

# **SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA WETLANDS RESTORATION PROGRAM MANAGEMENT GROUP**

## **MEETING SUMMARY DECEMBER 6<sup>TH</sup>, 2002**

### **Attendees:**

John Brosnan (Wetlands Restoration Program)  
Marcia Brockbank (San Francisco Estuary Project)  
Mike Connor (San Francisco Estuary Institute)  
Nadine Hitchcock (State Coastal Conservancy)  
Beth Huning (San Francisco Bay Joint Venture)  
Molly Martindale (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)  
Steve McAdam (San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission)  
Mike Monroe (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)  
Brian Mulvey (National Marine Fisheries Service)  
Peggy Olofson (Invasive Spartina Project)  
Karen Phillips (U.S. Geological Survey)  
Maxene Spellman (State Coastal Conservancy)  
Steve Thompson (NOAA Ocean Service)  
Carl Wilcox (California Department of Fish and Game)

### **1. Introductions**

Mike Monroe chaired the meeting and opened by asking for announcements. Mike Connor stated that SFEI had given a presentation to the Moore Foundation about the potential sediment deficit in the Bay. He then displayed pieces of that presentation to the Management Group. He recognized the need to consider the sediment budget when thinking about the evolution of the Estuary, as restoration efforts could be limited by sediment supply. He noted the need for an Estuary-wide plan to coordinate sediment management issues.

Mike Connor stated that the plan could interact with ongoing efforts, such as the South Bay Salt Ponds Restoration Effort, the Long-Term Management Strategy for sediment in the Bay, the Subtidal Habitat Goals effort, the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program, among others. Mike stressed the need to attempt to predict the cumulative effects of sediment use and, correspondingly, to develop a methodology to predict the distribution of bay habitats.

Carl Wilcox said that there were no resources within the *Habitat Goals* report to do this geomorphic analysis. He concurred with the need to understand how sediment will affect the distribution of habitats. He posed the question of how will the effort coordinate with other efforts? Karen Phillips added the remobilization of methylated mercury and Spartina as related issues. Carl reiterated the need to understand these consequences but noted that this should not be a blanket endorsement for use of dredged materials. Peggy Olofson agreed with the need for coordinated modeling effort, but noted that such an effort is challenging. Mike Connor stated that agency recognition of this issue is critical. Molly Martindale added that this is a long-range planning issue.

**MANAGEMENT GROUP MEETING SUMMARY  
DECEMBER 6<sup>TH</sup>, 2002**

Nadine Hitchcock expressed the need for adequate peer review of this concept that includes the review of biologists. Mike Connor expressed the need to begin the education process now and determine how the issue will be presented to the agencies. Carl stated the need to make sure the public and the private were coordinated in the same trajectory, in order to avoid competition on this issue. Nadine echoed the need to speak with one voice on these issues.

Mike Monroe summarized, noting the sediment supply is a critical upcoming issue for planning, and that there has to be some way that the group can formalize this into one, decision-making framework. Nadine asked what was the tool that we are to decide on? Mike Monroe noted the need for someone to take the lead for management of this issue. **The group agreed that this would be on the next Management Group meeting's agenda.** Molly put forth the possibility for a subcommittee that could determine how the Restoration Program will relate to and support this and identify which specific issues should be focused on. **Mike Connor suggested that Nadine serve as the point of contact to establish a meeting with Nancy at the Moore Foundation.** Mike Monroe asked whether there should be a joint Management Group and Science Advisory Group meeting to address this, but Mike Connor stated that SFEI needed to take the first step.

Mike Monroe wondered about what kind of scientific review Nadine was seeking. Carl stated the need for peer review as well as the need for a commitment to SFEI and Philip Williams Associates. He summarized stating that they will coalesce and begin the process. Mike Connor said that the process has the capability so that all relevant scientists will be involved. **Carl then suggested that the next step should see SFEI and Phillip Williams Associates refine the process and identify how it - and the peer review process - will be laid out. The proposal can then be circulated among the Management Group.** Karen pointed out that USGS might be competing with SFEI for the same money. USGS's client agency, the FWS, has identified the need for data collection and restoration modeling. USGS is also seeking funding to meet this client agency need. The group resounded the sentiment that taking the time to undertake this process at this point in time is essential. **John will coordinate a subcommittee meeting; volunteers are Molly, Karen, Carl, Steve, Nadine, and Mike Connor.**

Marcia Brockbank said that Bruce Wolfe (San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board) could not make the meeting. Bruce did want to pass along an announcement; the Prop 13 RFQ is going out in January. The RFQ is preferentially seeking large projects over smaller ones. Marcia added that the Nature Conservancy has asked to use the *Habitat Goals Report* at a presentation in Indonesia. John Brosnan informed the group that the Program's website is now accessible at [www.sfwetlands.ca.gov](http://www.sfwetlands.ca.gov). Carl informed the group of the upcoming meeting with the Santa Clara Valley Water District in regards to the management approach for Pond A4. Louisa Squires at the District is the contact.

