



Taking a Stand for San Francisco Bay's Sand

Baykeeper fights to stop excessive sand mining, which worsens Ocean Beach erosion

Photo by Andrew Snaps Flickr/CC


Sand mining companies and dredging operations remove more sand each year from San Francisco Bay than washes in from the Delta and local rivers and creeks. This robs the coast of sand that would otherwise wash out of the Bay and onto beaches outside the Golden Gate. And it robs the Bay of sediment that could be used to restore wetlands. Baykeeper is standing up in court to protect this important Bay resource.

In August, Baykeeper presented arguments in the California Court of Appeal in our case to stop excessive sand mining in the Bay. For years, private companies have been permitted to mine too much sand from the Bay. Yet in 2012, the California agency that oversees sand mining approved a large increase, despite scientific research showing that this would exacerbate Ocean Beach erosion. Excessive sand mining could also threaten bottom-dwelling Bay species, including Dungeness crab. Baykeeper is fighting for strong limits on sand mining that protect the Bay and Ocean Beach.

Baykeeper also recently filed a lawsuit to improve harmful methods of dredging in the Bay. Dredging is necessary to keep ship channels open, but better methods are needed. We're advocating to stop wasting clean dredged Bay mud and sand by dumping them deep in the ocean. Instead, clean dredged sediments

Dredging needs to be done in a way that doesn't harm wetlands and fish.

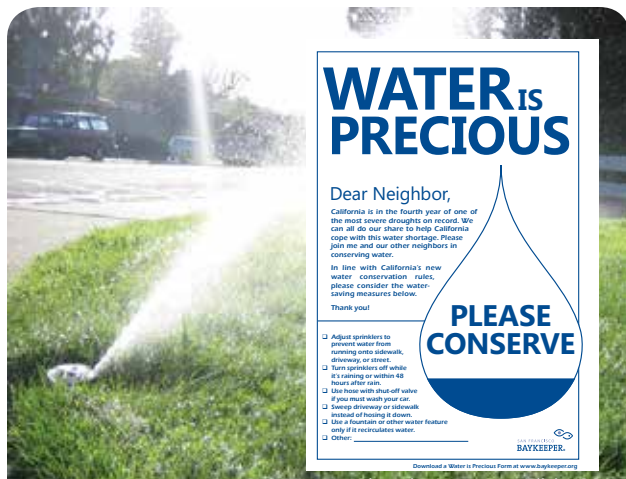
should be used to restore wetlands and protect Bay shorelines from sea level rise. In addition, we aim to end the use of hopper suction dredging, a method that vacuums up and kills endangered fish like Delta smelt.

Baykeeper will continue to stand up in court for the Bay, Bay wetlands, wildlife, and Ocean Beach. 

See Water Being Wasted? Use our Friendly Drought Reminder

See water being wasted? Use Baykeeper's friendly water conservation note to encourage good water-saving practices.

Just go to baykeeper.org, download a copy, fill it out, and attach it to your neighbor's mailbox, door, or car windshield. It's important for all Bay Area residents and businesses to protect our scarce water resources.



WATER IS PRECIOUS

Dear Neighbor,

California is in the fourth year of one of the most severe droughts on record. We can all do our share to help California cope with this water shortage. Please join me and our other neighbors in conserving water.

In line with California's new water conservation rules, please consider the water-saving measures below.

Thank you!

PLEASE CONSERVE

Download a "Water is Precious" form at www.baykeeper.org

BAYKEEPER

Photo by Jennanana Flickr/CC



SAN FRANCISCO
BAYKEEPER®

www.baykeeper.org

Pollution hotline:
1-800-KEEP-BAY

Fall/Winter 2015

Letter From the Executive Director



As Baykeeper's new Executive Director, it is my pleasure to present to you the Fall-Winter 2015-16 issue of *Baykeeper News*.

During these first months in my new role, I have felt continuously energized by Baykeeper's community of support, and I thank each and every one of you for your dedication to our vision of a Bay where

recreation is safe and wildlife thrives. I know I speak for my whole team of talented staff when I express gratitude for our

deeply committed Board of Directors, engaged Advisory Board members, dedicated volunteers—and you, our outstanding supporters. While you review this issue, I hope you will be inspired by the many ways your support helps us stand up to the Bay's biggest polluters and win big victories for the Bay's recreational communities and wildlife. Together, we are building tremendous momentum for a cleaner, healthier, safer San Francisco Bay.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sejal Choksi-Chugh'.

Sejal Choksi-Chugh, *Executive Director*

Two Wins to Make San Francisco Bay Healthier

California Ban on Plastic Microbeads

The California Legislature recently passed a ban on the sale of consumer products containing plastic microbeads, starting in 2020. Microbeads are tiny particles of plastic used in some facial scrubs, shampoo, toothpaste, cosmetics, deodorant, and sunblock. When these products are washed down a sink or shower drain, they aren't removed by treatment at wastewater plants—so they enter San Francisco Bay, where swimmers and wildlife can ingest the toxic particles.

San Francisco Baykeeper's research has found that central and south San Francisco Bay have high levels of microbead contamination. We advocated in support of this legislation, along with our partners Clean Water Action and 5 Gyres. Governor Brown is expected to sign the bill into law.

Until the ban is in effect, you can protect the Bay from microbeads by avoiding any personal care product that includes Polyethylene (PE), Polypropylene (PP), Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET), Polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA), or nylon.

