

Summary Notes from the Wetland Monitoring Group Meeting held Tuesday, May 4, 2010, at the San Francisco Bay Water Board Office in Oakland, CA.

Attendees: Bob Batha (BCDC); Tom Gandesberry, Marilyn Latta (CCC); Peggy Olofson & Ingrid Hogle (ISP); Elizabeth Christian, Naomi Feger, Andree Greenberg, (Water Board); Tim Stevens (DFG); Rich Freitas (US EPA); Laura Valoppi (USGS), Meredith Williams (SFEI).

The meeting consisted primarily of three presentations that are summarized below and available on-line at <http://www.wrmp.org/meetings.html>

Presentations (30 minutes each):

1. Subtidal Habitat Goals Project. (Marilyn Latta, CCC)

Over the next 50 years, this project will seek to protect, enhance, and restore subtidal habitats such as eelgrass, macroalgal, and shellfish beds; rocky shorelines; and mud, shell, and sand areas in the San Francisco Bay. GIS maps will show subtidal habitat types and habitat stressors that can assist with future project sitings. The project will be phased to proceed cautiously and will use an adaptive management approach to inform the public and scientists about program failures and successes. Living shorelines and the integration of subtidal, wetland, and upland habitats into unified designs will be included. A public meeting will be held on June 16, 2010 when the draft Subtidal Habitat Goals will be released for a 45 day comment period. That announcement and a summary of the project are provided as attachments to these notes. (Send questions or comments to Marilyn at mlatta@scc.ca.gov)

2. South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project (Laura Valoppi, USGS)

This project seeks to restore salt ponds in South San Francisco Bay to tidal marsh while preserving adequate managed ponds for the shorebirds and waterfowl that use them. The goal is to restore between 50 and 90% of over 15,000 acres of salt ponds to tidal marsh, depending on the success of the tidal marsh restoration projects and the re-configured salt ponds to provide suitable plant and animal habitat. USGS is managing studies to ensure that problems from mercury, poor water quality, invasive species, or excessive public use will not cause adverse impacts. Selected studies include measuring habitat evolution; assessing mercury bioavailability; water bird use in managed ponds; water bird response to trail use; pond, slough, and bay water quality interactions; baseline bird data; fish response to restoration; and a CA gull displacement study. For more information see the SBSRP website at <http://www.southbayrestoration.org/>. (Send questions or comments to Laura at laura_valoppi@usgs.gov)

3. Invasive Spartina Monitoring (Ingrid Hogle. Invasive Spartina Project)

The Invasive Spartina Program began in 2000 to eradicate the non-native Atlantic cordgrass species (*Spartina alterniflora*) which was brought to this region in the 1970s by a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers staff member who was unaware of its potential to out-compete the native *Spartina foliosa*. Monitoring program goals are to track the invasive species over time and determine the effectiveness of treatment methods used to eradicate it. The program has been successful in killing the invasive cordgrass but the number of hybrids has soared and are difficult to distinguish from the pure species – both the native and non-native forms—unless genetic tests are run. Annual inventories are conducted in the field with GPS dataloggers, resulting in extensive GIS maps which can be accessed on the program’s website (see <http://www.spartina.org/index.htm>). Sites with no invasive cordgrass for three years will be considered clean but continued vigilance is warranted. The program hopes to use remote sensing in the future to coordinate early detection and rapid response to eliminate the invasive non-native plant species as swiftly as possible. (Send questions or comments to Ingrid at ingrid@spartina.org)

Updates:

4. CRAM Workshop for Volunteers held Feb. 6-7, 2010 (Meredith Williams, SFEI). Thirty-nine attendees had the opportunity to share ideas and best practices among Bay Area volunteer-based organizations running citizen monitoring programs. Participants heard from speakers about local and statewide volunteer monitoring efforts. Attendees received an introduction to the estuarine wetland module of California Rapid Assessment Method (CRAM) and saw a demonstration of the method in Western Stege Marsh at the Field Station.

5. Prop 50 Wetland Regional Monitoring Program Status Reports (Meredith Williams, SFEI). This project was granted an extension to continue work held up by the bond freeze. By the end of 2010 the original wetland and riparian maps should be completed, reference and project CRAM assessments performed, and biosentinels from riparian systems analyzed for elevated mercury levels.

6. 2009-10 Wetland Monitoring Group Budget and Goals. Andree Greenberg suggested the following use of the \$8,000 WMG funds for 2010: \$5,000 for a student or contractor to maintain the San Francisco Bay Wetland Tracker; \$1,000 for the Volunteer Monitoring Workshop held Feb 6-7, 2010; \$2,000 for SFEI to assist with the WMG website at www.wrmp.org and the Wetland Tracker. Please note that the term “Wetland Tracker” was recently changed to “California Wetland Portal” or “Habitat Data” and is available at: www.californiawetlands.net.

Next Meeting: **Tuesday December 7, 2010 , 1:30-4:00 p.m.** at the Water Board Office, 1515 Clay Street, Oakland, CA 94612.

Final WMG Notes from May 4, 2010

Attachments: Subtidal Habitat Goals Project Description and Public Meeting
Announcement for June 16, 2010