Beth Huning informed the group that the next Joint Venture Board Meeting is on January 28th. Beth then had to depart the meeting and so the group then chose their next meeting date. **The group decided to hold their next meeting on Friday, January 10th, at 10 A.M. again at Mare Island. The group elected to hold its monthly meetings on the second Friday of each month.**

**2. October 22nd Management Group Meeting Summary**

**MANAGEMENT GROUP MEETING SUMMARY  
DECEMBER 6<sup>TH</sup>, 2002**

John reviewed the action items from the previous Management Group meeting. Items included: Molly to set up a meeting with the Pond A4 project managers (being done); John to circulate the Working Agreement to the group for review (done); John to make suggested changes, as described in the meeting notes, to the Working Agreement (done and ongoing).

**3. WRP Group Reports**

Design Review Group (DRG). Mike Monroe discussed the DRG's progress on the Breuner Marsh Mitigation Bank design review. He detailed the project's presentation at the DRG's October meeting and the group preparation of the draft Letter of Review. Jeff Olbering (the project proponent) attended the December 2nd DRG meeting and provided good feedback on the process. The Letter is currently being finalized and should be complete by the time the group meets again. The next meeting is Monday, January 6th at the Regional Board.

Executive Council. John highlighted the discussion and decisions from the November Executive Council meeting. The Council meeting discussion centered on the Working Agreement and its language. Notable points include direction to: alter language to avoid potential FACA issues; alter language/structure of the Program to avoid duplicative and redundant efforts with other Bay Area organizations, particularly the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture; clarify decision-making vs. discussion language in Attachment C; include subtidal habitats in Geographic Scope; incorporate other points expressed by Council members as recorded herein; focus on (1) assembling and storing data in a single tracking entity; (2) the overall monitoring strategy; (3) overseeing mitigation-based wetlands restoration projects; (4) regulation of the group; and (5) resolving conflicting policy issues among the agencies; and, following all revisions, circulate Administrative Final Working Agreement for signature to Council members

The Council also expressed some concerns about the Science Advisory Groups, and wanted to see addressing of: a plan of how the Monitoring Program is structured and how it is proceeding; addressing the public interface of the Science Advisory Group; determining public involvement in Science Advisory Group; and, clarifying Management Group and Science Advisory Group relationship/overlap.

Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program (WRMP). Molly discussed the progress of the WRMP and informed the group of the recent WRMP meeting. Molly has taken over as chair of the meetings. She stated that the Monitoring work for the EMAP is now done and the development of the California Rapid Assessment Method is being headed up by SFEI. The WRMP recently discussed the architecture and conceptual set-up of the data management system, which will serve as a central data repository to be available to all parties. The WRMP is presently investigating how it should be structured and whether a potential restructuring would allow it to work better. These issues will be discussed at the next WRMP meeting, which will take place at the Romberg Tiburon Center on Tuesday, January 21st.

**4. Revised Draft Working Agreement Update**

John, building off of the discussion from the Executive Council meeting, highlighted additional changes to the Working Agreement. Changes that have been incorporated into the document

**MANAGEMENT GROUP MEETING SUMMARY  
DECEMBER 6<sup>TH</sup>, 2002**

have come from the Executive Council meeting (see above), submitted comments from Paul Thayer of the State Lands Commission, Helen Flach of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and comments generated from a meeting among Mike Monroe, Chris Potter, John Brosnan, and Beth Huning.

Comments from Paul Thayer included: expressly pointing out that the purpose of the Executive Council meetings is to harmonize and coordinate multi-agency approaches to wetlands and other water-related habitats; establish a designated Management Group representative "go-to" person for each Executive Council member, to serve as proxies for the Council members; clarify the relationship between the Management Group and the Science Advisory Group; and seek to incorporate local government. Comments from Helen Flach were limited to stating the life of the agreement (i.e., in years) and including a non-discrimination statement. The meeting with Beth Huning resulted in the decision to have the Joint Venture act as the key Public Outreach source for the Wetlands Restoration Program; John will sit on the Joint Venture's Public Outreach Committee.

