Media Release
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Oro Loma and Castro Valley Sanitary Districts to Celebrate Completion of Cutting-Edge Horizontal Levee Construction With Public Tour

Project to demonstrate leading alternative to sea rise protection along the San Francisco Bay Shoreline

The public is invited to tour the innovative horizontal levee project and learn more from project experts about how the shoreline experiment may help the Bay Area adapt to projected sea-level rise and extreme weather.

On Saturday, November 14, 2015, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Oro Loma Sanitary District, 2600 Grant Avenue, San Lorenzo, CA 94580, experts Peter Baye, a coastal ecologist; Jessie Olson, Save the Bay Nursery Manager; and David Sedlak, a professor at UC Berkeley will speak and answer questions about the project and illustrate how the concept could be expanded to protect large portions of the shoreline. Tours of the wastewater treatment plant will also be offered, with espresso drinks and ice cream scooped by the green business, Knudsen's Ice Creamery.

On Thursday, April 9, 2015, construction began on this first-of-its-kind ecotone project that includes a wetland basin and a new type of levee known as a "horizontal levee." This wide, gently sloping wedge of gravel, mud and grasses mimics a historic wetland ecosystem that existed before settlement in the Bay Area. Treated effluent from the Oro Loma facility will flow into the basin, be piped to the top of the horizontal levee, and flow through the soil to sustain 70,000 native plants. This vegetation will provide wildlife habitat and remove nutrients that threaten water quality.

Most significantly, engineers see the horizontal levee as a natural buffer that can absorb storm surges and provide natural protection from flooding at a fraction of the cost of traditional levees. If successful, the approach could reduce the cost of typical flood response by half.

"If you can create a really wide rough levee, [covered with plants], it will slow waves down, and maybe you can actually build a smaller levee," said Peter Baye, a coastal ecologist. "Also, what we're building in these cases is not technically a levee, but a sloping terrace, or ramp, against a levee."

"This project resulted from a discussion between a wide range of environmental, engineering, residential and business interests along the Hayward Shoreline," said Tim Becker, Oro Loma Sanitary District Board President. "It is an indication that many diverse opinions find merit in the concept. Oro Loma is proud to partner with Castro Valley Sanitary District and the community to provide a place to advance the science of sea rise response."

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Phase One of the project has been completed, and now community volunteers mobilized by the regional environmental nonprofit group Save the Bay will plant more than 70,000 native plants in November and December 2015. Researchers at the University of California, Berkeley, will lead the monitoring effort to quantify the effectiveness of the levee. The experiment will provide a much-needed field test of how treated wastewater and these new kinds of levees can help address critical flood protection, water quality and wildlife habitat issues.

Project partners include Oro Loma Sanitary District, Castro Valley Sanitary District, East Bay Dischargers Authority, California Department of Water Resources, the San Francisco Estuary Partnership, and Save the Bay.

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A Look Into the Future of Our Shoreline ...

GET INVOLVED!

Plant Native Seedlings on the Horizontal Levee

Volunteer Pre-Registration Required at **savesfbay.org**

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