

Abstract  
**Bay Area Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program**

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**Mission and Scope**

The mission of the Wetlands RMP is to provide the scientific understanding necessary to protect, create, restore, and enhance wetlands of the San Francisco Bay Region, through objective and cost-effective monitoring, research, and communication. The geographic scope of the WRMP includes all of the baylands of the entire San Francisco Estuary plus the watersheds of the Estuary within the nine-counties Bay Area. The initial focus of the WRMP will be the baylands as transitional environments between the deeper reaches of the Estuary and the surrounding watersheds. The Wetlands RMP will consider physical and biological processes that link the baylands to their adjacent environments. The geographic scope of the program will be broadened in the future to include all the different kinds of wetlands in the Region.

**Statement of Need**

A monitoring program is needed to evaluate wetland policies, programs, and projects in the Region. Wetlands need to be compared to each other and over time to assess the status and trends of the wetlands ecosystem, measure the progress of wetlands projects, assess the efficacy of management decisions, and otherwise account for the public investment in wetlands. But these needs cannot be met at this time because the ambient conditions of wetlands in the region are not being monitored, local projects are monitored in disparate ways, there is little assurance of data quality, and monitoring results are not readily available to the public.

**Science Process**

The WRMP is governed by a Steering Committee of wetland protection agencies and organizations, and the leaders of scientific Focus Teams for Landscape Ecology; Physical Processes; Contaminants; Plants; Invertebrates; Fish; Amphibians & Reptiles & Mammals; and Birds. The Steering Committee is chaired by US EPA Region 9, and SFEI provides science coordination. The Steering Committee serves as a venue for integrating science and management. It has assembled the wetlands management questions that should be answered by the WRMP, developed conceptual models of wetland form and function, and selected indicators of wetlands condition that are consistent with the models and that will address the management questions. The Focus Teams are developing protocols for data collection, management, and interpretation that will be reviewed through an independent Science Advisors Group.

**Schedule**

Version 2001 of the WRMP Program Plan will be completed this fall. The Plan will include data collection protocols for immediate use by wetland managers, researchers, and restoration practitioners. The Steering Committee is now planning to formally implement the Program Plan with a pilot project in late 2001 or early 2002.