Ann Malcolm (Counsel, California Department of Fish and Game) has contacted the Restoration Program and inquired as to why she was asked to review the Working Agreement. She stated that the Working Agreement does not obligate any agency to do anything and, likewise, the Agreement does not step on any statutory duties of the agencies.

Per the suggestion of the Executive Council, John asked for volunteers for a special meeting of Management Group members to work solely on a final input and line-by-line review of the Working Agreement. **Volunteers included Molly, Mike Monroe, Marcia Brockbank, Nadine, Marcia Grimm (State Coastal Conservancy), and John Brosnan. The meeting will be scheduled for the first full week of January.**

**5. Presentation by Mike Sellors, Audubon**

Mike Sellors was out ill and not able to attend the meeting. This discussion will be rescheduled for another future meeting.

**7. Invasive Spartina Project's Upcoming Symposium**

Peggy Olofson pointed out that one remaining issue from the Goals Project was the need to address invasive Spartina in the Estuary. But what is the best way to amass everyone's information on the issue? The proposed answer to this question is holding a symposium centered on the eradication effort of Spartina hybrids. This symposium will bring nationally recognized experts to the Bay. The notice for the Spartina Project's EIS/EIR is planned to appear in the Federal Register on Friday, December 20th. At present, the Project's working groups - the Science Advisory Panel, the Monitoring Team, the Spartina Control Working Group, and the Steering Committee - are being formed and the Public Outreach effort is well established.

Peggy presented the tentative agenda for the symposium and said that this is likely to become a two-day event. She solicited suggestions and comments from the group. Nadine asked that the symposium be a one-day event. Molly suggested holding the meeting after some of the hands-

**MANAGEMENT GROUP MEETING SUMMARY  
DECEMBER 6<sup>TH</sup>, 2002**

on monitoring of Spartina had taken place. Nadine suggested having the meeting sooner due to uncertainty on the issue and a need to gather conflicting opinions. Maxene Spellman noted that monitoring funds couldn't be utilized until after the environmental documents have been completed. Mike Monroe suggested having the symposium during the public comment period. Peggy said that this would be possible, but it could pose a challenge when coordinating the schedules of academics traveling in from great distances away. Marcia supported the idea of including those experts from the East Coast.

Peggy then itemized the list of suggested topics and posed the questions to be answered at the symposium. Molly suggested that this is a good opportunity to hear many views and, therefore, fewer and smaller sessions would be good. Sequential panels over concurrent panels would be a good idea, she added. Carl wanted to know what would occur at the end of the program. Peggy said that the information gleaned from the process would be digested internally and that information would be used in planning and direction for the future. Mike Connor suggested using this information to come up with 5 to 10 questions to focus on. Molly added that these questions could focus the Project actions of the next year.

Peggy then asked what people felt about one or two days. Carl suggested two days, focusing one day on the out-of-towners and one day on the local experts. Karen suggested presenting issue papers on the second day, which would better ensure that visitors attend on both days. In general, the group favored the first or the last week of March for the symposium. **John will contact Mary and Alexis to OK the Wetlands Restoration Program's sponsorship of the Invasive Spartina Project's Symposium.**

Peggy asked about the need for a subcommittee to plan this project, but the group did not formally decide on this. She then collected names of additional potential speakers.

The meeting was adjourned.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

- Sediment deficit proposal to be on the next Management Group meeting's agenda.
- Mike Connor suggested that Nadine serve as the point of contact to establish a meeting with Nancy at the Moore Foundation.
- SFEI and Phillip Williams Associates will refine the sediment deficit proposal process and identify how it – and the peer review process – will be laid out. The proposal can then be circulated among the Management Group; John will coordinate a subcommittee meeting; volunteers are Molly, Karen, Carl, Steve, Nadine, and Mike Connor.
- Working Agreement volunteers included Molly, Mike Monroe, Marcia Brockbank, Nadine, Marcia Grimm (State Coastal Conservancy), and John Brosnan. The meeting will be scheduled for the first full week of January.
- John will contact Mary and Alexis to OK the Wetlands Restoration Program's sponsorship of the Invasive Spartina Project's Symposium.
- The group elected to hold its monthly meetings on the second Friday of each month.