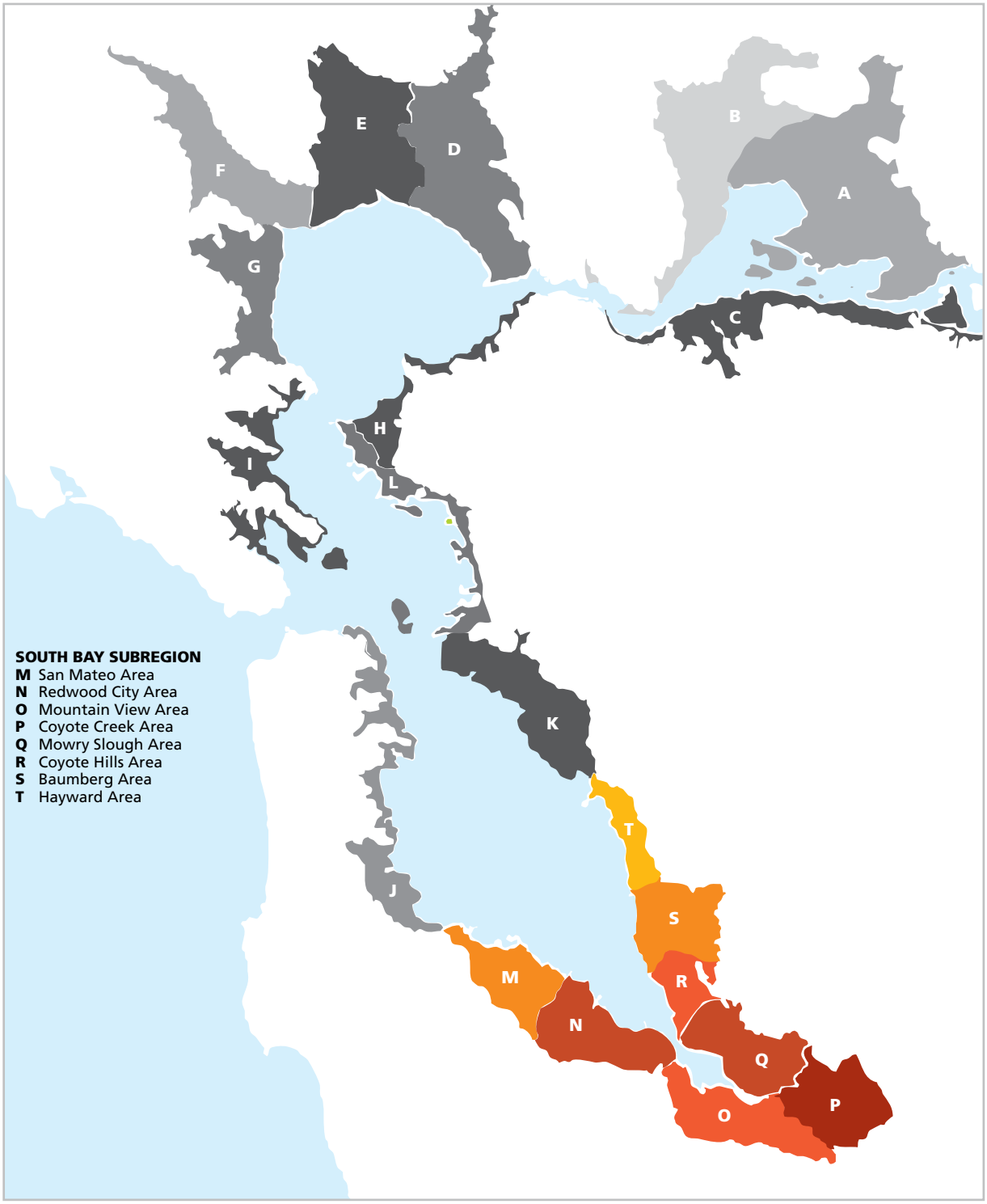
South Bay Subregion



South Bay Subregion

LANDSCAPE VISION

The South Bay provides some of the most extensive opportunities in the region to restore baylands habitat. The goal for South Bay is to restore large tidal marshes as soon as possible.

Recommended Actions

- Given the large areas available for restoration and generally high sedimentation rates, prioritize tidal marsh restoration, including the creation of transition zones. Supplement local sediment availability to increase long-term shoreline resilience and investigate novel approaches to beneficial reuse. Reconnect local tributaries more directly to and through the tidal baylands. Protect and restore riparian corridors and willow groves wherever possible.
- Connect all types of tidal marshes with wide corridors along the perimeter of the bay. Restore natural transitions from mudflat through tidal marsh to adjacent terrestrial habitats wherever possible. Restore naturalistic, unmanaged saline ponds (facsimiles of historical hypersaline backshore pans), especially on the Hayward shoreline. Protect and enhance adjacent moist grasslands, particularly those with vernal pools. Protect undeveloped lands adjacent to the baylands, and create broad transition zones adjacent to flood-risk management levees.
- Intersperse pond complexes, managed to optimize waterbird support, throughout the subregion in locations appropriate for long-term operations and maintenance.
- Create eelgrass beds and oyster reefs wherever possible, especially adjacent to tidal mudflats and marshes or other baylands that would benefit from physical protection. Create coarse beaches, where appropriate, to reduce bay-edge erosion of marshes.

View of island ponds restored to tidal marsh

RECENT RESTORATION

Since the 1999 Goals Report, the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration (SBSPR) project has made major progress toward baylands restoration. The Cargill Salt Division, whose operations were described as a "challenge" in the 1999 Goals Report, was willing to undertake major operational changes and transfer 15,100 acres into public ownership in 2003 through a combination of purchase and donation. Since that time, the SBSPR project has completed long-term planning for this area as well as the first phase of restoration projects, resulting in over 3,700 acres of restored or enhanced habitats, and an overall new pond management regime designed to benefit wildlife. Other significant restoration projects that are completed or nearly completed include Cooley Landing and Bair Island.

CHALLENGES

Progress in the South Bay will depend on the efforts of many other private and public landowners as development pressures increase and shoreline migration space becomes scarcer. Regulatory and logistical hurdles complicate achieving regional sediment management, the beneficial reuse of sediment in the baylands, and the creation of broad transition zones. Although largely under control, invasive *Spartina* remains a challenge for the South Bay, especially as newly restored tidal areas are breached. If baylands habitat patches become smaller, human-associated predator management will become a larger challenge.

The South Bay subregion consists of segments M through T.