

A New Partnership for the

Bolinas Lagoon Restoration Project



CRAIG SOLIN

A unique partnership generates community support

The **Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary** (Sanctuary) is leading a historic partnership with the **Marin County Open Space District** (Marin County) and the **United States Army Corps of Engineers** (Army Corps) to bring together local stakeholders and data from the previous Bolinas Lagoon Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study to develop a Locally Preferred Plan. The plan aims to address impacts caused by human activity while maintaining a healthy, sustainable ecosystem. What makes this partnership unique is the decision-making framework: federal and local agencies are collaborating with California State agencies, scientists, conservation groups and residents to collectively select the best approach to restore this significant estuary. The partnership is an innovative response to the critical need for new, sustainable natural resource management models in which habitat restoration is achieved by enabling natural systems to function, returning the ecosystem to a more vital and diverse state.



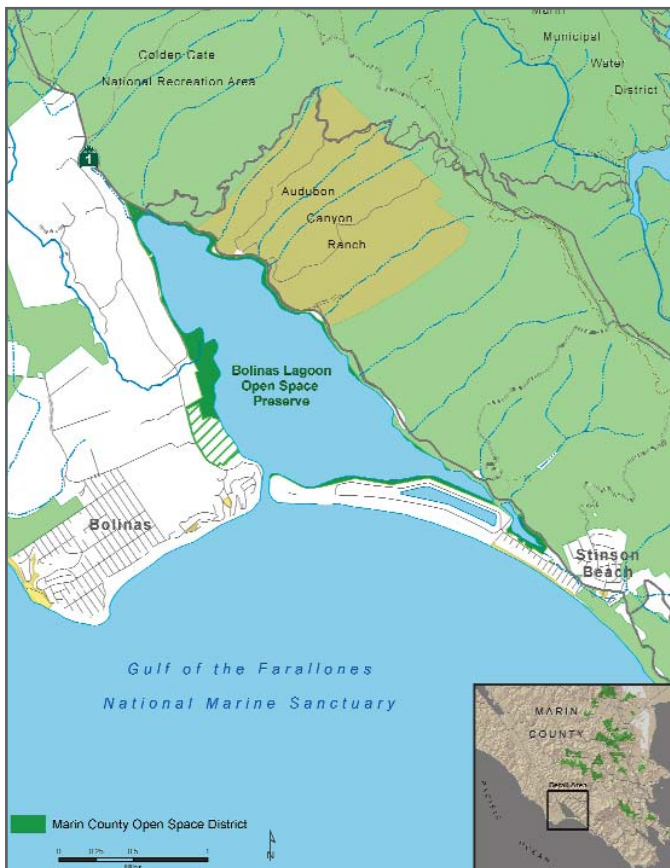
MAY CHEN

Bolinas Lagoon is the first estuary on the Pacific Flyway designated as a RAMSAR Wetland of International Importance

Project need

The restoration of Bolinas Lagoon is vital to the health of this Wetland of International Importance, the surrounding watersheds and to the increasingly rare ecological resources supported by this tidal estuary. Key needs include:

- ◆ **Restore critical habitat** for tens of thousands of migratory birds, harbor seals, coho and steelhead salmon, the rare Point Reyes Birds-Beak plant, and eelgrass beds.
- ◆ **Enhance and adaptively manage** Bolinas Lagoon and its watershed and plan for the onset of climate change.
- ◆ **Protect Bolinas Lagoon as a significant stopover** site on the Pacific Flyway.
- ◆ **Re-establish natural sediment transport** processes by removing the negative effects of human induced changes.
- ◆ **Protect water quality** by minimizing negative human impacts.
- ◆ **Identify and manage introduced species** in the Bolinas Lagoon watershed.



