

# FACT SHEET

## California Estuaries Ecosystem Health Portal (12-03)

**Deliverables:** Web portal with information on the health of California’s estuaries for use by the public, managers, scientists, and policy makers.

**Status:** Initial launch of portal planned for October 29, 2013

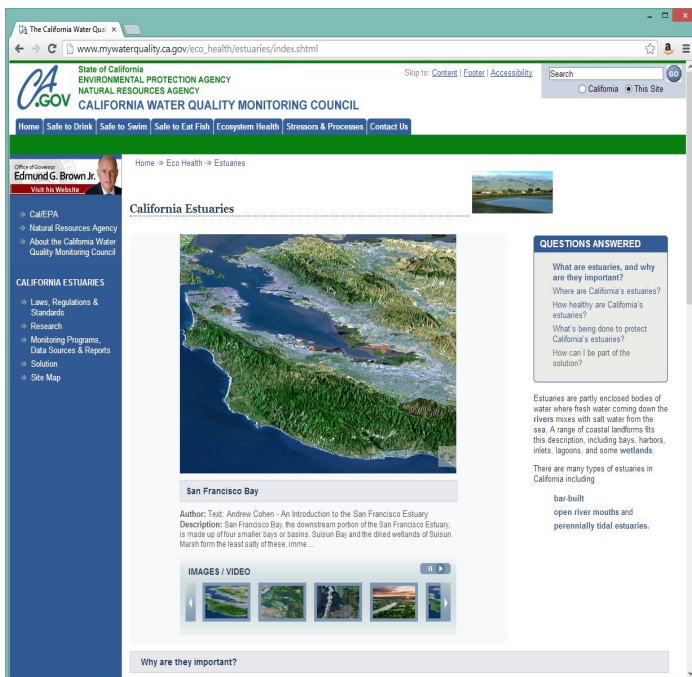
**Primary Investigator:** Calif. Estuary Monitoring Workgroup

**Recipient Organization:** 34 North

**Project Cost:** \$150,000

**SFCWA Funding:** \$150,000

**Partners:** Interagency Ecological Program and member agencies, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, Delta Stewardship Council, Delta Conservancy, Sacramento Regional CSD, The Bay Institute, California Water Quality Monitoring Council



California Estuaries Home Page- [www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/eco\\_health/estuaries/](http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/eco_health/estuaries/)

## Introduction

CA Senate Bill 1070 mandated that water quality monitoring and assessment activities be coordinated among organizations inside and outside the California government, and that the information be made available to decision makers and the public via the Internet. As a result, several water quality themed portals have been developed under the oversight of the California Water Quality Monitoring Council. This project focuses on developing a new web portal to house information on California’s estuaries and their health. Compiling information in this way will help streamline monitoring practices, identify relevant data gaps, and develop a deeper understanding of California’s estuaries.

## Objective

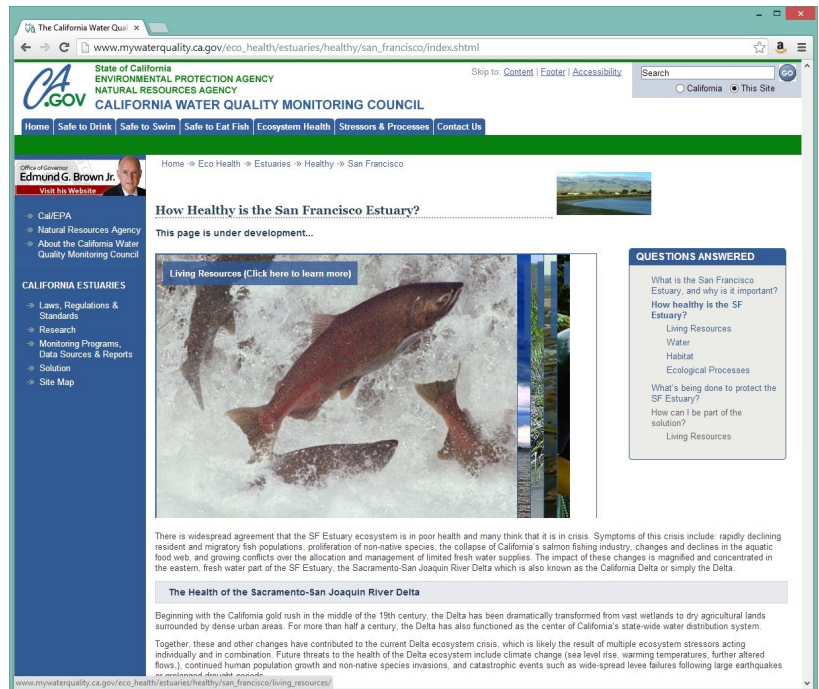
To develop a web portal that compiles information on California’s estuaries, including the health of each estuary’s living resources, water, habitat, and ecological processes as well as general information about relevant stewardship activities.

