



March 16, 2009

Ms. Dyan C. White  
Assistant Executive Officer  
California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
San Francisco Bay Region  
1515 Clay Street, Suite 1400  
Oakland, California 94612

Dear Ms. White:

Thank you for including funding for the Richardson Bay Audubon Center & Sanctuary's Aramburu Island habitat restoration in the recently announced settlement with the Sewerage Agency of Southern Marin. Your dedication of funding will launch important restoration and enhancement for this valuable conservation area that falls within the immediate area of sewage release.

The Marine Mammal Center is a nonprofit veterinary hospital, research and educational center dedicated to the rescue and rehabilitation of ill and injured marine mammals, primarily elephant seals, harbor seals, and California sea lions, and to the study of their health. Since 1975, the Center has been headquartered in the Marin Headlands, within the Golden Gate National Parks, and has rescued and treated more than 14,000 marine mammals. With our focus, we are especially interested in the restoration of habitat that supports healthy populations of harbor seals, and other wildlife.

Development around the entire San Francisco Bay, and along the Marin Coast in particular, has greatly limited the habitat options for native birds and wildlife. Aramburu Island – created from dredge spoils and fill in the early 1960s – offers a rare opportunity to restore a variety of habitats on land that is relatively isolated from human disturbances and terrestrial predators. When completed, this restoration project should greatly improve habitat for resident and migratory birds, such as the San Pablo song sparrow, the salt marsh yellowthroat, shorebirds and terns, as well as mammals such as the harbor seal. It will also increase the cover of native plants, including regionally rare salt marsh annuals such as Point Reyes bird's-beak, salt marsh owl's clover, and smooth goldfields. In addition, erosion reduction measures may have indirect benefits for adjacent sub-tidal habitats, including native eelgrass that is likely to be limited by turbidity due to locally resuspended fine sediment. All of these actions will contribute to the regional restoration objectives presented in the Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Report.

The Richardson Bay Audubon Center & Sanctuary has a nearly 50 year presence on Richardson Bay and has the staff and project management expertise to undertake this important

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restoration project. Moreover, as a Center with strong education programs they will help ensure that the Aramburu restoration will engage volunteers from the community and use it as an opportunity to help children and families learn more about the San Francisco Bay.

Word of your decision to fund the Aramburu restoration project is great news not only for the birds and mammals of Richardson Bay, but for the community around it that enjoy these waters and shorelines. Thank you for your partnership on this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Boehm". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" that loops around the first few letters.

Jeffrey R. Boehm  
Executive Director

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