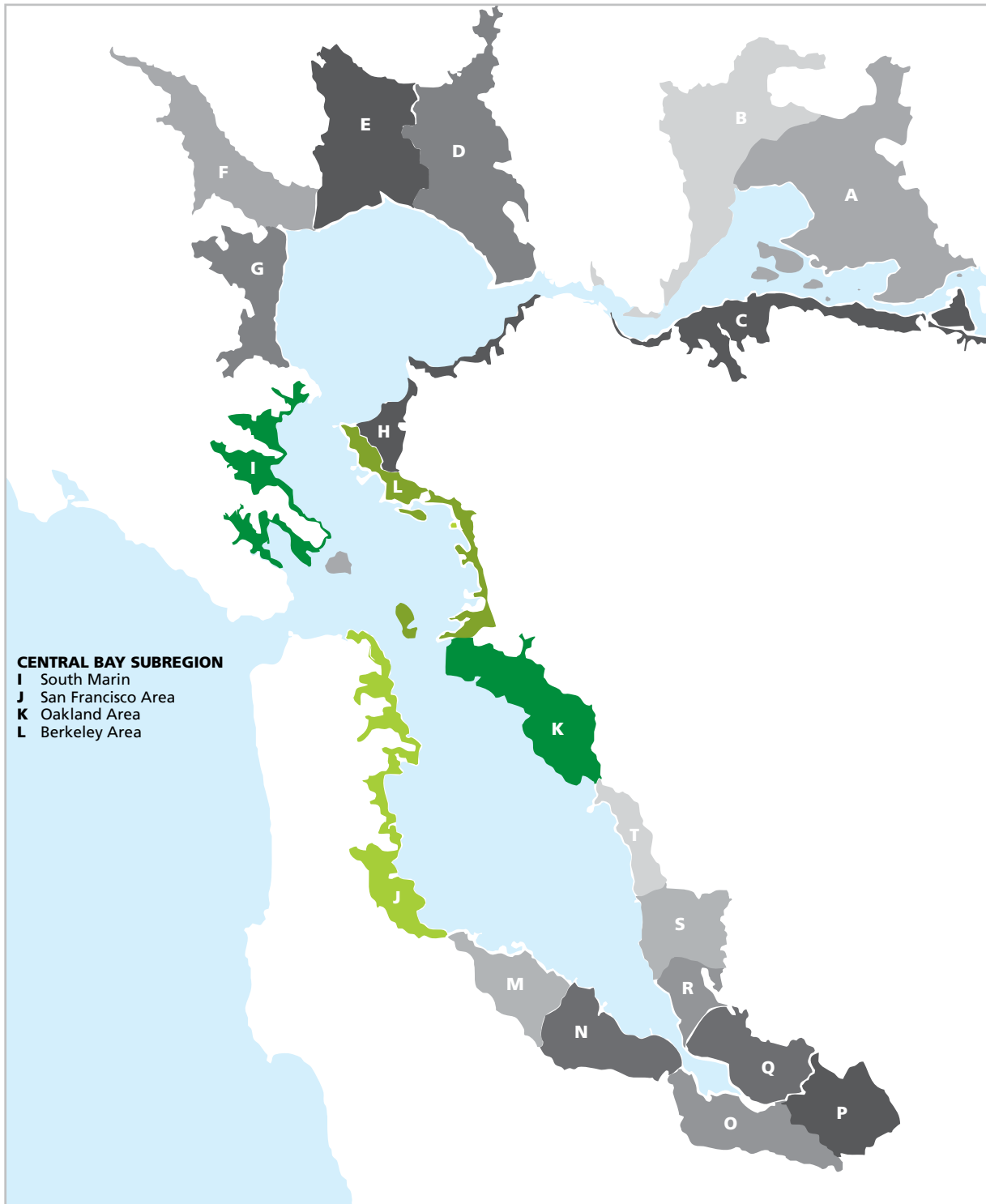


Central Bay Subregion



Central Bay Subregion

LANDSCAPE VISION

The Central Bay is the region's most intensively developed shoreline, yet it is home to critical bayland resources. The vision for the Central Bay is to protect and enhance extant marshes and mudflats, while connecting urban residents to the baylands with restoration projects that demonstrate how climate change adaptation can provide vital ecosystem services while improving ecological health. This subregion will likely remain highly urbanized with limited opportunities for large-scale restoration, yet there are opportunities for small-scale restoration with the co-objectives of improving habitat quality and connectivity, protecting existing infrastructure and habitats, and generating new knowledge and new public-private partnerships and community involvement.

The goal for the Central Bay is to protect and restore tidal marshes, mudflats, beaches, rocky intertidal areas, subtidal habitats, and seasonal wetlands to create an archipelago-style corridor of tidal baylands.

Recommended Actions

- ◆ Restore tidal marsh wherever possible, and particularly where streams enter the baylands. Protect, enhance, and restore streams and riparian habitats so that they pass through, rather than around, tidal marshes. Restore natural salt ponds on the East Bay shoreline, and protect and enhance shallow subtidal habitats (including eelgrass and oyster beds) and shorebird roosts. Incorporate transition zones and terrestrial buffers beyond the existing transition zone into all appropriate projects. Find opportunities to create or improve floodplains, off-channel aquatic habitat, or low marsh along flood-control channels, including upstream areas. Improve dock substrates and tidegate management. Study and consider removing derelict creosote pilings, contaminated soils, and derelict boats. Reduce and remove trash that terminates in the bay.
- ◆ Pursue opportunities to enable the baylands to persist and migrate with sea-level rise, despite limitations from steep topography and urban and industrial development. Consider creating very low-slope transition zones bayward of the flood protection levees to provide space for landward migration, possibly using wastewater to develop wetlands on the slope. Use any of the following techniques where appropriate: recharge mudflats with sediment to increase the local supply, stabilize the bayward marsh edge with a coarse beach to prevent erosion, and improve natural-sediment-transport processes to maximize vertical accretion in the landward portion of the marsh. Create living breakwaters that incorporate native eelgrass and oyster beds and protect the habitats and infrastructure behind them. Develop living seawalls and docks for the region at critical infrastructure sites, such as the Port of San Francisco. If developed baylands are abandoned due to rising tides, pursue opportunities to restore these areas to functioning habitats that provide ecosystem services.

RECENT RESTORATION

Despite the urbanization and limited baylands acreage in this region, several recent restoration projects have been completed at Crissy Field, Yosemite Slough, Lake Merritt, Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline, the Berkeley Meadow, and other areas.

CHALLENGES

Achieving the Central Bay vision is subject to significant infrastructure constraints (e.g., those posed by ports and airports, military facilities, transportation and utility corridors, bridges, wastewater treatment plants, and landfills), the presence of invasive species (principally invasive *Spartina*), and the limitations of steep topography, urban and industrial development, and contamination at restoration sites. Private landowners and public entities will need to be willing to undertake habitat restoration and enhancement in the most urbanized portion of the baylands and to retrofit infrastructure in a manner in keeping with ecosystem health. Although largely under control, invasive *Spartina* remains a challenge for the Central Bay, including at sites such as San Leandro Bay. Other challenges include a large urban population, extensive fill along the shoreline, on-site contaminants, flood-control considerations, and exotic predators (e.g., rats and red fox).

The Central Bay subregion includes segments I through L.



Mudflats and shoreline armoring