San Francisco Bay Joint Venture

A partnership working to protect, restore, increase, and enhance wetland habitats throughout the San Francisco Bay region to benefit birds, fish, and other wildlife.

Operations Plan

2022 – 2024

San Francisco Bay Joint Venture Operations Plan 2022–2024

Purpose

The purpose of the **San Francisco Bay Joint Venture (SFBJV) Operations Plan** is to identify where the SFBJV will focus time, resources, and effort over the next two years.

The Operations Plan draws on goals set forth in the SFBJV Implementation Plan, *Restoring the Estuary 2022,* and organizes SFBJV efforts into key focus areas, operations, and activities that will advance the partnership's habitat conservation goals. It is an internal document that serves to guide subsequent day-to-day work planning by staff and committee members.

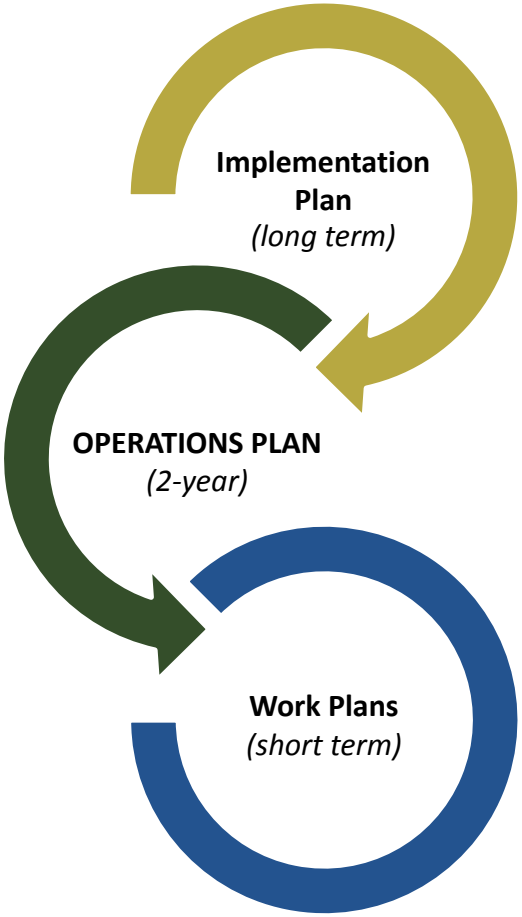
The SFBJV staff, working committees, and management board are critical partners in the adoption, execution, monitoring, and evaluation of progress made across the Operations Plan, and in identifying and approving workflow and staffing needs to advance stated focus areas and complete key activities.

Photo credit: Robert Campbell

Background

The Operations Plan aligns the SFBJV on critical activities that require priority attention over the next two years. It was developed in tandem with the SFBJV Implementation Plan and serves as a bridge between the longer-term goals of the Implementation Plan and shorter-term planning needed to conduct activities toward stated goals and successfully operate the SFBJV. The Operations Plan is a result of significant input and collaboration between the SFBJV staff and a volunteer Leadership Team comprised of SFBJV management board members and committee chairs.

Management board, committee, and staff roles:
The management board, staff, and working committees are instrumental to successful implementation of the Operations Plan. SFBJV staff are responsible for managing the day-to-operations, programs, collaboration, and ongoing planning that will occur in support of this plan. In addition to implementing programmatic activities and providing management board action items, working committees help draft the annual SFBJV work plans that flow from this Operations Plan for approval by the board.



Implementation Plan Highlight: Overarching Priorities and Strategies

These priorities and strategies provide the foundation for the SFBJV's collective work. They are the backbone of the Implementation Plan and provide the framework for the focus areas and activities that are represented in this two-year Operations Plan.

PRIORITY	STRATEGY
Conservation	Protect, enhance, restore and adaptively manage habitats.
Scientific Foundation	Utilize a strong science foundation to inform habitat conservation actions, guide policies, and to help identify funding and research needs.
Communications	Effectively communicate the story of the SFBJV, its partners, and projects to support the mission, goals, and priorities of the SFBJV partnership.
Coordination	Coordinate the implementation of federal, state, and regional conservation plans and projects that have been adopted by the SFBJV or support our mission.
Collaboration	Provide formal and informal regional forums to facilitate collaborative conservation action.
Funding	Increase funding for SFBJV programs, partner programs, and projects that work towards JV goals.
Proactivity	Identify and address emerging issues and barriers to conservation.
Monitoring	Conduct coordinated, regional, and project-specific monitoring to guide decision making, contribute to adaptive management, and improve conservation outcomes.
Climate Change	Ensure that protected and restored habitats are resilient to the impacts of a changing climate.
Equity	Ensure that the work of the SFBJV contributes to a more environmentally just and equitable future for the Bay Area.

