

Palo Alto Horizontal Levee – Outreach and Engagement

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San Francisco
ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP



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San Francisco Estuary Partnership

- A place-based EPA program
- Collaborative and non-regulatory
- Leverage federal, state, and regional resources to implement the Estuary Blueprint



Partnership in Action



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Palo Alto Horizontal Levee – About the Project

The Palo Alto Horizontal Levee Pilot (PAHLP) project is a nature-based shoreline adaptation project.

The pilot project engaged a broad set of stakeholders at every stage and will continue through construction.

Construction expected summer 2024, to build a horizontal levee at the City of Palo Alto's wastewater treatment facility wetlands



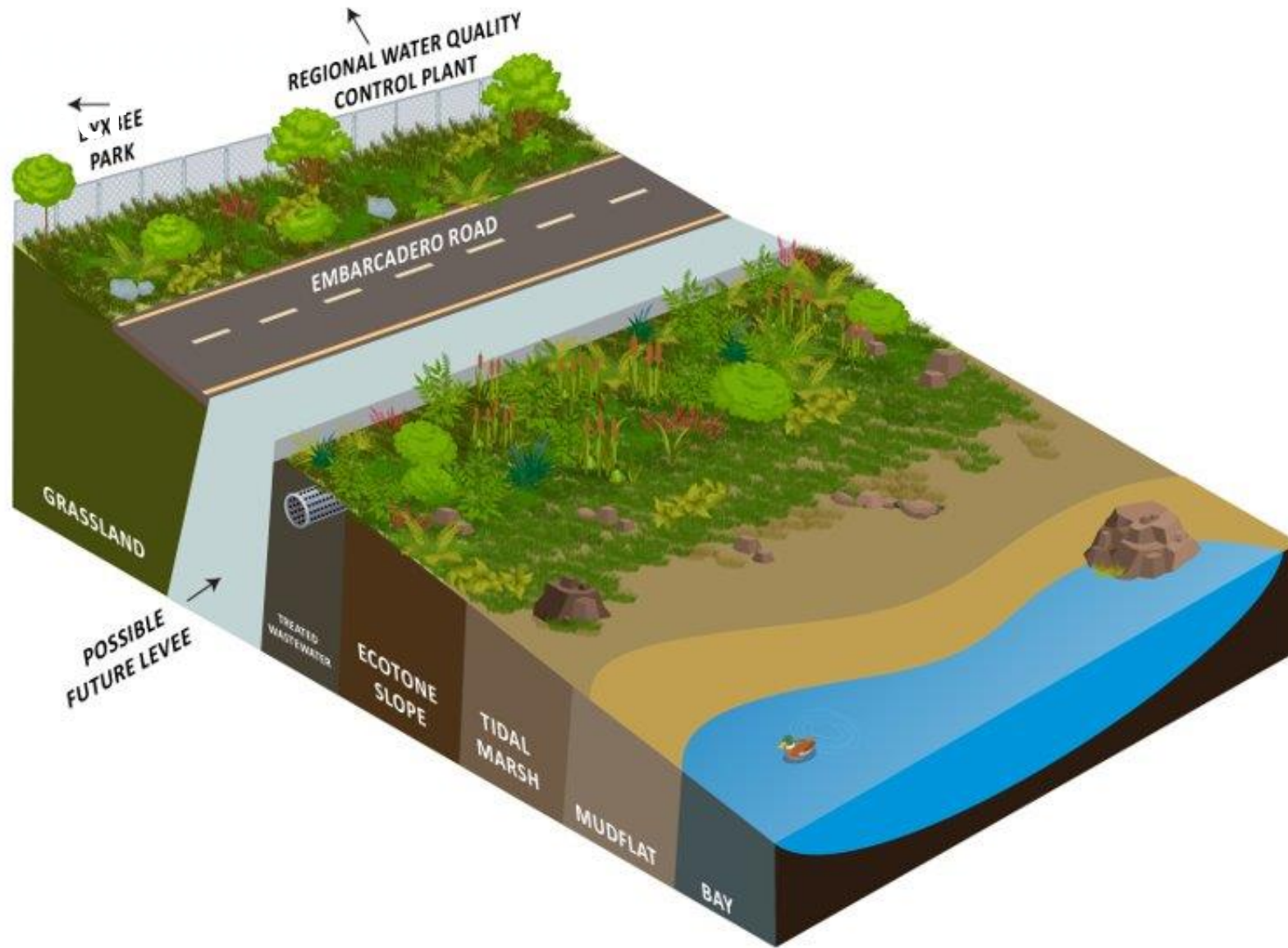


Project Goals

- Restore rare and historic transitional habitat along the Bay's shoreline for special status species.
- Adapt to sea level rise by providing a vegetated slope that will support freshwater plants to build organic soils to keep pace with and allow wetland habitat to migrate up slope with rising water levels.
- Provide polishing treatment of tertiary-treated wastewater.
- Engage diverse populations of residents and interested stakeholders in sea level rise adaptation, habitat restoration, and shoreline planning activities.

Horizontal Levee Benefits





Progress to Date

- Conceptual Design Report - 2018
 - Horizontal levees technically feasible & appropriate for Palo Alto Baylands
- Design Progress- 2020 – ongoing
 - 30% project definition (2020)
 - 60% design (2022)
 - Permit applications (in progress)
 - 100% design (2023)
- Construction and Outreach – 2024 - 2025



Key Stakeholders

- Regional Water Quality Control Plant
- SAFER Bay Project
- City of Palo Alto – Parks and Rec, Airport, City Council, Sustainability
- San Francisquito JPA
- Surrounding Cities: East Palo Alto, Mountain View, Los Altos, Los Alto Hills,
- E. Palo Alto Sanitary District
- Valley Water
- Residents
- Environmental Volunteers
- Save The Bay
- Audubon Society
- CLEAN South Bay
- Grassroots Ecology
- Greenbelt Alliance
- Sierra Club
- Citizen Committee to Complete the Refuge
- Youth United for Community Action
- Nuestra Casa
- Association of Raymutush Ohlone

Engagement Strategies

Design/Development:

- Community Workshops
 - Engaging Youth and Diverse Communities in Climate Resilience – January 2021
 - Balancing Public Access & Habitat Enhancement – November 2021
- Site Visits
 - Interested residents
 - Tribal stakeholders
- Individual consultation
- Education – BioBlitz

Construction (and lead up)

- Community-based monitoring
- Planting and outreach
- Ethnobotanical consultation



Looking Ahead

- Community-based planting days
- Parent Academy with Nuestra Casa
- Co-creation of monitoring program – metals and microplastics



Lessons Learned

- NBS requires early and ongoing engagement
- Partnership can help support the process – leveraging local planning sections & community partner orgs
- Ongoing training for staff is crucial
- Pay people for their time/consultation on project



Thank you!



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Huge thanks to the City of Palo Alto for their forward-thinking leadership on community engagement!

