

Water Board Policy Update: Wetlands and Climate Change



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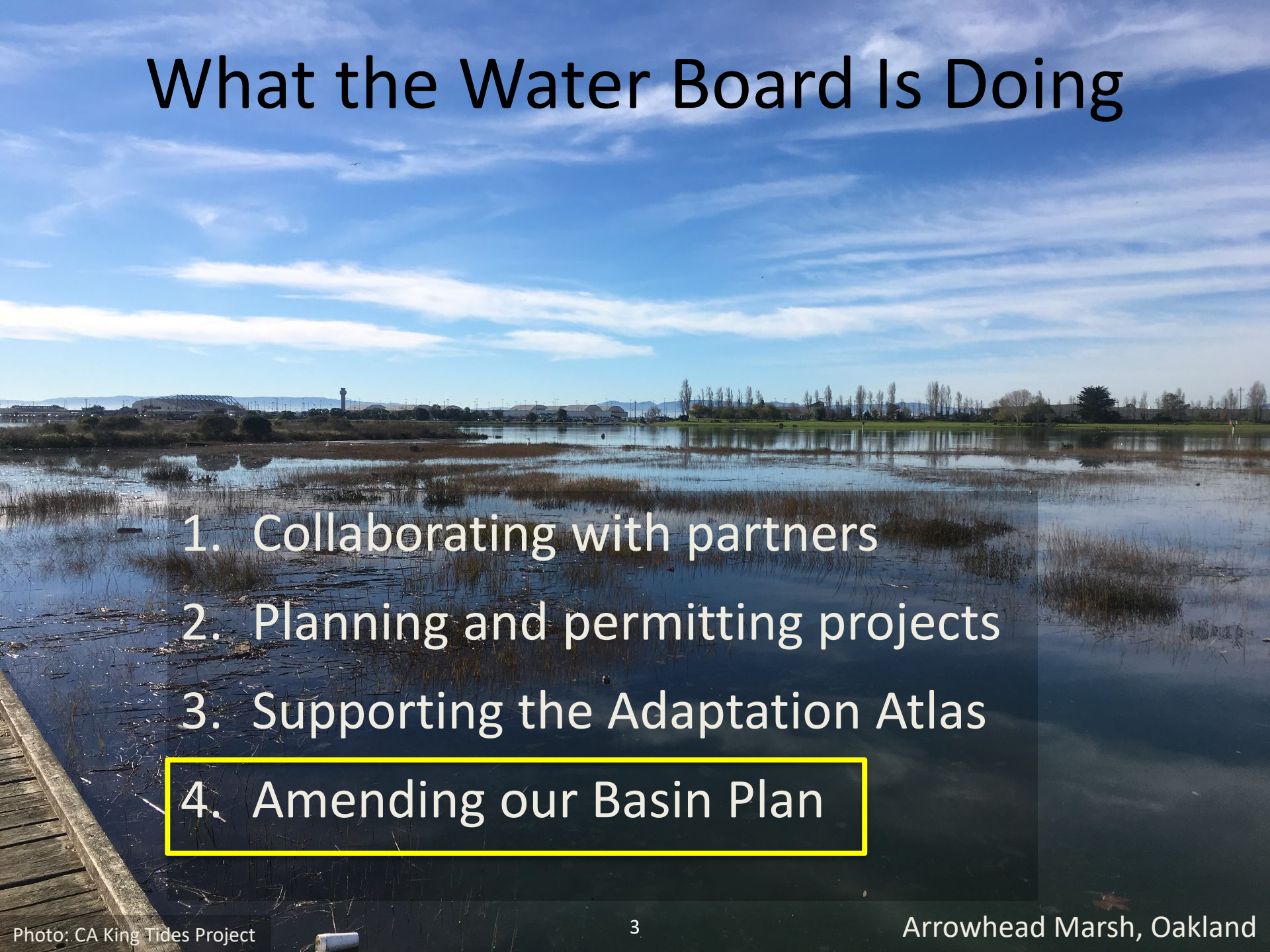


Climate Change Threats

- More frequent and severe droughts and floods
- Sea level rise
- Coastal flooding, overtopping, erosion
 - Higher groundwater tables
 - Drowning of tidal marshes