Drivers and Concepts for the Operations Plan

Throughout the planning process, three specific drivers emerged that cut across multiple areas of the Operations Plan. These concepts drove prioritization and heavily influenced the focus areas and activities defined in the Plan. These drivers are key links between the Implementation Plan and Operations Plan.

Habitat Goals

The SFBJV achieves habitat and wildlife goals by working with project partners to add acres of high-quality habitat to the region. Maintaining, improving, and expanding habitat is vital to all efforts the SFBJV supports, promotes, and implements. It is critical to maintain a focus on SFBJV's protection, restoration, and enhancement goals across all focus areas and activities. The Implementation Plan outlines specific goals related to habitat acreage.

Climate Change

Climate change is a critical part of the equation when setting goals for protection, restoration, and enhancement of habitats. As the sea level continues to rise, storms increase in severity and frequency, and the impacts of wildfire expand in our region, managing the risk to shoreline habitats, communities and agricultural lands will be ever more challenging, expensive, and increasingly necessary to consider.

A Commitment to Equity

The SFBJV recognizes a fundamental responsibility of the conservation community to work towards environmental justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, and commits to ensuring that the partnership's work contributes to an environmentally just and equitable future for the Bay Area.

Photo credit: Jack Haverty

Operations Plan: Focus Areas and Activities

Focus Areas

Over the next two years, the work of the SFBJV is prioritized to promote progress across four focus areas. These areas are drawn from the overarching priorities and strategies defined in the Implementation Plan and are topics on which staff, committee, and management board efforts are most needed to advance habitat conservation goals and respond to a changing climate.

Focus areas will evolve over time to maintain momentum and support the goals stated in the Implementation Plan. While not a focus area, SFBJV Operations and Administration is also included to capture the essential functions that keep the overall program running, including support of the four focus areas.

Activities

For each focus area, there is a defined set of activities to complete. Due to the integrated and interconnected nature of the SFBJV's work and partnerships, several activities cut across multiple focus areas in support of the SFBJV's broader efforts. For the purpose of this Operations Plan, activities are centered under the focus area with which they most closely align, acknowledging that they may impact multiple areas, programs, and operations.

Photo credit: Meade Fischer

Four Operational Focus Areas for the Next Two Years

Adaptation and Resilience Planning

Actively engage in adaptation and resilience efforts across sectors and municipalities to ensure habitat and wildlife needs are front and center.

Green Tape

Influence and advance regulatory efficiency at the state and regional levels to increase the pace of restoration project implementation.

Sediment

Address key issues and provide support for efforts that are working to increase beneficial use of sediment at restoration project sites.

Funding

Actively engage with and influence efforts to direct unprecedented levels of state and federal funding to advance Joint Venture goals.

Operations and Administration

Sustain Joint Venture operations and administration activities that ensure our ability to serve our mission, support the partnership, and advance work in the focus areas.

Operations and Administration

Critical Support for All Focus Areas and Activities

The Joint Venture's ability to serve its mission, realize significant conservation goals, and support partnerships rests on its ability to maintain a strong administrative and operational core. The Operational Plan identifies core approaches, tactics, and tools that the Joint Venture uses across goals and collaboration efforts to inform how its work gets done. A consistent, modest, efficient approach to sustaining operations and administrative capacity will support everything the SFBJV does. In addition, Operations and Administration includes programmatic work that is foundational and supports all four focus areas.

Two-year Operations Plan Focus

Although not identified as a specific "focus area," time and resources must be allotted towards the day-to-day operational activities that allow the SFBJV to accomplish its work across all focus areas and activities. The SFBJV's operational and administration needs coupled with already stated activities across the areas of adaptation and resilience planning, green tape, sediment, and funding will inform staffing needs, skill areas, and capacity levels for the next two years and beyond.

