

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA WETLANDS RESTORATION PROGRAM COORDINATING COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY AUGUST 10, 2004

Attendees:

Marcia Brockbank (San Francisco Estuary Project)
John Brosnan (Wetlands Restoration Program)
Mike Connor (San Francisco Estuary Institute)
Molly Martindale (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)
Steve McAdam (San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission)
Mike Monroe (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)
Anitra Pawley (The Bay Institute)
Chris Potter (California Resources Agency)

1. Introductions

Mike Monroe and Chris Potter co-chaired the meeting and Mike asked for introductions. Molly Martindale noted the Corps' San Francisco District's new colonel, Lt. Colonel Phillip Fier, has been sworn in. Chris Potter stated the Resources Agency and Cal EPA have issued an ocean action plan, and comments on it are due in early September; a public comment meeting will be held Thursday, August 19 at the Ferry Building in San Francisco, with another hearing in Newport Beach on Friday, August 20. This action plan was released following the Pew Oceans Commission report. Mike Connor said CICET will hold an informational meeting at the Regional Board office on August 12. CICET is a New Hampshire group that does technical support work for several Estuary Programs, and they're looking to expand use of their coastal technologies in the west. Mike Monroe noted local involvement in the restoration of Iraq's Mesopotamian marshes; see <http://www.iraqfoundation.org/projects/edenagain/>.

2. May 4 Coordinating Committee Meeting Summary

John Brosnan noted the two significant action items from the May 4 meeting were to create the WRP draft Annual Report and prepare for the Executive Council meeting. John noted the Coordination Committee also recommended the Executive Council revisit the DRG mitigation policy, which was discussed at the June 9 Executive Council meeting; the Council asked to consider this topic at their next meeting.

3. Design Review Group

John noted there has been no DRG project review since the National Park Service's Big Lagoon review was completed in February 2004. He noted he's contacted at least 6 project proponents and encouraged them to bring their projects to the DRG, and each has turned down the invitation citing timing concerns. John presented a summary of feedback received from DRG project proponents and asked for suggestions on what should be done with the information. **Mike Connor suggested holding phone interviews with those who've not responded.** Anitra

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Pawley suggested this information could be used to make a brochure, but that should include the general benefits of the DRG as well. Steve McAdam felt this information could feed into quasi-press releases, along with review results, to be disseminated to organizations in order to key them into the process early on. Mike Monroe urged John to reach out to consultants to build awareness of the DRG; Molly suggested reaching out to more agencies, first.

4. Monitoring Group

John noted the Monitoring Group intended to begin reviewing monitoring plans in the spring. The group's first project is to be the Sonoma Baylands Monitoring Plan, the release of which has been delayed for months. The plan should be released this month, with a review to begin 3-4 weeks later. John noted the Monitoring Group is planning to convene the Wetland Tracker's steering committee, but some questions remain about the committee's composition. Josh Collins proposed initial tasks for the committee, which were (a) finalizing the Tracker input form for the regulatory agencies, (b) reviewing the work plan and list of local agency invitees to the National Wetlands Inventory subregional input/review workshops, and (c) assisting SFEI build the crosswalk from National Wetlands Inventory to a Bay Area lexicon of habitat types to be used in the Tracker. Mike May stated those who'd be on the steering committee: Molly Martindale, Andree Breaux, Paul Jones, Josh Collins, John Brosnan, either Bob Batha or Caitlin Sweeney, and potentially Chris Potter. (Chris also suggested Ross Clark at the Coastal Commission should be included.)

Molly noted the data flow from the Corps' to the Tracker has been slow to establish; Mike May's proposed an SFEI intern to work at the Corps and input data. The goal is to be able to input permit data as permits are completed. Mike Connor advocated for reappropriation some of the Estuary Project's monitoring group funds - \$4,000 - toward the SFEI intern; Monroe agreed. (Marcia noted any reappropriation of funds from the Monitoring Group would require a letter to that effect from Andree Breaux) Anitra advocated for the Steering Committee to develop a list of those questions it would like to see answered; she suggested inviting staff from the Joint Venture. **As for the question of comprehensive participation on the group, Mike Monroe suggested having Andree Breaux convene the group and have its participants self-select.** Steve McAdam felt the steering committee should evaluate both those data fields to be included and those that could be eliminated.

5. Recent Executive Council meeting and WRP staffing

John reviewed the action items from the June 9 Executive Council meeting. Overall, the Coordinating Committee was directed to establish the next Executive Council meeting date, and work with staff to evaluate the following items: clarify the WRP's parallels to the CEQA process; summarize the cases for DRG review of privately-sponsored mitigation projects; investigate the WRP's creation of a spill response plan for wetlands; and, provide a complete inventory of the WRP's work. In addition, Executive Council would like to review the Design Review Group's mitigation project policy at its next meeting, in December 2004. The two Executive Council members committed to contribute \$5,000 each to the WRP. Mike Connor noted the state Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) maintained spill response plans and suggested inviting a member of the OSPR staff to present at an upcoming Coordinating Committee meeting. Steve McAdam summarized OSPR maps wetlands and develops plans, undertakes

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spill response and clean ups, and spends fine monies. Steve recommended John speak with BCDC staff in following up on this. Steve suggested, over the longer term, the WRP could build support for seeking funds from spill fine revenues. The Committee directed John to secure the \$10,000 in funds offered at the Executive Council meeting. Anitra Pawley suggested there might be advantages to connecting WRP activities with those of the Interagency Ecological Partnership (IEP).

John reviewed the continued efforts to secure operational funds for the WRP. He has been working at 50% time since July 15 and has been winding down certain WRP activities as a result; the position is expected to be vacant on September 1. John and Mike Monroe attended a recent LTMS Management Committee meeting and shared this news with them. Mike Monroe asked the Committee, how best to keep the WRP going in a way that is meaningful to the participants? He suggested the current funding situation would not allow for hiring of another coordinator. Mike Connor suggested a new staff person at SFEI could assist with coordination of some of the science components of the WRP, such as the DRG and the Monitoring Group. Anitra Pawley felt the DRG at SFEI could change perceptions of the group, and she advocated for keeping its management in agency hands along with strong NGO participation. Chris Potter suggested the California Sea Grant program trained people with science backgrounds to work in policy; this may be a source of WRP assistance. Steve McAdam suggested NOAA's Coastal Fellows, as well.

6. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

7. Wrap-Up/Next Meeting Date

Mike Monroe suggested switching the Coordinating Committee to quarterly meetings that he would coordinate; he noted he was most concerned with maintaining the DRG, Monitoring Group and the outreach. Mike said the group would meet again in three months. The meeting was adjourned.

ACTION ITEMS:

- **John will ask Monitoring Group chair Andree Breaux to write to Marcia Brockbank a letter requesting the reallocation of \$4000 in Estuary Project/Monitoring Group funds; this \$4000 would go to SFEI to initially fund a position to feed data into the Wetland Tracker database.**
- **John will also work with Andree to convene the Wetland Tracker Steering Committee.**
- **John will follow up with staff at BCDC and the Office of Spill Prevention and Response to assess how the WRP could assist with a spill response plan for wetlands.**
- **John will ensure adequate follow up with the WRP member agencies who've offered small amounts of funding**