

# **San Francisco Bay Joint Venture Project Adoption and Prioritization Criteria To Help Guide SFBJV Funding Recommendations**

## **Introduction**

The goal of the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture ([www.sfbayjv.org](http://www.sfbayjv.org)) is to protect, restore, increase and enhance all types of wetlands, riparian habitat and associated uplands throughout the San Francisco Bay region to benefit birds, fish and other wildlife.

One purpose of the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture (SFBJV or JV) is to provide the coordination of partnerships and resources to facilitate wetland and riparian habitat protection, restoration, enhancement, and monitoring projects in San Francisco Bay and the coasts of Sonoma, Marin, and San Mateo Counties. The SFBJV helps to identify potential partnerships and/or assistance needed to enhance the success of projects.

The SFBJV maintains updated information on wetland and riparian projects being conducted by SFBJV partners. The JV provides funding recommendations to the Wildlife Conservation Board, the State Coastal Conservancy and other funding entities. Projects have been identified in the Implementation Strategy, *Restoring the Estuary*, or subsequently adopted by the JV Restoration Strategy/Technical Committee. All projects tracked by the JV address the goals established in *Restoring the Estuary* and contribute to the Joint Venture targets for habitat protection and restoration.

This document describes SFBJV project submission, review, and prioritization procedures and outlines project adoption and prioritization criteria.

The Restoration Strategy/Technical Committee of the SFBJV is composed of representatives of state and federal resource agencies, NGO's and local governments with biological expertise, and Joint Venture partners conducting wetland projects. The SFBJV strives to promote projects with broad geographic representation although status and habitat value are primary.

The Restoration Strategy/Technical Committee reviews projects based upon the project adoption and prioritization criteria listed below and the guidelines of the appropriate funding agency, where applicable. Where appropriate, the project proponent or SFBJV will inform potential funders of adopted projects and request feedback on potential concerns and additional information needed. SFBJV projects are categorized into tiered priority lists according to how ready they are to be implemented, as described in the project prioritization section of this document.

It is essential that the SFBJV have the ability to react and pursue opportunities that arise unexpectedly and require immediate action. While this document describes the standard criteria and process for SFBJV project review, there will be occasional instances when the process may be streamlined.

## **Project submission, review and tracking procedure**

- 1) Information about a project is submitted by the lead partner to the SFBJV through the *San Francisco Bay Joint Venture Project Tracking System* at <http://cjvp.ducks.org/cajv/cajvlogin.cfm>. The project lead will need to request a login and password with editing privileges from the Coordinator or Assistant to be able to complete this step.

- 2) Information about the project is submitted to the Restoration Strategy/Technical Committee, and the lead partner requests the project be “adopted” by SFBJV and added to the main database of JV projects.
- 3) JV staff track project updates through the online system and contact partners as necessary for continuous updating of project information and status.
- 4) The tiered project lists, as described in the project prioritization section of this document, are generated and reviewed at least annually by the Restoration Strategy/Technical Committee.
- 5) In addition to an annual review, the Restoration Strategy/Technical Committee will also compare the tiered lists of projects with a funding agency’s criteria to provide funding priorities when requested by the Wildlife Conservation Board, Coastal Conservancy, or other funding entity.
- 6) Although the SFBJV Management Board has vested the Restoration Strategy/Technical Committee with the responsibility of providing recommendations and priorities, when multiple project priorities are requested by a funding agency, the SFBJV Management Board considers the recommended list of projects.
- 7) Throughout the process, the JV staff will provide funding agencies information about the status of projects.

## **II. Project Adoption Criteria**

The criteria for determining whether a project is suitable for adoption by the JV are divided into essential and desirable criteria. Projects do not need to meet all of the desirable criteria to be adopted as a SFBJV project. However, a project will be required to meet all essential criteria.

### **Essential Criteria:**

- 1) The project is specified in or implements the recommendations of the *Habitat Goals* report and/or the JV Implementation Strategy, *Restoring the Estuary* or is a special project outside the geographic range of the Joint Venture that has been authorized due to extraordinary significance.
- 2) The project advances the goals of the Joint Venture, by protecting, restoring, or enhancing habitat for target species including waterfowl, shorebirds, special status species, and anadromous fish as described in *Restoring the Estuary*.
- 3) The purpose of the project has a strong biological foundation. Biological assessments are available for the property or for nearby areas of similar habitat value that are representative of the existing or potential biological values of the property. These assessments demonstrate that the project will result in the protection, restoration or enhancement of habitat for target species. Documentation may include biological surveys, monitoring reports, known significant habitat values, historical ecology surveys, or field verification by the Department of Fish and Game, US Fish and Wildlife Service, or other qualified entity.
- 4) The project is being implemented by a partnership of organizations and agencies, each contributing resources or expertise to ensure the project will be completed in a timely way with the best biological foundations for long-term habitat value.

## Desirable Criteria:

- 1) The project provides linkage or connectivity to other priority wildlife areas such as a State Wildlife Area, National Wildlife Refuge, County Reserve or Open Space Preserve, or a permanently protected privately owned/managed wildlife sanctuary;

## III. Prioritization Criteria

Once a project has been adopted by the SFBJV, it is prioritized on the basis of:

- 1) Readiness to be implemented
- 2) Urgency
- 3) Cost
- 4) Connectivity
- 5) Community support

### A. Readiness

Readiness is the primary criteria used to determine upon which tiered list the projects should be placed. SFBJV projects are categorized into tiered priority lists according to how ready they are to be implemented, as described below.

Three levels of readiness are defined:

1. **Tier 1** – The Tier 1 list is comprised of those projects that can be implemented immediately when funding is received. These projects are considered to be “Ready to Go.”

The project is determined to be “Ready to Go,” if it satisfies the following conditions:

- Impediments are identified and remedied
- Sources of funding are identified including funding already in place, the amount needed to complete the project, and sources and amounts of potential matching funding. Match is at the appropriate level given the landowner’s or grantees assets
- Future ownership and management arrangements have been described
  - \*For acquisition projects, there is a willing seller with documented verification such as a letter from the landowner
  - For acquisition where restoration is recommended, a conceptual plan for restoration exists or a planning process has been proposed
  - Potential sources of liability have been identified and measures have been identified to limit the liability to a level acceptable to the funding entities, potential owner and manager of the property
  - Permits and environmental documents are either in place or will be secured in foreseeable future

2. **Tier 2** – Tier 2 projects have unresolved impediments. Tier 2 projects can be “Ready to Go” (Tier 1) once any impediments are remedied. Tier 2 projects require JV staff or partner assistance to elevate them to the Tier 1 status. Projects can shift between tiered lists if the “Ready to Go” status changes.
3. **Other Active Projects**- The JV also maintains a list of High Activity “Other” projects that are active, but don’t meet the criteria of Tier 1 and Tier 2. JV partners and staff invest time in implementing these active projects.

In addition to readiness, the following four additional prioritization criteria are considered, with no one of these criteria given more weight than any other. Each project is considered individually.

**B. Urgency**

The project is urgent, based on the verity of at least one of the following:

- Lack of restoration will contribute to habitat degradation
- Acquisition projects may be given priority over restoration or enhancement because of timeliness and threat when a window of opportunity might close, such as matching funds with limited time of availability, or a property when the degree of threat by development is high.

**C. Cost**

- Lack of restoration will contribute to increase in future costs as habitat degrades
- Cost efficiency can be improved when restoration of one site can be tied to that of another
- The project is a good value for the cost

**D. Habitat Connectivity**

- The project provides wildlife corridors and will contribute significantly to completing a complex of nearby projects or natural habitat.

**E. Community Support**

- There is widespread and active community support for the project as demonstrated by community involvement in protection/restoration or local funding support