Implementation Plan priorities core to this focus area

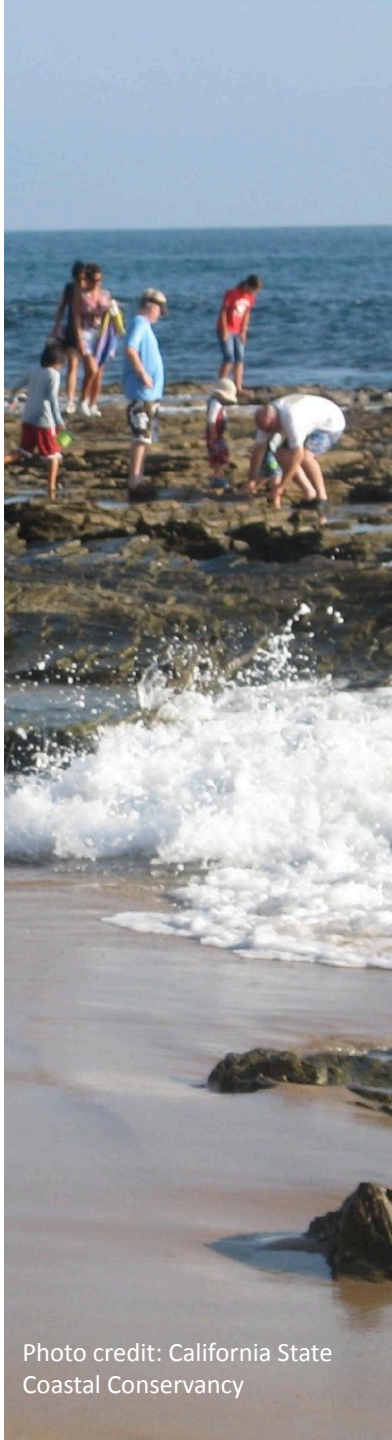


Photo credit: California State Coastal Conservancy

Operations and Administration
Activities in Support of all Focus Areas and Activities (1 of 1)

HABITAT PROJECT TRACKING AND REVIEW

This includes tracking and mapping of emerging, active, and completed projects. Resulting data summaries are used to demonstrate the need for, and support work towards, increases in project and program funding. Summaries also contribute to policy decisions, ensure accountability, and expand understanding of the scope and scale of habitat project implementation throughout the region.

COORDINATION

This includes core operational functions of the SFBJV, managed primarily by the Coordinator, including budget development and tracking, staff management, reporting, communications, partner coordination, and other functions as needed.

COMMUNICATIONS

This includes core operational communications functions, primarily managed by staff, including website management, newsletters and announcements, events, project tours, contact management, and other essential functions that keep the partnership informed and connected.

CONVENING

This includes core operational convening functions, primarily managed by staff, including meeting logistics, agenda setting, note taking, and all tasks needed to produce and execute successful meetings, workshops, events, and tours for the management board, committees, special working groups, decision-makers, and stakeholders.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

As a new area of work for the SFBJV, action will be guided by the new working committee and will ideally be integrated into all activities of the SFBJV or lead by partner organizations vs. adding a set of new tasks.

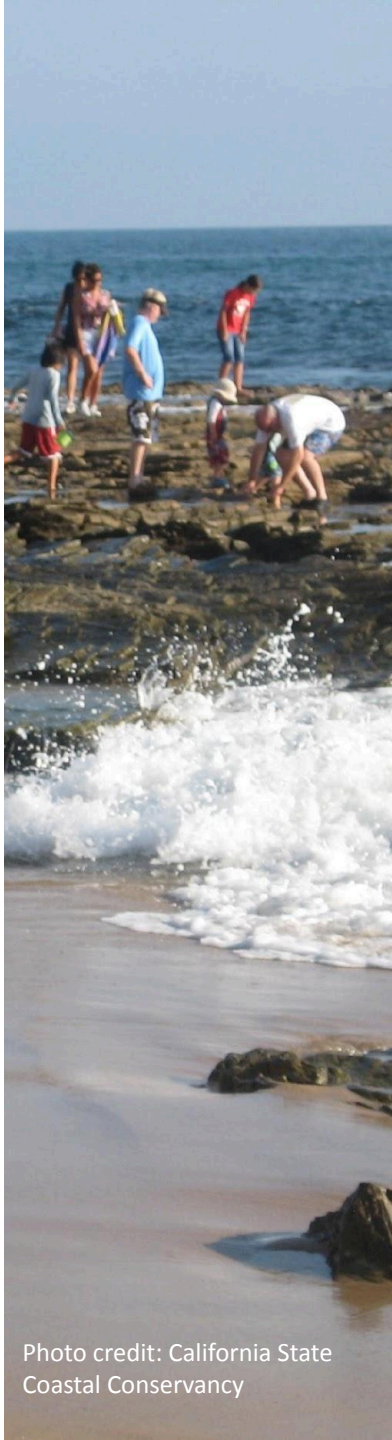


Photo credit: California State Coastal Conservancy

Operations and Administration Desired Outcomes*

Within the 2-year time frame of the Operations Plan, the SFBJV aims to:

