superior Court approved a settlement between the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, and property owners Param and Amandeep Dhillon that requires the Dhillons to pay a \$1.7 million penalty and restore the White Slough wetlands in Vallejo they destroyed.

In late 2019, the Dhillons filled most of the East Lagoon portion of White Slough with thousands of cubic yards of dirt trucked onto their property. The White Slough is a tidal wetland east of the Napa River near the intersection of State Routes 31 and 29, which is protected under state law and designated as a resource conservation area by the City of Vallejo. The East Lagoon is a seasonal pond and wetland on the Dhillons' property that provides important habitat for birds and wildlife. The terms of the settlement require the Dhillons to assess the damage they caused to these wetlands and restore the lagoon to its former condition.

“The outcome of this case demonstrates that the board is committed to protecting wetlands for future generations,” said Eileen White, executive officer of the board. “We look forward to seeing these protected wetlands restored.”

After the Dhillons failed to comply with orders issued by the board and commission, both agencies filed complaints in Solano County Superior Court in late 2021 and early 2022. Both cases have now been settled through a comprehensive judgment requiring the Dhillons to pay the penalty – which will be split between the two agencies – and to complete the property damage assessment and restoration work by November 2024.

“This is an outstanding outcome and a tribute to the close coordination between our two agencies,” said Lawrence J. Goldzband, executive director of the commission. “However, our job is not over; we will remain vigilant to ensure that the East Lagoon is restored and becomes an integral part of White Slough’s health once more.”

The White Slough provides habitat for plants and animals, improves water quality, provides recreational and educational opportunities, and protects against floods and sea-level rise.



Since most of California's wetlands have been lost to development, the State Water Resources Control Board and nine regional boards have adopted [policies to protect wetlands](#) like the White Slough, including through enforcement efforts like these, and enhance the quantity, quality and permanence of wetlands throughout California.

The mission of the San Francisco Bay Water Board is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California's water resources for the protection of the environment, public health and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper water resource allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations.