

Natural Areas and Priority Conservation Areas

Asset Description

The region's open spaces provide regionally significant natural resource, scenic, recreational, agricultural and ecological values and ecosystem functions.

Functions and values provided by the region's natural areas include:

- Habitat for endangered and threatened species
- Recreational opportunities for residents and visitors
- Coastal protection from wave and tidal action

Existing conditions that threaten the region's natural areas include:

- Pressure from urban development and encroachment
- Current and future flooding
- Invasive species and pollutants
- Climate change impacts on heat, salinity, rainfall and fire



Preliminary Exposure Results

Total Water Level (inches)	PCAs Exposed	Acres Exposed
12	51	750,000
24	52	770,000
36	54	780,000
48	54	780,000
52	54	780,000
66	54	780,000
77	54	780,000
84	54	780,000
96	55	790,000
108	55	790,000
FEMA 100 Year	144	2,150,000
FEMA 500 Year	148	2,160,000

*Preliminary exposure methodology assumed if part of the PCA was exposed, the whole PCA was exposed. Large PCAs pose limitations to this approach. Future exposure analysis for the project will examine percent inundation of each exposed PCA.

Priority Conservation Areas

The Priority Conservation Area program was initiated in 2007 to identify Bay Area open spaces providing regionally significant values that are in need of protection. The objective of the program is to serve as a framework for directing future regional funding to support the vitality of the region's natural systems, rural economy, and human health.

PCAs are divided into four, non-mutually exclusive designations:

- **Natural Landscapes:** examples include Tiburon Ridge Lands, Petaluma Watershed South Portion, Menlo Park and East Palo Alto Baylands.
- **Agricultural Lands:** Napa County Agricultural Lands and Watersheds, Suisun Valley, Sonoma County Coastal Agricultural Area.
- **Urban Greening:** East Bay Greenway, Hercules Waterfront.
- **Regional Recreation:** Bay Trail, Russian River Access.

Natural Areas

The PCA network is not all inclusive of the region's natural areas. Many of the services provided by natural and open spaces rely on connectivity of these spaces regardless of designation.

The ART team, working with the **Natural Capitol Project**, will both quantify and qualify ecosystem services provided by natural habitats in the region to help address key management and adaptation questions including:

- Where in the bay are ecosystems providing critical services, such as recreation, storm water retention and coastal protection for people, property and infrastructure?
- Are we protecting these places (e.g. the Priority Conservation Area network) to ensure continued delivery of services in the future?
- How might the delivery of these services change with SLR?