- ❑ Fill staffing vacancies to increase the day-to-day capacity of the organization and achieve the SFBJV's near and long-term priorities.
- ❑ Determine initial steps to be taken by the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) committee to incorporate EDI principles into SFBJV activities.
- ❑ Establish a leadership group that meets quarterly to assess Operations Plan progress, make updates as needed, and report on progress to key stakeholders.
- ❑ Maintain all coordination, communication, and convening essential for progress towards all goals and outcomes.
- ❑ Establish process and protocols for staff and partner coordination and management to maintain and update data in project tracker.

*Outcomes are currently in draft form and will be finalized by SFBJV staff in the coming weeks. Outcomes will evolve over the duration of the plan as priorities, opportunities, and capacities fluctuate.

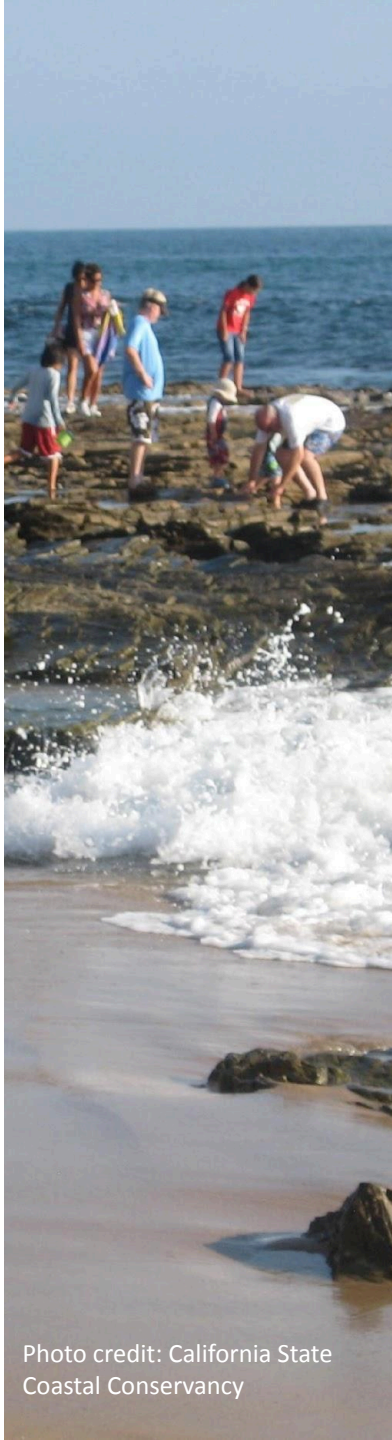


Photo credit: California State Coastal Conservancy

Adaptation and Resilience Planning: Focus and Approach

Connection to SFBJV Implementation Plan

The SFBJV will support projects that prioritize natural over built infrastructure, and which restore functional wetlands and ecosystem connectivity in order to increase climate resilience. The SFBJV will actively communicate the critical importance of biological diversity and ecosystem health as key planning components for all adaptation and resilience efforts. Planning efforts should recognize that climate threats often create increased vulnerability for disadvantaged communities. These efforts should seek opportunities to minimize negative climate impacts on and maximize adaptation-related benefits to these communities.

Two-year Operations Plan Focus

Engage in adaptation and resilience planning efforts to promote ecological resilience that include both habitat and wildlife needs. Key activities include attending and contributing to planning and decision-making processes for shoreline projects, coordinated regional adaptation mapping, regional monitoring efforts, and strengthening climate policy. Leading and supporting these efforts is essential to long term planning and climate change response.

Implementation Plan priorities core to this focus area

Photo credit: Russ Lowgren

Adaptation and Resilience Planning Activities (1 of 3)

REGIONAL AND MUNICIPAL PLANNING

Ongoing and emerging planning processes throughout the region can impact where and to what extent habitat is maintained and/or improved. An effort to identify, track, and promote specific adaptation projects is underway.

- Identify and engage in planning processes and specific meetings where decisions are made regarding how to achieve shoreline resilience to make sure wildlife and habitat needs are considered and that green infrastructure (restoration) is prioritized over gray wherever possible and appropriate.