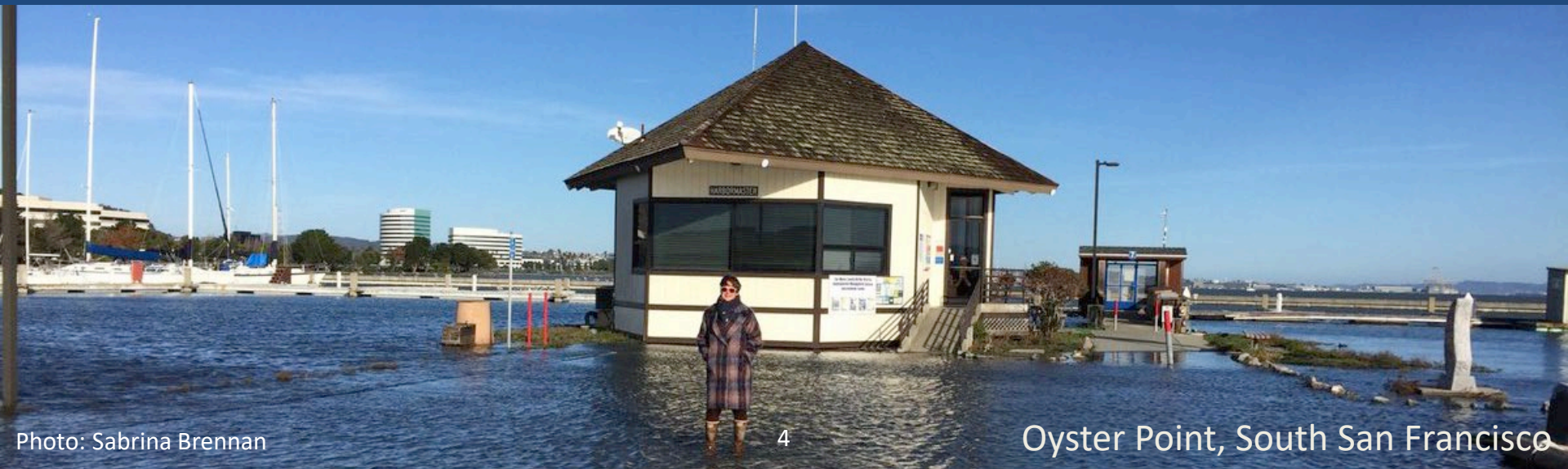


What the Water Board Is Doing

- 
1. Collaborating with partners
 2. Planning and permitting projects
 3. Supporting the Adaptation Atlas
 4. Amending our Basin Plan

SF Bay Basin Plan

- Master policy document
- Designates beneficial uses
- Assigns water quality objectives
- Describes implementation plans & policies
 - Chapter 4.23: Wetland Protection & Management



