

San Francisco Bay Area Wetlands Restoration Program Management Group

July 23, 2002 Meeting Summary

Attendees:

Bob Batha (BCDC)
Marcia Brockbank (SFEP)
Mike Connor (SFED)
Nadine Hitchcock (Coastal Conservancy)
Paul Jones (US EPA)
Molly Martindale (US Army Corps of Engineers)
Mike Monroe (US EPA)
Brian Mulvey (NMFS)
Chris Potter (Resources Agency)
Steve Thompson (NOAA)
Carol Thornton (SFEP)
Carl Wilcox (DFG)
Bruce Wolfe (SFRWQCB)

1. Introductory Discussion

Announcements:

- Sub-tidal Goals – there will be an agency meeting on July 30th. This first meeting will be a scoping session. Katie Wood of BCDC helping to coordinate. The immediate purpose of this effort is to catalogue current habitats and to determine the feasibility of establishing habitat goals for the deeper part of the Bay. This work will be coordinated with the Habitat Goals.
- Molly Martindale announced the new Colonel, Michael McCormick, was introduced at a ceremony at the Bay Model.
- Chris Potter announced that the Resources Agency will be holding a third workshop in late September to present to stakeholders a scope of work for its statewide wetlands inventory.
- John Brosnan will start August 1st as the full-time Program Coordinator for the WRP. John will be an ABAG employee and is funded for two years through US EPA and NOAA grants.

2. Group Reports

Management Group – see minutes from the June 24th meeting.

Design Review Group (DRG) – met July 19th for the first time in many months. Projects that the DRG has reviewed thus far as pilot projects include Leonard Ranch (seasonal wetland) and the SFO mitigation plan. However, the DRG has yet to send out any comment letters to project sponsors/proponents.

The proposed DRG structure designates agency staff as the core group. Group discussions relative to the DRG continued on the following issues:

- Acceptance process for projects (how to choose which projects would be selected for review).
- Conflict of interest guidance needs to be developed, both for agencies and consultants.
- RFQ needs to be developed to set up a mechanism to compensate consultants for their participation in the DRG. The tentative rate for consultant compensation is \$75/hr. The RFQ should be sent out in the next 4-6 weeks.
- Procedure for announcing the DRG to the public.
- How to handle different scales and levels of involvement of various projects; e.g., Leonard Ranch vs. Cargill.
- What should go into the “Project Review Letter”?
- How are the DRG and Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program (WRMP) related? It was noted that a number of folks who serve on the DRG also serve on the WRMP. This discussion will be continued at a combined meeting/workshop of the DRG and WRMP in September.

Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program

Paul Jones reported on a two-day US EPA workshop held on June 26 and 27 on a Rapid Assessment Protocol for wetlands. The first day consisted of a number of presentations and discussions on rapid assessment from scientists around the U.S. On the second day workshop participants gathered at Arrowhead Marsh to test the Ohio Rapid Assessment methodology. The consensus was that the Ohio method could be used in California wetlands. The Ohio method has passed legal tests in Ohio and a California assessment methodology could be ready in 6 months (one is currently being developed in Morro Bay). The Habitat Quality Evaluation for Santa Rosa is similar to the Ohio model. Paul will prepare a Power Powerpoint presentation for the Executive Council meeting on August 13. Funding needs and potential resources were discussed and it was decided that this issue was not ready for presentation to the Executive Council.

Executive Council

The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) will be left on the roster, but will not be attending meetings in the near future. The WCB is short staffed and would consider attending meetings if they were held in Sacramento. WCB issues will be covered by the Department of Fish and Game if the WCB is not present.

Mike reported that there were no new comments on the Working Agreement. Mike would like to expand the benefits section, to include benefits beyond DRG benefits. He will request comments from the Executive Council at the next meeting and expects them to sign the Agreement at the following EC meeting in November.

3. Agenda for August 13th Executive Council meeting

- Introduction of new staff person (John Brosnan).
- Committee updates.
- Working Agreement presentation.

- Project presentations: Cargill (Nadine Hitchcock, Marge Kohler, Carl Wilcox) and the Spartina Project.
- Role of PAC (invite members of the environmental community to attend EC meeting).

4. Action Items

- Prepare agenda for August 13th Executive Council meeting.