Funding opportunities

Funding Partnership Leverages Resources

Restoring the ecological health of one of Marin's most important ecosystems requires significant funding from a variety of sources over the course of many years. Funding commitments from the key partners—Army Corps, the Sanctuary, Marin County and the Bolinas Lagoon Foundation—have begun the work to complete a Locally Preferred Plan. Additional funding will be needed to complete the environmental review process and to implement monitoring and management actions. Possible actions include: restoring floodplain functions throughout the lagoon; removing a portion of the Pine Gulch Creek delta to increase the lagoon's natural flow; removal of introduced species; promot-

Map, left: Bolinas Lagoon is part of a large protected natural habitat complex including local, state and federal agencies and private organizations

ing best management practices for farming, ranching and residential areas; and implementing a monitoring program that will measure the success of these management strategies. Successful restoration and conservation of the lagoon's resources is dependent upon implementation of long term monitoring and management strategies, which in turn requires a long-term financial commitment.

Community process



BRIAN JOHNSON

The Locally Preferred Plan is being developed through an intense public process with the goal of crafting a community-supported alternative that will be included in the revision of the Bolinas Lagoon Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study and Draft EIR/EIS. Community involvement includes:

- ◆ Public meetings.
- ◆ Working Group meetings allowing time for public comment.
- ◆ A 30-day public comment period allowing for written and oral comments on the Draft Plan.
- ◆ A lecture series on the Bolinas Lagoon ecosystem.

The Working Group, staffed by the Sanctuary, Marin County, and the Army Corps, is made up of expert local and regional scientists and representatives from California State agencies, conservation groups, the Bolinas Lagoon Foundation, the Seadrift Homeowners Association and the local recreational fishing community. The Working Group will complement public input and use science-based decision making to narrow the range of alternatives to be assessed when the EIR/EIS process resumes in mid 2008.



MAY CHEN

Harbor seals

Bolinas Lagoon provides a rich diversity of habitats supporting many rare, threatened and endangered species of plants and animals. The lagoon sustains 245 species of birds and is extremely valuable for migratory waterfowl and shorebirds. It serves as a nursery area for fish and invertebrates and as a pupping ground and haul-out site for harbor seals. Since the 1850's, human activity in the surrounding watershed increased the rate of sedimentation, which is increasing the pace of habitat change and affecting the populations of plant and animal species.



LEN BLUMIN

The Greater Yellowlegs winters at the lagoon, feeding in the rich mudflats



MAY CHEN

Gumweed is native to Bolinas Lagoon and provides pollen and nectar for bees

“ Bird species diversity at Bolinas Lagoon rivals or exceeds that of every other tidal wetland on the Pacific Flyway.”

—Rich Stallcup, ornithologist

Projected timeline



Partners

National Marine Sanctuary Program Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Sanctuary Program seeks to increase the public awareness of America's marine resources and maritime heritage by conducting scientific research, monitoring, exploration and educational programs. The Sanctuary protects an area of 1,255 square miles off the northern and central California coast and 1,377 square miles of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. These waters are part of an internationally significant marine ecosystem. Encompassing a diversity of highly productive marine habitats, the Sanctuary supports an abundance of species.

www.farallones.noaa.gov



Marin County Open Space District

The Marin County Open Space District is responsible for preserving public open space in Marin County, California. The District is dedicated to educating, inspiring and engaging the people of Marin in the shared commitment of preserving, protecting and enriching the natural beauty of Marin's parks and open spaces for the enjoyment of all generations. Habitats are managed to protect and enhance their natural, undeveloped character while accommodating educational activities and trail-oriented uses such as hiking, horseback riding and mountain bicycling.

www.marinopenspace.org



The United States Army Corps of Engineers

Army Corps engineers, biologists, geologists, hydrologists, natural resource managers and other specialists work hand in hand as leaders in engineering and environmental matters. Our mission is to provide quality, responsive engineering services to the nation including planning, designing, building and operating water resources and other civil works projects.

www.usace.army.mil



The view south including the lands of Audubon Canyon Ranch and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area