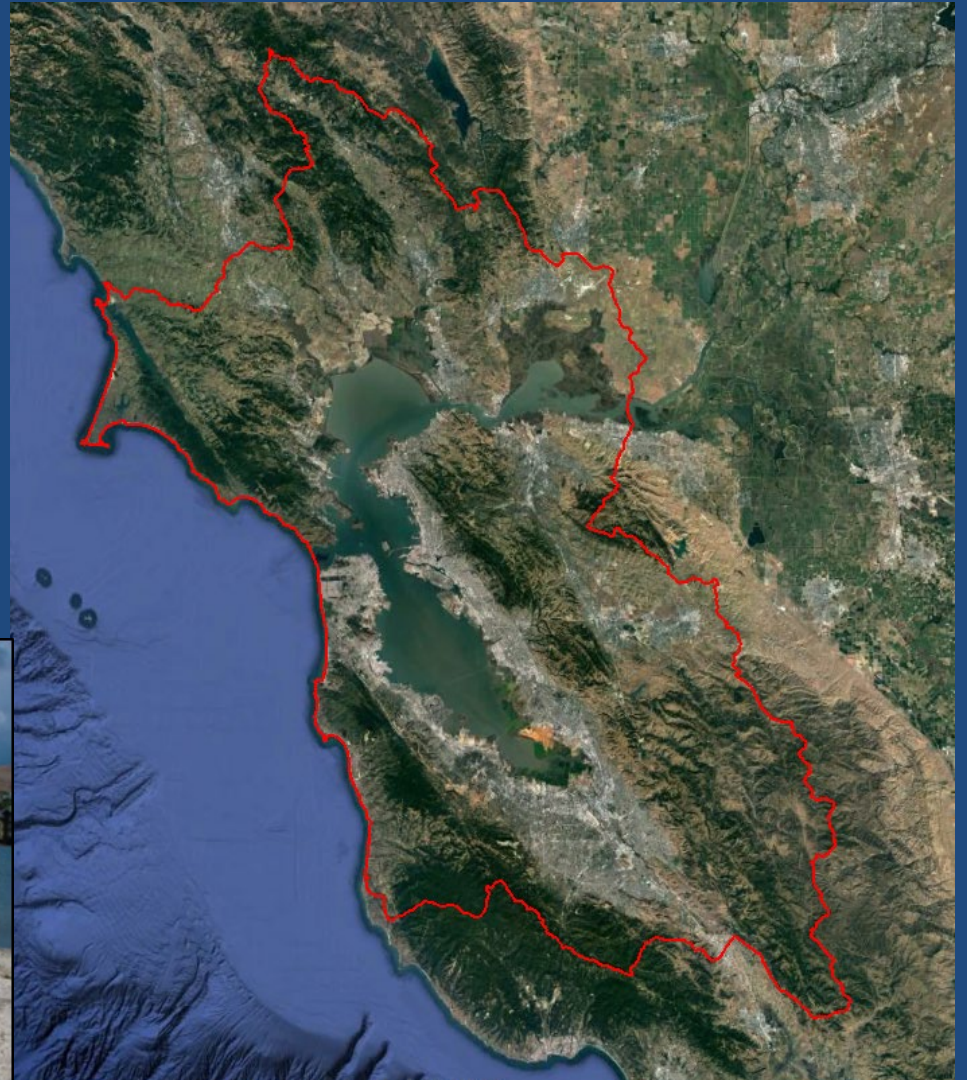
Key Beneficial Uses of San Francisco Baylands + Shorelines

- Estuarine habitats – mudflats, tidal fresh, brackish, and salt marshes
- Habitat for wildlife, including rare and special-status species
- Recreation, commercial fisheries, shellfish harvesting



