

HEWLETT FOUNDATION-SPONSORED RESEARCH INITIATIVES AIM TO IMPROVE PUBLIC EDUCATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN CALIFORNIA

FOUNDATIONS SUPPORT UNPRECEDENTED SCHOOL FINANCE RESEARCH EFFORT

The Gates, Hewlett, Irvine, and Stuart Foundations recently announced a \$2.6 million research project called "Getting Down to Facts," which will examine what reforms are needed to improve the effectiveness of California's public school system, and how much it would cost to provide every child in the state with a quality education.

A bi-partisan group of state leaders, including Ted Mitchell of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's Committee on Educational Excellence, Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez, Senate President pro-Tem Don Perata, and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell, formally requested the research.

During a March 30 news conference to announce the project, Senator Perata pledged that the research "will not

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STUDY FINDS AIR POLLUTION COSTS CENTRAL VALLEY \$3 BILLION ANNUALLY

Premature deaths, hospital visits, and missed days of school and work are among the serious health-related impacts of air pollution in California's San Joaquin Valley that drain the region's economy of \$3 billion every year, according to a new study conducted by leading researchers in the fields of economics and air quality.

Funded by a Hewlett Foundation grant, the study is the first to put a price tag on air pollution in the Central Valley and demonstrate the potential benefits to public health and the economy that would come from attaining federal clean air standards.

The results of the study were announced at a news conference in Fresno on March 29, and the report was covered by a variety of news organizations, including *Forbes* magazine, Reuters, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Stockton*

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THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF SAN FRANCISCO BAY RESTORATION PROJECT MARKED BY MAJOR PROGRESS

In March, state and federal officials, local leaders, and representatives from Bay Area foundations and nonprofit groups gathered at the southern tip of San Francisco Bay to celebrate the beginning of an important new phase in one of the largest wetlands restoration efforts in the United States.

The ceremony at the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge in Alviso marked the third anniversary of the South Bay Salt Ponds Restoration



The restoration of the salt ponds will open more areas along the Bay to recreational activities, such as hiking, wildlife viewing, fishing, and kayaking. (Photo: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

Project as well as the breaching of earthen levees along three former industrial ponds, which for the first

time allow Bay waters to flow in and out freely and silt to fill the ponds.

Three years ago, state and federal government agencies in partnership with four private foundations, including the Hewlett Foundation, acquired more than 15,000 acres of salt ponds along the Bay's shoreline from the Cargill Corporation, a major salt producer. The goal was to return the stagnant industrial ponds to a tidal ecosystem brimming with life.

At last month's ceremony, Senator

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Record, and the NPR radio program, *The California Report*.

The study was authored by Professors Jane Hall and Victor Brajer of California State University, Fullerton and Fred Lurmann, president of the research firm Sonoma Technology, Inc. The California Endowment also provided support for the dissemination of the research.

"This study shows how much is at stake for the people of the Central Valley who are living with the adverse health effects of air pollution in their region," said Hal Harvey, Director of the Environment Program at the Hewlett Foundation. "The findings also indicate the enormous health and economic benefits of addressing the problem."

The research was funded through the Hewlett Foundation's New Constituencies for the Environment initiative, which focuses on the needs of communities whose environmental concerns have often been under-represented. This initiative recognizes that the growing ethnic communities in California's Central Valley and greater Los Angeles bear a disproportionate burden of pollution in the state. The Foundation is working to address this inequity by supporting research and strengthening environmental leadership in the region.

The full text of the report, "The Health and Related Economic Benefits of Attaining Healthful Air in the San Joaquin Valley" is available at:

<http://business.fullerton.edu/centers/iees/reports.htm>. ■



"A study conducted by the California State University at Fullerton states that air pollution costs the San Joaquin Valley \$3 billion a year—a husky average of \$1,000 per person per year by the university's calculation. Pollution costs dearly in health and life, and it pays (in terms of business) to be clean, according to the study."

-Robert Malone, "America's Greenest Cities," *Forbes*

San Francisco Chronicle

"If air quality in the eight-county region were brought up to federal ozone and dust standards, an average of \$1,000 for each of the valley's 3.3 million residents would be saved. If the air was improved to meet California's tougher air quality standards, the savings would double."

-Greg Lucas, "Cost of Polluted Air in Billions, Study Says," *San Francisco Chronicle*

TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND HELPS CREATE PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS IN BAY AREA'S URBAN COMMUNITIES

What was once a parking lot adjacent to Bella Vista Elementary School in Oakland has been transformed into a modern playground where children now play at recess and families gather on weekends. In the Potrero Hill neighborhood of San Francisco, a park with outdated play equipment will get a major upgrade, giving the surrounding community a safe place for recreation. And in nearby Visitacion Valley, residents have helped establish a ribbon of mini-parks that includes a community garden, walking paths, and a playground.

The creation of these outdoor oases in some of the most underserved and challenged communities in the Bay Area is part of the Parks for People Program, an initiative of The

Trust for Public Land (TPL), a national nonprofit land conservation organization supported by the Hewlett Foundation.

Foundation funding is being used to support all aspects of TPL's work to revitalize these and other urban parks, including securing public and private funds for projects, and
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Juan Luna, a student at Bella Vista Elementary School leads a tour of the newly refurbished playgrounds, athletic fields and gardens.

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die on the shelf," adding that it "should be the driving force behind what we do legislatively and with the budget in 2007."

The research effort has already garnered significant attention within the state education and policy communities, and has been the subject of numerous articles and editorials across the state.

