

San Francisco Bay Area Wetlands Restoration Program Management Group

August 27, 2002 Meeting Summary

Attendees –

Bob Batha (San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission)
Marcia Brockbank (San Francisco Estuary Project)
John Brosnan (Wetlands Restoration Program)
Paul Jones (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)
Molly Martindale (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)
Mike Monroe (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)
Chris Potter (California Resources Agency)
Cdr. Steve Thompson (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)
Carl Wilcox (California Department of Fish and Game)
Bruce Wolfe (San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board)

1. Introductions/Review Agenda

Mike Monroe (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) and Chris Potter (Resources Agency) co-chaired the meeting and called it to order. Members made self-introductions. Mike reviewed the agenda items and said that an “Announcements” category would be added to future agendas.

Mike initiated announcements that went around the table. Chris Potter (Resources Agency) stated that the Restoration Program will be setting up its website through CERES and that having a domain name with “.ca.gov” is less expensive and less of a hassle than “.org” would be. The domain name would take approximately one month to establish. Paul Jones (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) suggested the name www.sfwetlands.ca.gov and the group responded favorably to the suggestion.

Marcia Brockbank (San Francisco Estuary Project) reported that one grant for the Restoration Program is securely in place and the second grant is lined up to come in. The grants she referred to cover the Restoration Program’s staff salary.

Bob Batha (San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission) mentioned the current state of the State budget and the 20% cut contingency plans that the state agencies are being asked to prepare. Bruce Wolfe (San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board) expressed that some agencies hope to achieve these cuts through allowing vacancies to go unfilled.

Paul Jones stated that the Audubon Society’s San Francisco Wetlands Restoration Report is available for release soon. Molly Martindale stated that she had not yet seen their findings, but stated that they are getting up to speed to where we are now. Bob Batha told the group that the report’s formal adoption with the inclusion of comment responses would take place in the second week of October.

Bruce Wolfe gave a brief update on the recent meeting of the Regional Water Board. He asked about the possibility of Executive Council field trips in the near future and wondered if the trips should be open to select groups. He noted that the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture (SFBJV) offers these types of tours and could be available to help organize such an event. Mike stated that the SFBJV might enjoy coordinating these trips. Mike said that it might be helpful to invite along the commissions that the Executive Council members belong to. Molly suggested a rapid assessment demonstration field trip. **ACTION ITEM:** Mike and Chris will talk to Alexis Strauss and Mary Nichols about these trip options. Marcia suggested that any invitation letter sent should come from these two as signatories. Molly suggested asking the Executive Council members which sites that they might like to see.

Molly said that the new Army Corps Division's Colonel should soon be brought up to speed on the Restoration Program.

John Brosnan (Wetlands Restoration Program) told the group that he would be appearing the following afternoon at the Bay Planning Coalition's Dredging and Wetlands Committee meeting.

2. July 23, 2002 Management Group Meeting Summary

Chris requested feedback from the group on the meeting notes from the previous meeting. People reviewed the notes and had no comments in the way of alterations. Bruce suggested that the meeting notes always contain a summary of the action items at the end. The group responded favorably to this idea.

3. WRP Group Reports

Executive Council Meeting Review. Mike posed the question of whether to brief the Executive Council or to provide them explicit detail in their decision-making. Paul stated that if we make sure they are adequately briefed before their meetings, than the Management Group is doing its best. Molly suggested that we recognize the core group who pay most attention to these issues. Mike iterated that each meeting should produce one significant decision. Members discussed how Executive Council meetings should be conducted. They agreed that all presentations made to the Executive Council receive a test run at a Management Group meeting; no more than a couple presentations per meeting; and with the public in the room at the meetings, a balance is needed between what is summarized and what is presented in detail. Paul stated that we should err on the side of giving the Executive Council more information. Carl Wilcox (California Department of Fish and Game) wanted to know how the State Indicators project meshed with the Restoration Program. Mike said we should look into that.

Paul Jones asked about the Management Group's relation to the Executive Council. He was concerned with how the Group would be taking proposed actions and structuring them to proceed more systematically. Mike stated that discussion would occur over how to structure information in the Group and take it to the Executive Council. Molly Martindale (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) agreed and added that there needs to be a standard format for presentation and that a pros and cons evaluation of those formats would be helpful.

Draft Working Agreement. Mike shared that Alexis was hoping to have a shorter Working Agreement. Mike then led the Group through a section-by-section review. The Group agreed to the following:

- Operating procedures could be cut and moved to an appendix
- Coordination with other efforts should come out
- The Scope section was necessary and should encompass geographic and vertical boundaries
- The Organization section was essential
- More detailed agency lists should be moved to an appendix
- Listing on page 4 should be removed
- Membership criteria and meeting procedures should be moved to an appendix, as should all Groups
- Tasks should remain in there, but should be distilled down
- Program information should come out, but funding information should be moved
- In the Agreement section, 1 and 2 should be moved up front and Amendments and Determination should go to the back, Agreement 3, 4 and 5 should be moved to the disclaimer section
- Organization should be moved to the Appendix
- Attachment B is redundant and should be removed
- Attachment C is necessary
- Attachment D should include SFEI and the SFBJV, and a paragraph for Public Involvement, including coordination with other efforts and that meetings are open to the public
- The role of local governments and communities needs to be written into the public involvement section.