Key Water Board Authorities

- Placement of fill in wetlands and waters
- Dredging and beneficial reuse



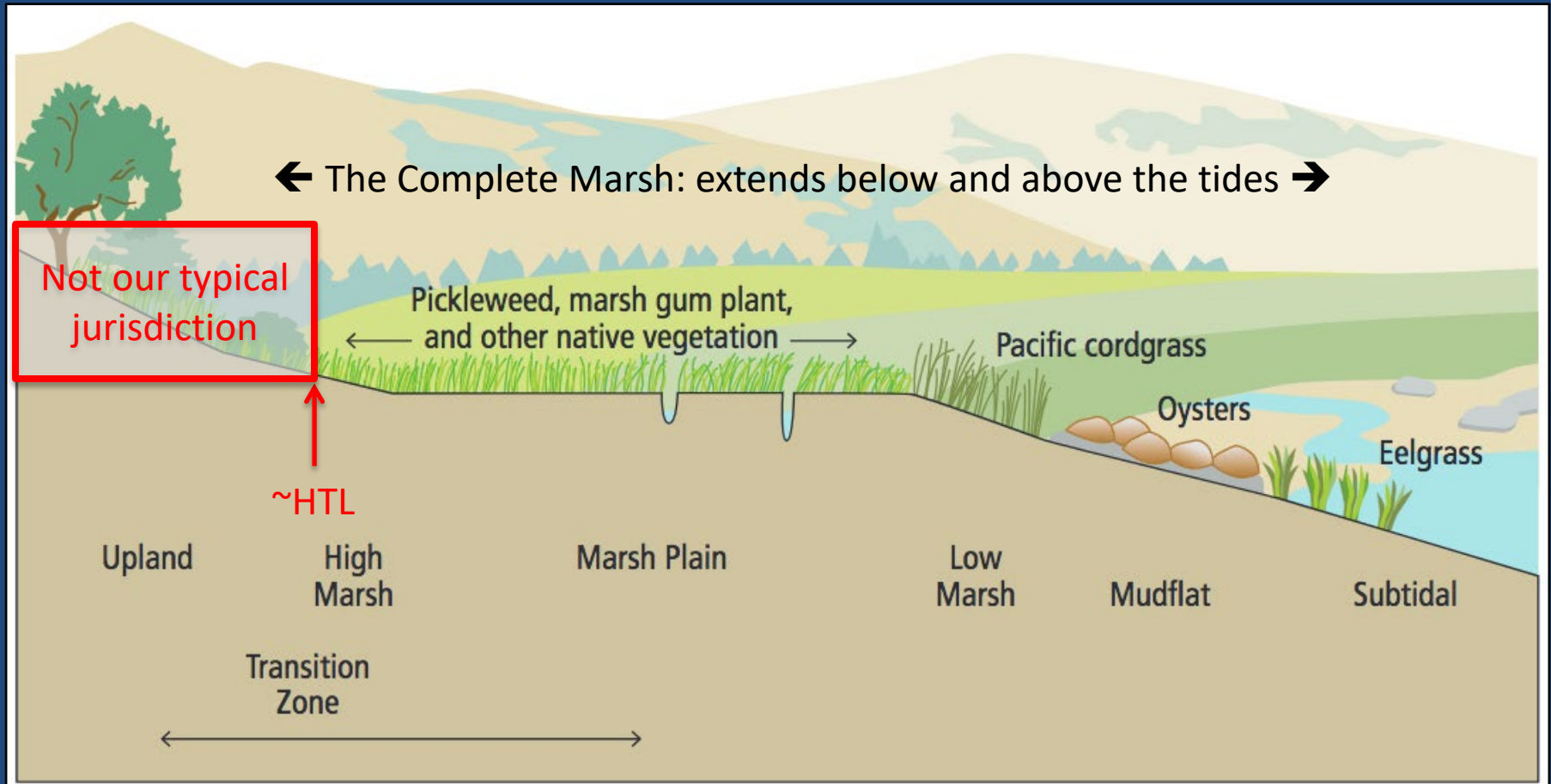
CA Wetlands Conservation Policy

- “No Net Loss”
- Ensures no overall net loss and a long-term net gain in wetlands acreage, functions, and values
- Emphasizes regional restoration goals, planning, and strategies



The Complete Tidal Marsh

- Important habitats above the high tide line (HTL)