The project consists of a series of 23 studies conducted by top education researchers in California and across the country. The studies, which are expected to be completed by the end of 2006, will explore three broad questions:

- What do California school finance and governance systems look like today?
- How can we use the resources that we have more effectively to improve student outcomes?
- To what extent are additional resources needed so that California's students can meet the goals that we have set for them?

The research effort is being coordinated by Susanna Loeb, a noted economist and Professor at Stanford University's School of Education. Professor Loeb, who has gained international acclaim for her work on school finance reform, designed the studies that will be conducted by researchers at several institutions.

A summary of the "Getting Down to Facts" project is available at: <http://www.hewlett.org/Publications/>. ■

San Francisco Chronicle

"For too long, we have let good intentions rather than good research drive our education delivery system," state Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell said.... That is why a new \$2.6 million research initiative named "Getting Down to Facts" funded by four leading foundations...is potentially so significant....We commend this unusual partnership between public schools and private philanthropy."

-Editorial, "Back to School on Reform," *San Francisco Chronicle*



"The hope is that this gargantuan, groundbreaking effort will spur equally massive reform - change based not on politics or good intentions but on knowledge and independent inquiry focused only on helping children."

-Jill Tucker, "Nonprofits Fund Study of State School System," *Oakland Tribune*

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Dianne Feinstein joined U.S. Department of Interior Deputy Secretary Lynn Scarlett, California Resources Secretary Mike Chrisman, Hewlett Foundation President Paul Brest, and others to acknowledge the progress that has been achieved toward restoration.

"Three years ago, I stood along the Bay to announce an historic public-private partnership - moving 16,500 acres from Cargill Salt to the California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service," said Senator Feinstein, who played a key role in negotiating the initial land acquisition. "I said at the time that I'd like to see the restoration completed in my lifetime, and today, we are seeing major progress toward that goal."

The first phase of the project began in July 2004 when tens of thousands of gallons of Bay water flowed into former industrial ponds through tidal gates. The recent removal of the levees surrounding several of the ponds signals the beginning of what wildlife refuge manager Clyde Morris called the

"full-blown restoration" of the wetlands.

Already bird populations have more than doubled and the public has increased access to open spaces and opportunities to enjoy wildlife, according to Hewlett Foundation President Paul Brest.

"With the continued involvement and support of the public and local citizen groups, the scientific community, and our local and state leaders, I am confident we will see the implementation of a restoration plan that we can all be proud of and that will be a model for public-private partnerships for years to come," Brest said at the ceremony.

The Hewlett Foundation partnered with the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and the Goldman Fund, to contribute a combined \$35 million toward the project. Transforming the stagnant salt ponds back to their natural state is estimated to be a 30-year effort.

More information is available at <http://www.south-bayrestoration.org>. ■



At the Foundation

The Foundation welcomes the following new employees:

Joan Garretson - Program Assistant, Philanthropy. Prior to joining the Foundation, Joan worked as an Executive Assistant to the President of a start-up company in San Jose. Before that she managed sales for an off-shore computer manufacturer based in Asia. She attended San Jose State University.

Lillian Giraldo - Program Assistant, Global Development and Mexico. Prior to joining the Foundation, Lillian worked at a public interest law firm in Santa Cruz. Lillian received her BA in Art History from Yale University.

Erin Hafkenschiel - Program Assistant, Environment. Erin recently graduated from UC Berkeley with a BA in Political Economy of Industrial Societies. Prior to joining the Foundation, Erin interned at the Energy Foundation in China, and was most recently with the Phil Angelides for Governor Campaign.

Nina Keres - Program Assistant, Global Development. Nina was born in New York City, but grew up and was educated in Finland and Spain. Prior to joining the Foundation, Nina worked as the Assistant for Press and Culture at the Embassy of Finland in the United Arab Emirates.

Verna Kuo - Director of Real Estate Investments, Finance. Prior to joining the Foundation, Verna spent

six years at Stanford Management Company. Verna holds an MBA from the Stanford Graduate School of Business and a BA in Public Policy from Stanford.

Lynn Murphy - Senior Fellow, Education, Population, and Global Development. Lynn is working on an initiative supporting universal education in the developing world. Prior to joining the Foundation, she served as a consultant and education advisor for several international organizations including Save the Children, UNESCO, and the Commonwealth Education Fund. Lynn holds a Ph.D. from Stanford in International and Comparative Education.

Kathy Nicholson - IT Project Manager, Information Technology. Prior to joining the Foundation, Kathy managed the HR Information Systems team at Borders Group, Inc., and previously served as a computer communications officer in the Air Force. Kathy holds a BS in Computer Science from Santa Clara University and an MBA and MA in East Asian Studies from Stanford.

Nathalie Scholl - Program Assistant, Population. Prior to joining the Foundation, Nathalie worked for Google as a Web search contractor for French-language sites and as a graphic designer, primarily in the high-tech industry. She received her BA in English and Spanish from the New Sorbonne University and subsequently worked for eight years at the U.S. Embassy in Paris. ■

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undertaking a collaborative community outreach, design, and stewardship process.

At Bella Vista Elementary School, students said their recently-renovated park and playground, with its new play structures, outdoor stage and community plaza, picnic tables, butterfly and native gardens, and

large synthetic turf field for soccer and football, was a major improvement over the asphalt and concrete surface that previously covered the 1.6 acre area.

TPL plans to continue its work in the Bay Area and expand to other cities. More information is available at www.tpl.org. ■