Protecting the Bay from Drug Pollution

Marin and Santa Clara recently became the latest Bay Area counties to require pharmaceutical manufacturers to develop and fund safe and convenient programs for unused medication disposal. Without such laws, taxpayers must fund safe disposal of pharmaceuticals.

Levels of medications harmful to fish and wildlife have been found in San Francisco Bay. Baykeeper worked with our partner Clean Water Action to successfully advocate for passage of the drug take-back ordinances in Marin, Santa Clara, and San Francisco. Alameda and San Mateo counties also have these ordinances.



Photo by Joan Robbins

Recent Baykeeper victories will help protect San Francisco Bay wildlife from two types of harmful contamination: plastic microbeads and pharmaceuticals.

When leftover medications are flushed down the toilet or washed down the sink, they aren't removed by wastewater treatment, so they enter the Bay via treated wastewater. Unused drugs thrown in the trash end up in landfills and can leach into the Bay via storm water runoff or groundwater contamination.

You can help prevent pharmaceutical pollution in the Bay by taking your unused medications to a proper disposal facility. For a list of sites in the Bay Area, visit baykeeper.org.

Ensuring Industrial Runoff Doesn't Pollute the Bay


A total of 28 Bay Area industrial facilities are now keeping pollution out of the Bay, thanks to Baykeeper's Bay-Safe Industry Campaign. The campaign targets the widespread problem of illegal rainy-season runoff that flows into San Francisco Bay from local industrial facilities. This runoff often contains high levels of heavy metals and other dangerous pollutants that can harm wildlife and people.

What do we do when controls that are supposed to keep pollution out of San Francisco Bay don't work? We ask the facility to try again. Under **Oldcastle Precast's** legally-binding agreement with Baykeeper, the Pleasanton concrete manufacturer was required to keep contaminated rainwater from running off its site into tributaries of the Bay—but their first efforts didn't succeed.

Last year Oldcastle installed an environmentally-friendly bioretention system to filter runoff through tree bark. Then, during early storms, runoff from the site was still highly polluted, just as it had been before Baykeeper sued the company under the Clean Water Act. Baykeeper Staff Scientist Ian Wren recommended that the company instead try filtering runoff through a mixture of sand and compost. When the next storms hit, Oldcastle's runoff pollution was reduced by 97%.

After Baykeeper secures an agreement from an industrial facility to reduce pollution, we monitor to ensure that they implement required pollution controls and that the controls actually protect the Bay. If the controls don't work, we require further controls or recommend something better, just like we did with Oldcastle.

The most recent facilities to agree to protect the Bay from toxic runoff include **McHugh Auto Wrecking**, a Concord auto dismantler; **Marin Sanitary Service**, a Marin County recycler and

waste disposal service; and **Central Concrete Supply**, a San Jose concrete manufacturing plant. We'll continue working to ensure that these Bay Area industrial facilities are keeping toxic polluted runoff out of San Francisco Bay. 

Mystery Goo Identified Chemical Spills Still Threaten Bay

The toxic "mystery goo" that was spilled into San Francisco Bay in January, harming hundreds of birds, was recently identified as a polymerized oil similar to vegetable oil. But there are no leads on where the chemical came from, and no responsible party has been found or held accountable.

The sticky substance coated hundreds of ducks and shorebirds, killing at least 300 of them. California's oil spill response agencies could not be activated to clean up the chemical or rescue injured birds, because they are funded to respond only to petroleum-based spills. Instead, Baykeeper and wildlife-rescue nonprofits worked to save injured birds.

Baykeeper then partnered with Audubon California to sponsor state legislation that would have enabled oil spill response agencies to also respond to chemical spills—but the bill was inexplicably killed in May.


That means that if another chemical is spilled into San Francisco Bay, until we can find a way for the agencies to respond, Baykeeper needs to be ready to protect the Bay and our birds once again. Thank you, Baykeeper donors—it's your continued support that allows us to stay ready! 

Photo by Robb Most



*For seals, sailors, swimmers, and paddlers
For birds, beachgoers, and boaters
For fish and folks who fish
For kites, kayakers, and
kids splashing on the shore*

**Help safeguard San Francisco Bay from pollution.
Make a gift to Baykeeper using the enclosed
envelope, or donate online at baykeeper.org**



SAN FRANCISCO

BAYKEEPER®

1736 Franklin Street., Suite 800
Oakland, CA 94612

Fall/Winter 2015 Baykeeper News

Action Around San Francisco Bay



Photo by Robert McKinney



Photo by Robert McKinney

Top left: The second annual **Bay Parade** was a big success for San Francisco Bay! In May, more than 100 swimmers, sailors, stand-up paddle boarders, surfers, kayakers, and rowers paraded on the water, along with Bay enthusiasts on the Hornblower hybrid ferry, the classic sailing schooner *Freda B*, and the Baykeeper pollution patrol boat. Participants raised funds to support Baykeeper, and it was a heartfelt celebration for a clean and healthy Bay. *Top right:* Baykeeper staff and volunteers removed trash and debris from India Basin Shoreline Park in San Francisco on **Coastal Cleanup Day**. *Bottom right:* A plan to export coal from Oakland could lead to long coal trains shedding toxic dust into San Francisco Bay, threatening Bay wildlife. Coal would be shipped on these railroad tracks near the Bay, and on tracks that run through local communities. Baykeeper recently advocated before the Oakland City Council, urging them to **stop coal exports and protect the Bay from coal contamination**.



Photo by Shea Carley



Follow us on Facebook and Twitter
Sign up for e-mail updates at baykeeper.org

www.baykeeper.org

Pollution hotline: 1-800 KEEP BAY