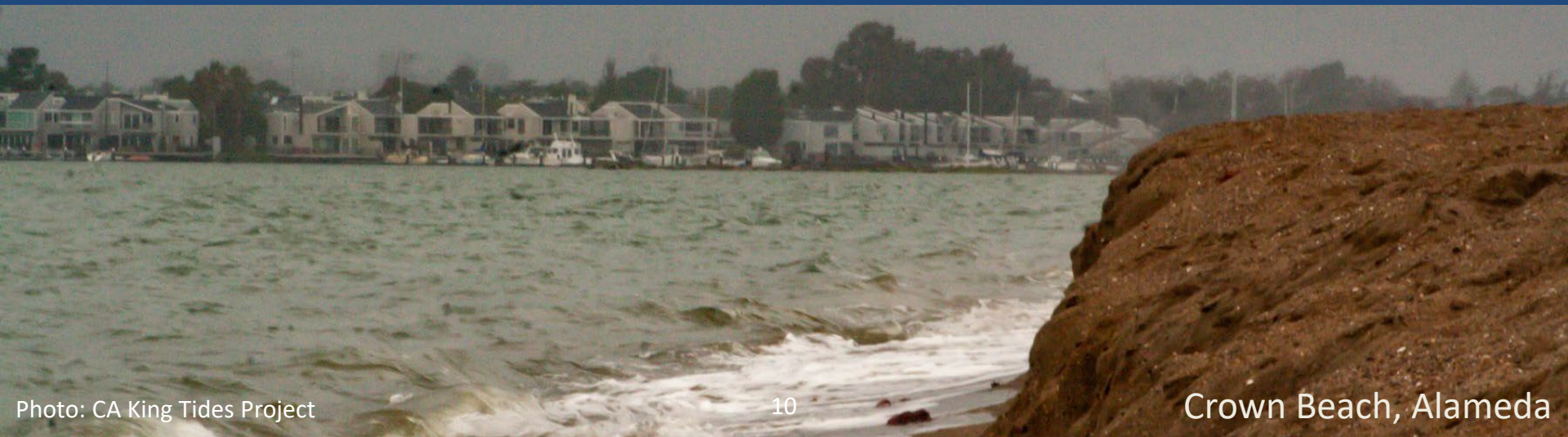


A photograph of a red SUV driving through a flooded road, splashing water. In the foreground, a yellow diamond-shaped sign with the word 'FLOODED' in black letters is mounted on a metal frame. Below the sign is a wooden sign that reads 'COUNTY OF MARIN'. The background shows a road winding through a wooded area with a car visible in the distance.

Proposed Basin Plan Amendment

Key Regulatory Opportunities

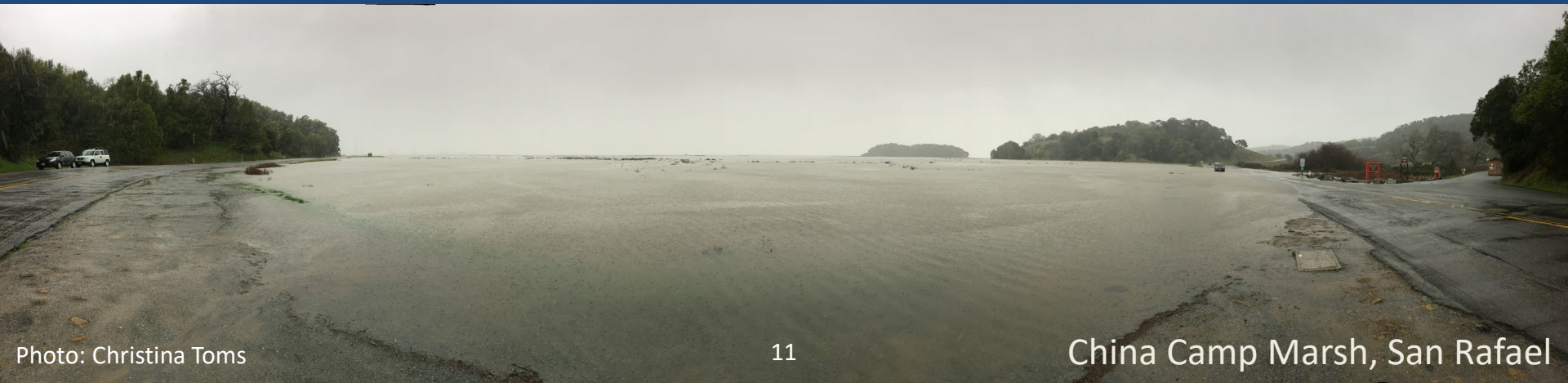
1. Document threats that climate change poses to Bay habitats and beneficial uses
2. Identify benefits of “complete” baylands
3. Identify preferred strategies for SLR adaptation: Baylands Goals, Adaptation Atlas



Key Regulatory Opportunities

4. Clarify how we will apply “No Net Loss” for

- Horizontal and ecotone levees
- Living shorelines, beaches, dunes, and nature-based (hybrid green-grey) infrastructure
- Strategic/thin-lift sediment placement
- Enhanced high tide refugia in marshes



Key Regulatory Opportunities

5. Clarify acceptable wetland type conversions
6. Incentivize landward alignments of shoreline protection, movement of natural shorelines
7. Develop framework to address temporal and spatial tradeoffs and uncertainties
8. Address indirect and cumulative impacts



Key Regulatory Opportunities

9. Minimize shoreline hardening

10. Evaluate mitigation on a regional basis

11. Support regional tidal wetland monitoring



Basin Plan Amendment: Next Steps

- Climate change + wetlands policy staff report:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/water_issues/programs/climate_change/
- 2020-2021: Develop Basin Plan Amendment
 - Staff writing + review, stakeholder engagement, CEQA, Board adoption, sign-off by EPA and CA Office of Administrative Law





Questions?
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