- Advance design of shoreline and bank adaptation projects or pilot projects using natural or nature-based approaches, including horizontal levees, living shorelines, transition zones, and other innovative design approaches. (Estuary Blueprint Nexus)

- Continue to engage in Shoreline Adaptation Project Mapping Program to spatially track shoreline adaptation projects to help communicate the region's progress, facilitate planning, evaluate project design and funding needs, and identify opportunities for local community input and use of nature-based adaptation strategies. (Estuary Blueprint Nexus)

- Engage in planning processes and meetings where decisions are made about dredged sediment and/or fluvial sediment to promote and support beneficial use of sediment. (see also Sediment Focus Area)

Photo credit: Russ Lowgren

Adaptation and Resilience Planning Activities (2 of 3)

BAYLANDS MAPPING

This activity addresses the #1 Science Program priority "Net Landscape Change" to understand where the region's wetland habitats are and how they are changing over time. It also fulfills the plan to improve accomplishment tracking by using habitat maps in addition to project tracking.

- Engage in the EPA grant-funded effort to update the Modern Baylands map (SFBJV is a sub-awardee).

POLICY COORDINATION

This activity involves staff work to compile and share information and convene meetings and partner activity where legislative or other action is needed.

- Identify and track regional planning and policy efforts, including proposed amendments to BCDC SF Bay Plan and the SF Regional Water Quality Control Board Basin Plan, and work to improve the representation of wildlife and habitat considerations in shoreline resilience policy efforts.

CLIMATE POLICY

This activity builds upon prior work to identify climate planning processes and key messages and keeps these materials current and relevant for use by staff and partners.

- Update efforts and key messages of the Climate Change White Paper and produce a key messages only document.
- Engage with climate change planning processes through written and oral comments to achieve the desired outcomes identified by the SFBJV's 2019 Climate Change White Paper and any subsequent updates.

Photo credit: Russ Lowgren

Adaptation and Resilience Planning Activities (3 of 3)

WETLANDS REGIONAL MONITORING PROGRAM

The SFBJV identified coordinated regional monitoring as a priority to help us better understand habitat and wildlife changes over time and identify and implement responses to changes of concern. SFBJV staff and partners helped develop the Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program (WRMP) and remain committed to ensuring its successful implementation.

- Engage in the continued development and implementation of the WRMP.
- Conduct user testing of WRMP data management system. (SFBJV is sub-awardee)

STATE OF THE BIRDS SAN FRANCISCO BAY FRAMEWORK

This framework is intended to galvanize support and funding to produce a dynamic and updatable State of the Birds reporting process that fulfills progress tracking needs and informs strategies related to adaptive management of habitat restoration, acquisition, and management practices based on current science on the state of the Bay's bird populations.

- Complete the State of the Birds Framework and use it to seek funding to produce and establish the outlined reporting process, in coordination with partners. (SFBJV received USFWS funds to complete framework, currently under production.)

Photo credit: Russ Lowgren

Adaptation and Resilience Planning Desired Outcomes*

Within the 2-year time frame of the Operations Plan, the SFBJV aims to:

- ❑ Identify and provide support needed from SFBJV in Hwy 37 planning efforts.
- ❑ Update Climate Change White Paper with current and upcoming priority efforts in which to engage.
- ❑ Outline and implement engagement plan for staff and partners within Adaptation and Resilience Policy and Planning.
- ❑ Fulfill SFBJV role in project to complete Baylands Mapping (sub-award).
- ❑ Complete Data Management platform user testing for WRMP (sub-award).
- ❑ Complete State of the Birds Framework (funded).

*Outcomes are currently in draft form and will be finalized by SFBJV staff in the coming weeks. Outcomes will evolve over the duration of the plan as priorities, opportunities, and capacities fluctuate.

Photo credit: Russ Lowgren

Green Tape: Focus and Approach

Connection to SFBJV Implementation Plan

Many agencies and organizations across California have identified "cutting green tape" as critical to "improving interagency coordination, partnerships, and agency processes and policies to allow ecological restoration and stewardship to occur more quickly, simply, and cost-effectively."[1]

Actualizing the SFBJV's habitat goals requires expanding efforts to accelerate the permitting of restoration projects and cross collaboration among partners and agencies that share a mission to protect and restore the San Francisco Estuary.

Two-year Operations Plan Focus

Engage in specific efforts to increase regulatory efficiency at the regional scale. Key activities will include meeting with the Policy and Management Committee of the Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team (BRRIT) to help prioritize and act on policy issues related to permitting restoration projects and integrating regulatory issues into project discussions at the Conservation Committee.

