

SAVING RICHARDSON BAY

By Dave Gotz

In July of 1949 Reedport Properties, a development company based in Tiburon, bought 879 acres of tidelands in Richardson Bay for \$42,000, and promptly unveiled plans for Reeds Port, a business area and residential marina with as many as 2,000 homes, covering almost the entire Bay. "It is the hope of the corporation to construct a yachting area similar to those in Southern California and along the east coast of Florida." (Reedport proposal, 1950)

Belvedere citizens were alerted in 1952 to the fact that Reedport first intended to build 99 homes on three tide lots along San Rafael Ave. By 1954 the plan had been rejected by the City Council and a group of dedicated citizens had raised \$25,000 from more than 250 of their friends and neighbors to purchase the tide lots from Reedport. The Belvedere Land Company added their adjoining 53 acres of tidelands, and so the southeastern end of Richardson Bay next to Belvedere was given to the City and permanently protected from development.

A subscription drive of residents in the yet-to-be-incorporated city of Tiburon netted close to \$30,000 for the purchase of additional tidelands. Realizing that the Bay was part of the Pacific Flyway, an essential winter and spring stopover for thousands of migratory waterfowl, the

National Audubon Society was contacted and pledged \$25,000 toward to purchase, raising most of that sum from Marin County citizens. Caroline Livermore of the Marin Conservation League helped form the Richardson Bay Foundation to coordinate the save the tidelands effort.

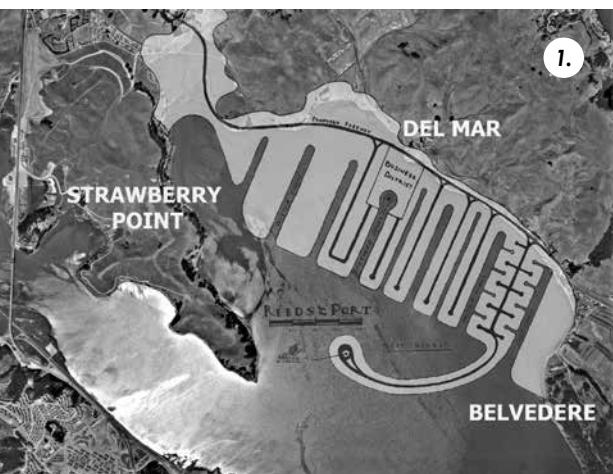
Mrs. Livermore persuaded the California Department of Transportation to purchase tideland acreage along the edge of Tiburon for \$100,000 for the eventual widening and realignment of Tiburon Boulevard using the rationale, "it's going to cost you more if you wait to buy it." Belvedere ultimately passed \$55,000 bond issue (by a whopping 7 to 1 margin) that secured 200 acres contiguous to tidelands already owned by the city.

Armed with fierce local opposition to any development of the Bay, Foundation Board members wore down the Reedport Properties owners, who in August 1957 agreed to sell 624 acres of Richardson Bay tidelands and the knoll along the Tiburon shore for \$200,000, one third of their original asking price. The Audubon Society offered to manage a new bird refuge and water recreation area now known as the Richardson Bay Audubon Center & Sanctuary.

Next month this story continues with Tiburon's "Goat Lady" and moving the Lyford House.

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- 1. Proposed Reedsport development overlaid on an aerial photo of Richardson Bay.
- 2. Concept drawing of Reedsport by Utah Construction, 1956.



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