Monitoring Group. Paul proposed having a direct linkage in the Restoration Program between the Management Group and the “Science” Group, which would be composed of a Design Review Group arm and a Monitoring Arm. He then reminded the Group that the next Wetlands Restoration Monitoring Program would be held on September 10th at 9:15 a.m. and that there would be about an hour of open time in their agenda to discuss this joint group.

Carl wanted to know the relationship between the Design Review Group and the SFBJV in that the DRG is similar to their technical committee. Paul then mentioned that the SFBJV is giving \$100,000 to Ducks Unlimited in order to establish a project tracking system, which is a duplication of the San Francisco Estuary Institute’s work. The sentiment was expressed that the Restoration Program should prevent this type of redundancy in the future.

Paul wanted to know how the Restoration Program was going to establish a system for reviewing, tracking and monitoring these issues around the Bay. Members agreed SFBJV’s Beth Huning should be included in this Group. Mike Monroe stated that Mike Connor (SFEI), David Lewis (Save San Francisco Bay Association), Fritz (SFBJV) and Beth should come to the Group. Marcia mentioned that the SFBJV is very good at prioritization, which is not a duplicative effort for us. **ACTION ITEM:** Have SFBJV attend the next Management Group meeting and have the overlap between the groups as an agenda item.

Design Review Group (DRG). Mike stated the DRG should be reviewing projects after its next meeting. Paul stated that the group should do two things – look at the project design in advance and also be the technical backstop, or to provide preconstruction review of elevations and calculations involved in the blueprints. **ACTION ITEM:** Include this point as an agenda item for the next DRG meeting.

4. Management Group Work Program

A model Management Group work program was distributed and feedback from the group was requested.

Mike raised the following questions: What issues do we want to be looking ahead to? What of those issues does the Executive Council need to know about? Molly suggested that we make brief issue statements in the Work Program. She suggested that we ask the Executive Council which issues they'd like to discuss.

5. Public Involvement

John Brosnan distributed a draft feedback sheet to the group. The sheet seeks feedback from members of the public following their attendance at Executive Council meetings. Its purpose is to solicit feedback from Executive Council meeting attendees. John asked for ways to improve the sheet. A few people suggested restructuring the form so that the most important issues were at the top. Members generally agreed that email was a good way to distribute the form.

Bruce reminded the Group that the Executive Council may, at times, have to meet in closed sessions and that this needs to be addressed and announced. This point has to be reconciled with public involvement and open meeting laws.

Paul mentioned that the Monitoring Group is holding a September 9th meeting with its Southern California counterpart at SFEI and that a Montezuma kickoff meeting agenda will be forthcoming soon. Paul also mentioned the relatively poor function of the Management Group when attendance was so low. He suggested that Executive Council members should prompt those in their respective departments to come to the Management Group meetings.

6. Expanding the Geographic Scope of the WRP

Mike reviewed the history of the selection process that has traditionally held to the immediate drainage that doesn't include the coastal areas. Coastal inclusion would require Coastal Commission involvement and the Coastal addition to the WRP would not amount to many new projects. Many of those potential projects are being covered by other organizations, such as those in Bodega Bay, Bolinas Lagoon, and Tomales Bay. Molly stated that the CCMP and the Goals never got to the coast. **ACTION ITEM:** The decision was made to leave the boundaries where they are. Bruce will check this with Loretta.

Steve Thompson asked about the inclusion of subtidal habitats and the need for subtidal goals. These would involve State Lands Commission and BCDC. Carl stated that they should be

included and that the geographic scope of the Working Agreement should reflect this. This change – along with others – should be noted in the cover letter when the Working Agreement is sent out.

At that time, Paul announced that Josh Collins (SFEI) might have sent the Monitoring Plan to Larry Smith (U.S. Geological Survey). He wanted to know if the Monitoring Plan with or without the Monitoring Protocol to the Executive Council. He wanted to know if rapid assessment and weblinks should be included. The group instructed that Paul send it to Larry in response to his comment (Larry's comment at the Executive Council meeting was that management questions should guide what is being monitored). Paul then stated that there remains no central point where monitoring data goes within the Monitoring Group.

7. Spartina Presentation

The presentation was postponed.

8. Wrap-up/Next Meeting Date and Agenda Items

Mike stated that before the November meeting of the Executive Council, several things need to be determined, such as combining the DRG and the Monitoring Group, and the decisions that the Management Group will bring to the Executive Council.

Mike suggested that the Management Group should compose a paper about the Monitoring Group. **ACTION ITEM:** The next Management Group meeting agenda should include a definition of how the Monitoring Group fits into the Restoration Program structure and then take that document to the Executive Council on November 4 (centralized vs. decentralized).

Meeting time changes were suggested and the Group decided to meet in the afternoons instead of the mornings. The next meeting was set for 1-4 P.M. on Tuesday, September 24. It will likely be held at BCDC in San Francisco.

In closing, Steve Thompson (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) raised the issue of the group name. The group discussed and stated that the name had been changed already, and they were going to stick with the present name.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Mike and Chris will talk to Alexis Strauss and Mary Nichols about these trip options.
- Revise Draft Working Agreement based upon the comments detailed herein.
- Have SFBJV attend the next Management Group meeting and have the overlap between the groups as an agenda item.
- Include preconstruction design review as an agenda item for the next DRG meeting.
- The decision was made to leave the geographic boundaries where they are – coastal zones excluded. Bruce will check this with Loretta.
- The next Management Group meeting agenda should include a definition of how the Monitoring Group fits into the Restoration Program structure and then take that document to the Executive Council on November 4 (centralized vs. decentralized).