[1] https://resources.ca.gov/Initiatives/Cutting-Green-Tape

Implementation Plan priorities core to this focus area

Photo credit: Russ Lowgren

Green Tape Activities (1 of 1)

POLICY COORDINATION

- Engage with the Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team (BRRIT) Policy and Management Team to coordinate on and address high priority policy issues.
- Create forums for discussion and action that advance regulatory efficiency.

CONSERVATION COORDINATION

- Include identification of regulatory issues and potential solutions as part of project reviews at the Conservation Committee.

Photo credit: Russ Lowgren

Green Tape
Desired Outcomes*

Within the 2-year time frame of the Operations Plan, the SFBJV aims to:

- ❑ As a new area for the SFBJV, an initial focus will be for staff and partners to develop an action plan.
- ❑ Include regulatory efficiency topics at Conservation Committee meetings and Management Board meetings.
- ❑ Identify other specific actions within this focus area through collaborative forums organized by the SFBJV staff and partners.

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Photo credit: Russ Lowgren

Sediment:
Focus and Approach

Connection to SFBJV Implementation Plan

Region-wide sediment supply and distribution is frequently a limiting factor in habitat restoration, and these impacts will be exacerbated as sea levels rise. Current policies result in large quantities of clean, dredged sediment transported out of the estuary and dumped at a deep ocean “disposal” site. To address the projected sediment deficit in the Estuary beginning after 2030, studies have shown that we need to significantly increase the amount of sediment remaining in the system and used for beneficial purposes at restoration sites.

Two-year Operations Plan Focus

Engage in specific efforts to increase the beneficial use of sediment at restoration sites. Address impediments and collaborate with regulatory agencies, restoration community practitioners, and dredgers to advance solutions and increase the use of specific tools and resources that can further support these efforts.

Implementation Plan priorities core to this focus area

Photo credit: Steve Carroll

Sediment Activities (1 of 1)

BENEFICIAL USE

The Sediment for Survival Report released by San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) in 2022 documents the need for a significant increase in beneficial use of sediment from dredging and watershed sources. The effort to increase beneficial use includes SediMatch, a collaborative program of the SFBJV, BCDC, SFEI, SFEP, flood control districts, and others. The SediMatch program seeks to increase beneficial use of sediment at restoration project sites through increased coordination, funding, and policy solutions.

- Improve coordination of dredged sediment supply with demand to reduce sediment disposal and increase beneficial reuse by convening a working group that includes restoration community practitioners, dredgers, and regulators to identify planning and management gaps, coordination gaps, key messages, and policy changes that would help advance areas where action will likely have the greatest impact. BCDC received funding to kick this off. *(Estuary Blueprint Nexus)*

- Working group to coordinate a regional approach and develop a programmatic roadmap for beneficial reuse opportunities and increasing the use of SediMatch by dredgers and restoration practitioners.

- Engage with specific regulatory agencies on policy solutions to increase the use of dredged sediment and/or alluvial sources to support habitat restoration and enhancement (e.g., US Army Corps of Engineers, BCDC, etc.).

- Engage with BCDC on their Bay Plan Amendment for beneficial use and convene SFBJV partners to contribute.

- Advance regional matchmaking of sediment suppliers and restoration projects by promoting the increased engagement in the SediMatch program and use of the SediMatch web tool.

Photo credit: Steve Carroll

Sediment
Desired Outcomes*

Within the 2-year time frame of the Operations Plan, the SFBJV aims to:

- ❑ Assist BCDC in EPA funded project to identify priority sediment management policies for wetland restoration and climate change resilience.
- ❑ Secure new support and enhancement of SediMatch web tool and increase number of users.
- ❑ Include beneficial reuse topics at committee and Management Board meetings.
- ❑ Identify other specific actions within this focus area through collaborative forums organized by the SFBJV staff and partners.

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Photo credit: Steve Carroll

Funding:
Focus and Approach

Connection to SFBJV Implementation Plan
Accomplishing broader SFBJV goals requires significant funding for all aspects of conservation implementation, including project design, review, implementation, and monitoring. The primary focus of this action is on securing funding for implementation of on-the-ground habitat projects.

Additionally, regional coordination efforts require programmatic funding for items such as staff salaries and operating costs. To address these needs, the SFBJV will pursue and advocate for continued and increased funding from both traditional and new/emerging sources.

Two-Year Operations Plan Focus
Actively engage and influence efforts to direct the unprecedented levels of funding coming through state and federal sources, including the Infrastructure Bill, state budget, and agency budgets, to advance SFBJV goals.

