

**NSDI Cooperative Agreements Program
Institution Building and Coordination Project**

FINAL REPORT – “San Pablo Bay Watershed Information System”

Agreement Number: 04HQAG0187

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Organization:

Sonoma Ecology Center
P.O. Box 1486
Eldridge, CA, 95431
<http://sonomaecologycenter.org>

Project Leader:

Deanne DiPietro
GIS & Information Services Program Manager
Sonoma Ecology Center
deanne@sonomaecologycenter.org

Collaborating Organizations:

US Army Corps of Engineers San Francisco Region Office
San Francisco Estuary Institute
San Francisco Bay Joint Venture
MIG, Inc.
North Bay Watershed Council
Sonoma County Water Agency
Bay Area Open Space Council

Project Narrative:

This project's goal was to foster the collaboration of San Pablo Bay Watershed data owners toward a regional data management framework. This was accomplished by establishing the San Pablo Bay Watershed Data Consortium. The collaborative of organizations continued meeting and building upon the original effort, which later became the Northbay Environmental Information Commons, and changed again in 2006 to be called the San Francisco Bay Area Conservation Commons.

This NSDI-funded coordination of the region's environmental data managers was instrumental in jump-starting what is now becoming a more formal effort. In June 2005 we hosted a regional data discovery workshop, wherein we established a strategic plan for the Consortium. The website and many products of this multi-organization collaborative may be found at <http://sfbacc.net>. The outreach and coordination done under the funding provided by this grant allowed us to secure additional funding and

contributions from local and regional agencies as well as another NSDI grant (Metadata Training and Data Coordination Agreement 05HQAG0142) and continue building our regional Conservation Commons. Since starting the initiative we have accomplished the following activities:

- held several metadata training workshops in which we taught FGDC-standard metadata creation (see <http://sfbacc/training>)
- formed Steering, Content, and Technical committees for the establishment of a regional network of standard metadata libraries and these committees continue to meet quarterly (see <http://sfbacc/committees>)
- developed a specialized, FGDC- compatible standard for creating metadata describing environmental projects (see <http://sfbacc/standards>)
- held a 3-day programming “Sprint” in which 9 organizations output metadata to the new standard from previously proprietary databases see (<http://sfbacc.net/committees/the-developers-group/sprints/>)
- formed the California Environmental Digital Library Network (<http://CalEDLN.org>), a state-wide effort that to date has focused on new technology development in support of the pilot regional network, the SFBACC

Feedback on Cooperative Agreements Program:

This particular program area, for building multi-organizational collaboration and data sharing, is incredibly helpful. While the technical challenges of building new systems that serve the needs of data users are important, the coordination of stakeholders is fundamentally critical, takes an enormous amount of time and effort, and is difficult to fund. By providing financial support (and credibility) for efforts aimed at this, the program does a great service. Funding for the first steps of getting the collaborative process off the ground is key.

We had help from Kathy Covert of the NSDI in our first big coordination meeting, and we thought that this presence by a representative of the program lent credibility to our effort. To the extent that program staff from NSDI can be made available, we recommend that NSDI provide this support to other projects to give wider context to project efforts. This may become increasingly important in the future as regional efforts begin to coalesce within national structures.