Plant Communities
Creating Diversity

Native Perennial Grassland
Considered one the most invaded habitats in North America, grasslands in California have been heavily impacted by exotic annual grasses and human disturbance. These restored grasslands will be dominated by a number of native bunchgrasses: Purple Needle Grass (Stipa pulchra) and Meadow Barley (Hordeum brachyantherum), as well as a diverse community of native wildflowers. After winter rains, look for blooming wildflowers such as the California Poppy (Eschscholzia californica) and human disturbance. These restored grasslands will be dominated by a number of native bunchgrasses: Purple Needle Grass (Stipa pulchra) and Meadow Barley (Hordeum brachyantherum), as well as a diverse community of native wildflowers. After winter rains, look for blooming wildflowers such as the California Poppy (Eschscholzia californica), Checker Bloom (Sidalcea malviflora), Miniature Lupine (Lupinus bicolor), California Buttercup (Ranunculus californicus), and Willow Dock (Ludwigia palustris). Freshwater resources for wildlife are rare in urban coastal environments where stormwater is generally shunted in to storm drains and dumped in the ocean. These wetlands provide an opportunity for nutrient cycling and infiltration, which reduce downstream pollution. The protection and enhancement of these habitats is an important aspect of this project.

Vernal Pools
Vernal pools are seasonally flooded during the winter season and dry during the summer and fall. Generally found on open mesas with dense clay soils or underlying hardpans, vernal pools are not part of stormwater drainage systems and are generally oligotrophic, or low nutrient. The plants and animals that are uniquely associated with these systems have mechanisms for adapting to the short wet window and for persisting as seeds and cysts during the dry season. Be on the lookout for Coyote thistle (Eryngium vasesy), Dwarf Woollyheads (paucicarpus brevissimus), dragonflies and clam shrimp.

Coastal Sage Scrub
A fog-adapted shrub community along the coast of California, Coastal Sage Scrub can be found along trails and in patches on the mesa slopes. It is characterized by aromatic low-growing shrubs that are drought tolerant. There are over 20 different Coastal Sage Scrub species growing here. Keep an eye out for the showy California bush sunflower (Eriophyllum confertifolium), Sticky monkey flower (Diplacus aurantiacus), and Golden Yarrow (Eriophyllum confertifolium) as well as the characteristic Coastal sage (Artemisia californica) and giant wild rye grass (Elymus condensatus).

Salt Marsh
One of the project’s dominant habitat features is the salt marsh habitat which is found at elevations between 7 and 9 feet within the restored estuary. The plants that live in the salt marsh are adapted to intermittently flooded conditions and high salinity levels. These harsh conditions support a surprising diversity of plants. Look for, alkali beach (Frankenia salina), salt grass (Distichlis spicata), and pickleweed (Salicornia pacifica) at the edge of the salt marsh and transitional species such as the rare shone grass (Distichlis littoralis) and Parish’s glasswort (Salicornia subterminale), and the more common and adaptable California saltbush (Extraphilus californica), creeping wild rye (Elymus trichophyllus) and California sea grass (Saccharina taxifolia).