Implementation Plan priorities core to this focus area

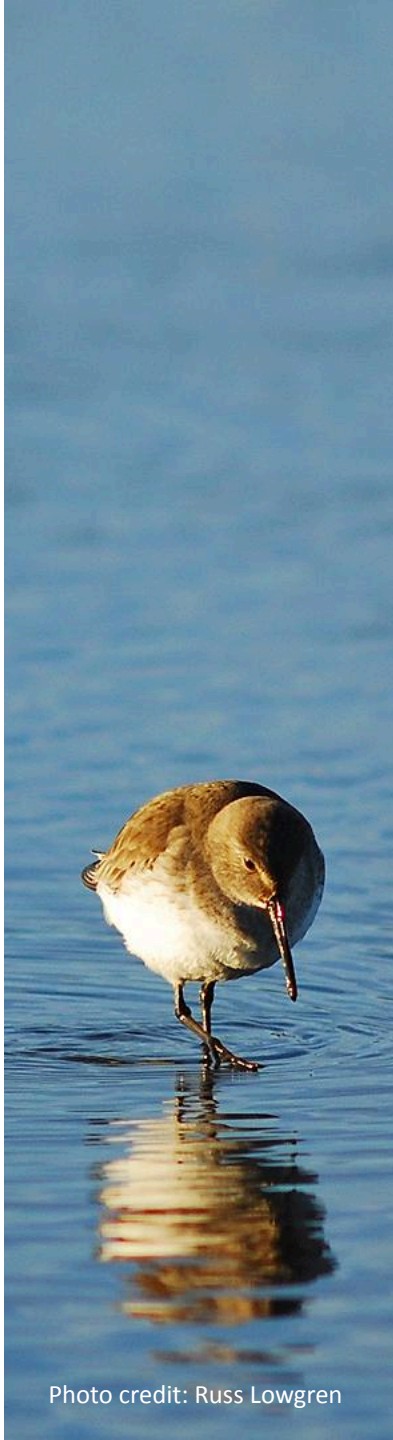

Photo credit: Russ Lowgren

Funding Activities (1 of 1)

SOURCE NEW OPPORTUNITIES

- Identify, track, and implement strategies to direct 30x30, climate resilience, Infrastructure Bill, state budget, and agency budget funding towards partner projects, resilience planning, and to increase SFBJV operational and collaboration capacity.

STATE:

- Engage with forums and individuals within SCC, OPC, and others on conservation funding.

FEDERAL:

- Engage with NFWF America the Beautiful Challenge Grants and/or other appropriate funding sources.
- Engage with specific partners on funding within their budgets to direct toward SFBJV partner projects and SFBJV operational capacity.

FUNDING ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT:

These actions are traditionally implemented by SFBJV partners, with coordination and support from SFBJV staff. Specific asks are only made by non-government partners.

- Promote authorizations and reauthorizations of federal programs that fund SFBJV habitat work (NAWCA, etc.).
- Provide information to and coordination through the SFBJV Policy Program.
- Initiate a funding-focused work group.
- Compile information on funding needs to distribute to potential funders, elected officials, and other decision makers.
- Provide letters of support for projects adopted by the Management Board and conduct project tours and other outreach efforts to elevate visibility of adopted projects. These can be considered tools in our toolbox but are capacity dependent.

