



Media Release

San Francisco Bay Regional Water Board Approves Actions to Complete Restoration of Napa Sonoma Salt Marsh

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Oakland — The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board today completed milestones that would open the gates for full wetland restoration of the Napa Sonoma Salt Marsh Restoration Project. This project encompasses nearly 10,000 acres and is the second-largest restoration project in the San Francisco Bay Area.

One of the milestones was the Regional Water Board's approval today of a permit that allows the California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to treat and discharge ultra-saline brine from one of twelve former salt evaporator ponds near Napa River. Aside from scarcity of funding, brine toxicity has been the biggest hurdle for completing restoration efforts. In parallel with this permit, the Regional Water Board also approved levee changes by the Department of Fish and Game and the Army Corps that will improve circulation in three other former salt ponds. This circulation will allow background water to mix with the brine to eliminate toxicity prior to its discharge to Napa Slough. Circulating background water will also reduce salt concentrations in the ponds themselves, thus improving habitat value over time.

The Napa Sonoma Salt Marsh Restoration Project's goals are to restore former salt ponds in the Napa/Sonoma area to a mosaic of habitats to support populations of fish and wildlife, including endangered species, migratory waterfowl, and shorebirds. The State of California purchased the ponds in the early 1990s. The Department of Fish and Game and the Army Corps manage the restoration efforts with the Regional Water Board's oversight. In 2004, the Regional Water Board took action that allowed for restoration of nine of the twelve ponds. This included breaching levees of some of the lower salinity ponds to restore natural tidal flows. The Water Board's actions today allow for restoration of the remaining ponds.

For additional information, please visit

www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/board_info/agenda.shtml

The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board's mission is to preserve, protect, enhance and restore the quality of California's water resources, and ensure their proper allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations.