US Army Corps of Engineers
San Francisco District

Project Map

SAN FRANCISCO BAY-DELTA MODEL AND VISITOR CENTER

CALIFORNIA

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The model is a one and one-half acre tidal hydraulic model once capable of reproducing existing and planned conditions of San Francisco Bay and Estuary. Issues of effluent dispersion, salt/fresh water mixing, dredging, shoaling, and solid barrier construction were studied. The Visitor Center provides programming via public and curriculum-based school tours, special events, workshops, and seminars on the environmental, cultural, and historical issues of the Bay Area.

FISCAL YEAR 03 BUDGET: $1,181,000

PRESENT STATUS: The Bay Model Hydraulics Laboratory research department was closed in January of 2000. However, the model is still maintained and operated on a daily basis. Present studies are underway to stabilize and protect the deterioration of the concrete slabs. The Center currently serves over 140,000 visitors annually, 60% of them school children, and completed extensive exhibit renovation in 1989. It is the goal and desire of the Visitor Center to establish partnerships with local high schools and universities to make the model available for students who may be interested in pursuing a degree in engineering, turning the model into their hands-on classroom. The Center's exhibits are in the process of being updated to reflect its new mission. Exhibits present information on the environmental program and history of the Corps, regional water issues, and current issues of interest with regard to state water policy management. The Marinship exhibit, documenting the history of the building and grounds, was contributed with private funds in 1991. In 2001 the Visitor Center installed two new exhibits in partnership with other agencies. The first, in cooperation with the Marin County Storm Water Pollution Prevention

Project, focused on storm drain pollution. The second exhibit, in collaboration with Water Education Foundation, was the result of a $115,000 CALFED grant focusing on water allocation issues. The exhibit is also available for loan to other educational institutions. The Bay Model Association (a non-profit cooperation association) contributes direct funds and services to provide diverse programming and funding for special projects. Projects have included construction of a new classroom, and the JASON project, a NOAA-funded remote video exploration link-up whereby children can view various scientific "explorations" through classroom monitors as they take place. Their newest enterprise is Project Transquest, which exposes children to the secrets and wonders of San Francisco Bay. The Association is the coordinator for an extensive watershed monitoring program, called the North Bay Riparian Station, that monitors water quality in the North Bay of San Francisco, and also operates an educational bookstore.

FUTURE EFFORTS: The primary future effort is to update the existing exhibits and program information to reflect the Center's new mission. The Visitor Center envisions becoming a widely recognized educational facility, with the ability to make the model available to students to assist them in exploring both potential careers and the ramifications of the various changes and issues facing the San Francisco Bay. The Visitor Center has the only hydraulic scale model of the San Francisco Bay in existence, and has the unique opportunity to use it as an educational tool, both for students and the general public.