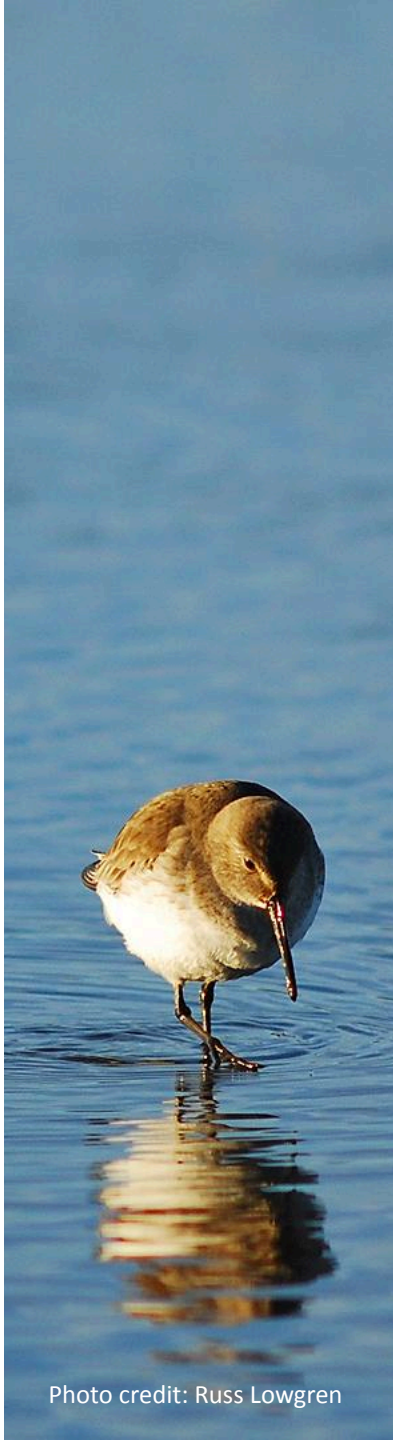

Photo credit: Russ Lowgren

Funding
Desired Outcomes*

Within the 2-year time frame of the Operations Plan, the SFBJV aims to:

- ❑ Increase the number of funding sources for partner habitat projects.
- ❑ Establish a leadership working group focused on harnessing funding opportunities to advance SFBJV goals.
- ❑ Engage with the appropriate staff at funding entities to learn about funding opportunities.
- ❑ Increase funding for additional staffing to achieve SFBJV priorities.
- ❑ Include funding opportunities and coordination at committee and Management Board meetings.
- ❑ Identify other specific actions within this focus area through collaborative forums organized by the SFBJV staff and partners.

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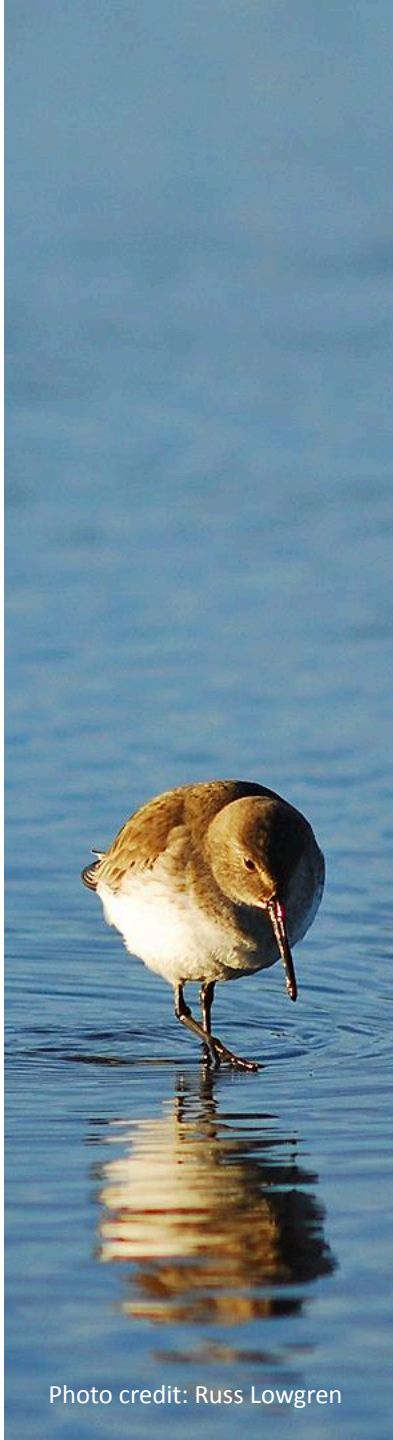

Photo credit: Russ Lowgren

Operations and Administration EXAMPLE FORMAT
Key Metrics*

Key Performance Indicators	Target	Milestones	Key Dates	Status
2022 staffing vacancies filled	Hire for 2 open positions	JDs created and posted Interviews Hiring	6/31/22 7/31/22 8/31/22	Complete Complete Complete
EDI principles integrated	Actionable steps identified and incorporated	Committee convened Steps drafted Steps applied across org and all focus areas	10/1/22 12/1/22 12/1/23	Pending
OP reviewed quarterly	Maintain regularly updated and useful OP	Leadership team formed Quarterly assessment of progress towards outcomes	9/31/22 Last week of each quarter	Pending
Coordination, communication, and convening maintained	Staffing capacity meets organizational needs	Define staff roles and responsibilities	9/31/22	Pending
Up-to-date project tracker	Processes/protocols established	Define roles for staff, partners, and mgmt	10/31/22	Pending

*These are examples of how specific key metrics (KPIs) can be created and tracked based on activities, programming choices, commitments (e.g., grant reporting), and priorities. SFBJV staff may move towards this level of tracking in the future.