

ITEM: 5

Update on Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program – Informational Item

DISCUSSION:

The San Francisco Bay Water Board (Water Board) is participating in the development and future implementation of the [Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program](#) (WRMP). The WRMP is a collaborative effort led jointly by the San Francisco Estuary Partnership and the San Francisco Estuary Institute. Water Board staff lead the Technical Advisory Committee and participate on the Steering Committee of the WRMP. The goal of the WRMP is to collect, synthesize, and communicate regional data to inform stewardship and adaptive management for conserving, restoring, and enhancing San Francisco Bay's wetlands. A regionwide monitoring program is needed to inform management actions that enable wetlands to adapt and evolve into the future, while providing essential ecosystem services and equitable benefits to communities. Once in place, the WRMP will include a comprehensive science framework to guide monitoring, an open data-sharing platform, and a monitoring site network.

In 2020, the WRMP Steering Committee adopted [the science framework](#). This framework is a living document that will be adapted over time. It includes the initial guiding and management questions, and priority actions. The open data-sharing platform is currently under development and will begin with an interactive map of tidal wetlands locations and conditions throughout the region. This map is expected to be completed this year and will serve as a baseline for future assessments. The [monitoring site network](#) was approved by the Steering Committee in February 2023 and consists of the following:

- Benchmark Sites – Mature marshes that indicate the likely long-term conditions of existing and restored marshes.
- Reference Sites – Marshes at mid to late stages of evolution that help forecast the rate of project development as habitat.
- Project Sites – Restoration projects implemented over roughly the past 20 years that improve understanding of restoration designs and management.

The monitoring site network also includes an initial set of high priority sites to begin monitoring with initial funding sources and a secondary set of sites where monitoring will begin once more funding becomes available. Both sets of sites include Benchmark, Reference, and Project Sites.