



Implementation Committee Quarterly Meeting
Estuary Program Offices, Morro Bay, CA

August 10, 2017
12:00 pm

DRAFT Minutes

Attendees: Michaela Robbins, *Caltrans*; Peter Waldburger, *Camp SLO*; Tom Edell, *Bay Foundation*; John Sayers, *CA State Parks*; Paula Madeiros, *Morro Coast Audubon Society*; Cheryl Zelus, *NRCS*; Kyle Walsh, *Land Conservancy of SLO County*; Rachel Pass, *MBNEP Staff*; Carolyn Doehring, *MBNEP Staff*; Sara Markham, *MBNEP Staff*; Karissa Willits, *MBNEP Staff*; Cynthia Milhem, *MBNEP Staff*; Ann Kitajima, *MBNEP Staff*.

1. Introductions and Updates

- Tom Edell: No updates from the Bay Foundation.
- Ann Kitajima: The California Department of Public Health has updated the shellfish regulations for the oyster farms in Morro Bay. Due to elevated levels of bacteria, CDPH analyzed 12 years of data grouped by month. They determined that certain months of the year had bacteria levels that merited closure, while other months did not. Based on this, CDPH created a seasonal closure schedule for each parcel. The Grassy Bar Oyster Company's primary lease would be closed from October through December, and the Morro Bay Oyster Company's lease would be closed from November through January. There were also changes to the rainfall closure amounts which trigger closures. Both farms are in various stages of adding depuration to their operations, which would ease the impact of closures on their businesses.
- Karissa Willits: For bioassessment, we completed 12 surveys this year. In recent years that had lower than normal rainfall, we've only been able to conduct six or seven surveys. The eelgrass transplant effort in July went well. This second round of the planting used the same location and methods as the effort conducted in March. The only different factor was the seasons, to get a sense of how seasonality impacts eelgrass transplant survival. The forebay area planted in March is doing well, but the mid-bay site has been less successful.
- Carolyn Doehring: The pikeminnow project has a removal effort coming up in September on Chorro Creek. This effort is an action identified in the management plan that was completed in March. The fieldwork is scheduled to take place on Sept 9 to 15 and will involve Stillwater Sciences, the California Conservation Corps, and CDFW.
- Cheryl Zelus: NRCS has an EQIP funded project in our watershed. It involves installation of a railcar bridge to replace an in-stream crossing damaged by winter storms. There is also a head cut at the site which might be dealt with in a future project. Construction on the crossing will probably take place next fall, depending on the permitting process.
- John Sayers: CSP continues to do pine management on Black Hill. They are starting a restoration project on the Sandspit to slow down erosion at Sharks Inlet. A 100-yard dune recently collapsed. They are using straw waddles and native plants to try to stabilize the area. They are also doing ice plant removal on the Sandspit. On the limonium project, the Land Conservancy has taken over the effort. A new population of the plant was recently identified, and they are dealing with it. There is a lot of salt marsh bird's beak this year, which makes it more difficult to spot the invasive limonium. CSP is meeting with FEMA to review the storm damage from last winter. Some of their costs to deal with storm damage might be recouped. In the December/January timeframe, the Morro Bay State Park campground will be closed for installation of a new waterline.
- Michaela Robbins: The South Bay Boulevard bridge project continues to move forward. The County met with the NEP, after which the county came to Caltrans to talk about potentially doubling the span length of the bridge to improve flow under the bridge, and using these flow improvements as

on-site mitigation. The location of Turri Road is a constraint on the design. This design change increases the cost of the project. Hopefully the bridge will end up being quite a bit longer than originally planned. Construction is at least two years out. The project might include the creation of a bike/pedestrian bridge over Santa Ysabel to connect various trails. This might occur if CSP allows the County to use its property as a staging area for construction, and then the County would compensate CSP with this bike/pedestrian bridge project.