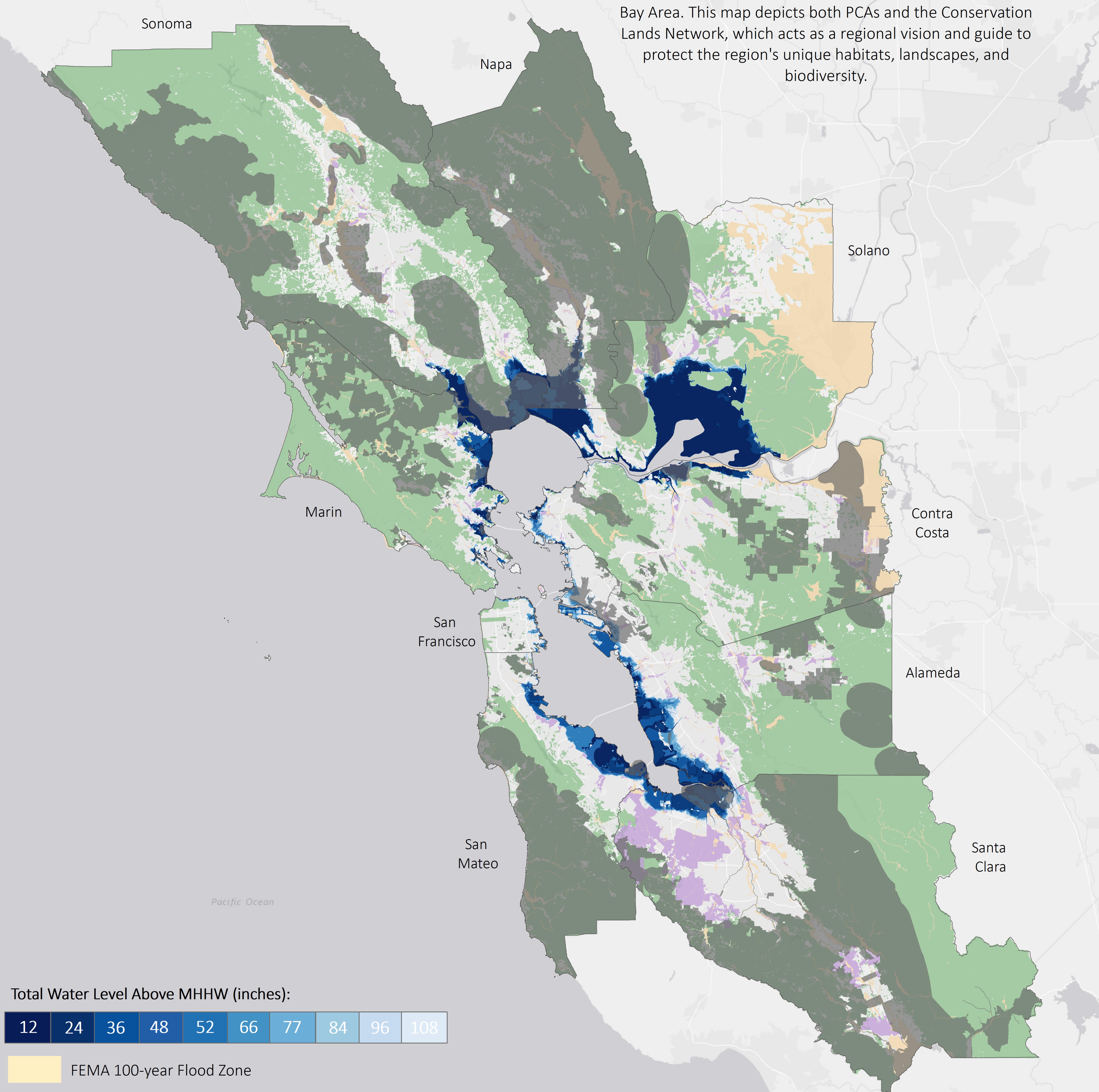
Quick Facts

- ✧ According to the Bay Area Open Space Council, The Bay Area's two million acres of parks, trails, agricultural lands and natural areas sustain our quality of life and provide natural beauty, diverse habitats, native flora and fauna, affordable healthy food and clean air and water.
- ✧ The region's Priority Conservation Areas are envisioned as a framework for directing future regional funding to support the vitality of the region's natural systems, rural economy and human health.
- ✧ Wetlands and other natural habitats currently provide critical coastal protection services to disadvantaged communities, threatened and endangered species, coastal infrastructure, and priority development areas throughout the region.



Natural Areas and Priority Conservation Areas

This map displays the network of natural, urban greening, recreational, and agricultural areas throughout the Bay Area region identified as Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs). These areas were identified under the region's integrated long-range transportation and land-use/housing plan, Plan Bay Area. This map depicts both PCAs and the Conservation Lands Network, which acts as a regional vision and guide to protect the region's unique habitats, landscapes, and biodiversity.



Total Water Level Above MHHW (inches):

12	24	36	48	52	66	77	84	96	108
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- FEMA 100-year Flood Zone
- FEMA 500-year Flood Zone
- Priority Conservation Areas
- Conservation Lands Network

Data: ART Bay Area Sea Level Rise Analysis and Mapping Project 2017 BCDC, MTC, AECOM; FEMA 2017; Bay Area Open Space Council 2011; Association of Bay Area Governments 2015; ESRI

