



March 8, 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:

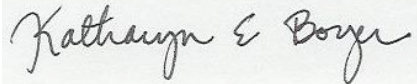
I am encouraged to hear of the potential for funding of the Richardson Bay Audubon Center & Sanctuary's Aramburu Island habitat restoration in a settlement with the Sewerage Agency of Southern Marin. This funding will launch important restoration and enhancement for this valuable conservation area that falls within the immediate area where the sewage was released.

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 marsh annuals such as Point Reyes bird's-beak, salt marsh owl's clover, and smooth goldfields that are rare in this region. In addition, the erosion reduction measures in this project may have indirect benefits for adjacent subtidal 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 50-year presence on Richardson Bay and has the staff and project management expertise to undertake this important 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. I have worked closely with the scientists and staff at the center and am very confident of their abilities and motivation to conserve and restore vital habitats in Richardson Bay and beyond.

I am thrilled to hear of your interest in funding the Aramburu restoration project. This is truly a “silver lining” that will help to offset impacts of human damages, and great news not only for the birds and health 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 on a light-colored background. The signature reads "Katharyn E Boyer" in a cursive script.

Katharyn E. Boyer, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Biology
Romberg Tiburon Center
San Francisco State University
katboyer@sfsu.edu