- Rachel Pass: The plover sign grant to CSP for a new set of plover nesting signs for the Sandspit is underway. The Estuary Program ordered the signs and handed them over to CSP. Some are already in use.
- Kyle Walsh: The Land Conservancy has several projects underway in our watershed. One is a potential ranch easement between San Luisito and San Bernardo Creeks. Another is an easement on a farm in the Los Osos Valley, for which they are seeking a grant.
- Paula Madeiros: Paula attended the IC for Doug Tait, who was out of town. The first segment of the boardwalk at Sweet Springs has been completed. MCAS has started an Ambassador Program, where trained volunteers count the people and dogs at the Reserve. Starting September 1, dogs will no longer be allowed in Sweet Springs. The Ambassador Program will serve not as enforcement but rather as docents to provide information. They will share their outreach materials with us so that we are aware of their messaging. They also redid the walkway to the Overlook on 3rd Street.
- Pete Waldburger: The base now has a new commander, Colonel Angel Ortiz. Pete thought he would be reasonable to work with on environmental projects. Weed control efforts are ongoing. Training seems to have increased at CSLO with more off-road training, potentially leading to increased erosion and runoff.

2. Public Comment: None presented.

3. Presentation: Spencer Harris from Cleath-Harris Geologists, presented an overview of groundwater issues in the Los Osos Groundwater Basin. This work built on the Climate Readiness work that they did with the Estuary Program a few years ago. Project efforts include the Los Osos Creek recharge project, the deep monitoring well at Cuesta-by-the-Sea for tracking sea water intrusion, and a looking at the fringe areas of the bay as part of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The rate of seawater intrusion seems to be speeding up. This is the main issue for the basin. With all of the rain, the data now is showing a slowdown of seawater intrusion, but the long-term trend is uncertain. Nitrate in the upper aquifer ranges from 15 mg/L to 60 mg/L (drinking water standard is 45 mg/L). The groundwater basin is currently in critical overdraft. A Basin Management Plan was created by all the water purveyors in Los Osos through a court settlement. The plan aims for the Basin Yield Metric, which is the 2016 groundwater production divided by the sustainable yield with 2016 infrastructure, to be 80 (out of 100). The number has been well over that since the 1980s. In 2015, it went back down to the target. But the chloride metric (a measure of seawater intrusion) is still high. Looking at Los Osos Creek, Cleath-Harris' analysis shows that even with reduced precipitation, the creek should have adequate water for groundwater recharge. Additionally, 200 acre-feet of recycled water will be going to the basin each year, which should reduce demand on groundwater. All agriculture in the Los Osos Valley uses about 800 AFY. Looking at 2016 infrastructure and 67% of average precipitation, the BYM will be above 100, which is above the target level.

4. Agenda Revisions: None.

5. ACTION: Consider Approval of May 4, 2017 IC minutes

Vote: Tom Edell motioned to approve, Peter Waldberger seconded. All in favor.

6. ACTION: Community Grant Application

During the spring round of Community Grant applications, the committees decided to delay a decision on the Sea Otter Savvy application to install signage to promote sea otter stewardship by divers. The committees supported the goal of the work but wanted to see a different approach. Estuary Program staff worked with the applicant to revise the proposal, incorporating the comments from the EC, IC, BF and E&O Working Group. The proposal involves the development of a brochure printed on waterproof paper, which would contain a map, tips on responsible wildlife viewing, and other useful information targeted at the diving community.

During the discussion, the question came up of whether the Estuary Program staff would have a chance to review the brochure content created by Sea Otter Savvy. It was agreed to add this as a condition in the contract if the grant is awarded. John Sayers, who is a diver, volunteered to assist with the review.

Vote: Motion for approval by Pete Waldberger, with the added condition that the brochure content be reviewed by Estuary Program staff. Seconded by John Sayers. Unanimous in favor.

7. DISCUSSION: E&O Updates

Rachel presented State of the Bay statistics, shared information about our upcoming speaker series, and invited the group to a screening of the short documentary *Of Marshes and Morros*, which was funded in part by an Estuary Program Community Grant.

8. DISCUSSION: CCMP Evaluation

Ann described the planned approach for updating the CCMP. A plan for updating will be created in FY18, with actual updating of the plan occurring in FY19. The input of program partners such as the IC members will be a valuable part of the process.

9. Adjourned at 1:40 pm to next meeting of November 2, 2017 at 12:00 pm at the Estuary Program offices.

Attachments sent with Staff Report:

1. May 2017 Draft IC meeting minutes
2. Revised Community Grant application for Sea Otter Savvy