## Results

The first iteration of the California Estuaries web portal has been developed, based largely on the California Water Quality Monitoring Council’s other web portals—California Wetlands and California Rivers, Lakes, and Streams. The portal initially focuses on the health of the San Francisco Estuary (SF Estuary) by evaluating five ecosystem elements called “key attributes” that are used in the State of the San Francisco Bay 2011 Report. These key attributes are living resources, water, habitat, ecological processes, and stewardship. For now, the portal includes information and data on the SF Estuary’s living resources, including phytoplankton, zooplankton, benthic organisms, fish, and birds. Several introductory pages on water, habitat, ecological processes, and the laws, regulations, and policies that protect California’s estuaries are also included.

## Conclusions

1. The web portal is designed to answer assessment questions about estuarine health. The questions range in difficulty from basic introductory questions, such as “What are estuaries, and why are they important?” or “What are phytoplankton, and why are they important?” to more technical questions, such as “What are SF Estuary phytoplankton trends?”
2. The web portal requires that data from disparate sources be standardized into an accessible format that can be better understood and used by the general public, managers, scientists, and policy makers.
3. The portal is able to use the accumulated data and visualization tools developed for the California Estuary Monitoring Workgroup Web-based tools portal to depict trends in the health of the living resources of the SF Estuary.



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the California Water Quality Monitoring Council website. The URL is [www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/eco\\_health/estuaries/healthy/san\\_francisco/index.shtml](http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/eco_health/estuaries/healthy/san_francisco/index.shtml). The page title is "How Healthy is the San Francisco Estuary?". The page content includes a navigation menu, a search bar, and a "QUESTIONS ANSWERED" section. The "QUESTIONS ANSWERED" section lists the following questions and their corresponding answers:

- What is the San Francisco Estuary, and why is it important? → Living Resources
- How healthy is the SF Estuary? → Water
- Living Resources → Habitat
- Water → Ecological Processes
- Habitat → Ecological Processes
- Ecological Processes → Ecological Processes
- What's being done to protect the SF Estuary? → Living Resources
- How can I be part of the solution? → Living Resources
- Living Resources → Living Resources

How Healthy is the San Francisco Estuary?– Exploring the status and trends of living resources in the estuary.

## Relevance

Having estuarine monitoring and assessment activities be coordinated among organizations and having that information be made available to decision makers and the public via the Internet will help develop a better understanding of the health of California’s estuaries. Once the health of these estuaries is better understood, they can then be better managed for the benefit of all Californians. SFCWA’s strategic plan calls for the continued collaborative efforts with Delta science entities to improve monitoring, assessment and reporting of Bay Delta monitoring and research results through the facilitation of the California Estuary Monitoring Workgroup and data portal.

## Next Steps

Additional content on SF Estuary plants and mammals and information on the health of the SF Estuary’s water, habitat, and ecological processes will be developed in subsequent phases of the project. Content on the drivers of SF Estuary health will also be added as the portal continues to be developed. Comparable information on other estuaries throughout California will be added to the portal at a later date.