



**DRAFT Minutes**

**Attendees:** Becka Kelly, *City of Morro Bay*; Matt Makowetski, *City of Morro Bay*; John Flaherty, *Tourism Interest Seat*; Jennifer Epp, *Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board*; Bruce Gibson, *San Luis Obispo County*; Joel Neel, *Bay Foundation*; Ethan Bell, *Environmental Interest Seat*; Suzanne Marr, *USEPA*; Lexie Bell, *MBNEP Staff*; Ann Kitajima, *MBNEP Staff*.

**1. Introductions and Updates**

- Suzanne Marr: EPA has a project with funding from the regional Federal Emergency Management Agency to help the regions build resilience to disasters. The Central Coast Climate Collaborative recently formed, and the Estuary Program attended a recent meeting, which Suzanne thought was a good idea.
- Joel Neel: No updates from Bay Foundation.
- Matt Makowetski: The dredging project is complete. The Morro Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant project is in hiatus. Due to costs and analysis of the master plan, the city is considering sites other than the South Bay Site (located near the Morro Bay Blvd exit of Highway 1). They are now conducting analysis on what is called the Hanson Cement Plant site and a site on power plant property where the tank farm was formerly located. Both are at a higher elevation than the current site and have not been considered before in the analysis. The hope is that water can be re-used at Lila Kaiser Park and the well fields up Highway 41. Cayucos is considering a Toro Creek discharge location. These options could be energy intensive. The Trident Wind Farm project could potentially be utilizing Morro Bay's ocean outfall infrastructure, and thus might be willing to provide energy to run the plant in exchange. Matt felt that the Coastal Commission was optimistic about these two potential sites for the plant.
- Becka Kelly: Coastal Cleanup Day is on September 16, and the city will be helping with the effort by disposing of the collected trash. The city was awarded a \$25,000 grant from the California Department of Boating and Waterways for boat removal. The Harbor Department was grateful to the Estuary Program for working with Anders, our Clean Boating intern, to conduct outreach. Becka feels like he's making many positive interactions with the public. There is a new surf break now due to the dredging disposal. The contractor disposed of all of the spoils in one spot and did not relocate the pipe during the project. This change to the bathymetry created good surf but someone was recently injured, so the city is working to keep people away from the area. It is expected that the spoils should disperse by the upcoming winter storms. The area drops to only six feet of depth, whereas it is 40 feet deep in nearby areas. Dredging is completed but all of the equipment is still here. The deadline to remove the equipment is September 30. Several thousand feet of pipeline has to be moved off the beach when plover season ends. The contractor has a plan to handle this.
- John Flaherty: It's been a busy summer season. He feels that our area did well for tourism this year, despite the Highway 1 closure. Earlier in the year, a study of total loss of tourism dollars due to the Highway 1 closure was estimated to be half a billion dollars, between Monterey and SLO Counties. This assessment did not include the later slides that closed additional portions of the highway.
- Bruce Gibson: Tourism promotion has paid off as far as the Highway 1 closure is concerned. People still came to Hearst Castle, Cambria, and Morro Bay. He estimated perhaps a 10% drop in tourism. The boat that ran aground at Point Estero is the responsibility of the State Lands Commission to

remove, but they lack the funds for the effort. The hull has been breached, and it will sink if it is removed. All hazardous materials have already been removed. Currently 93% of households have connected to the Los Osos Wastewater Project facility, and the county is working to get the last approximately 130 connections completed. The Basin Management Committee is meeting about every other month. They issued an annual report for calendar year 2016 back in June. The data shows that salt water intrusion is moving in the right direction, with chloride levels decreasing. Efforts are focusing on the water supply side and denitrifying of the upper aquifer. The upper aquifer is a potential source of water if it is pumped up and treated. This would act as remediation for the nitrate pollution. Proposals will go to the planning commission this year and to the Coastal Commission next year. This would reduce pumping in the lower aquifer, which would slow salt water intrusion. About 25% of households have converted septic tanks to manage on-site stormwater reuse or runoff management. The county is working on a rebate program to get people to use them as sources of outdoor water. But since the CSD is giving irrigation water away for free, septic re-purposing is not as attractive.

- Lexie Bell: ANEP will be holding its national meeting in Boston in November. Lexie and Carolyn will attend. The Estuary Caucus is still going on in the House. Recent focus topics included aquaculture and living shorelines.
- Jennifer Epp: The Board Meeting in July in Watsonville did not have any topics specific to San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay on the agenda. An item we'd be most interested in is the 303(d) list approval. The next step is for it to go before the State Water Resources Control Board. The comment period has ended with no new comments from our region. The hearing for approval will be in October.
- Ann Kitajima: We monitored at 12 bioassessment sites this past spring. We conducted a second round of experimental eelgrass planting in July. The mid-bay site has experienced quite a bit of loss of transplanted eelgrass, while the forebay site is doing well. A Chorro Creek pikeminnow removal effort is planned for September. The California Department of Public Health is changing shellfish lease area regulations in response to elevated bacteria levels. They analyzed twelve years of data by month to determine which times of year had elevated bacteria levels. Based on this, Grassy Bar Oyster Company will have a seasonal closure from October to December, and Morro Bay Oyster Company will have a seasonal closure from November to January. The Community Grant for snowy plover signs is completed. 200 signs were purchased at a cost of \$3,500. The signs were given to State Parks, and they are already in use.

**2. Public Comment:** None presented.

**3. Agenda Revisions:** None.

**4. ACTION: Consider Approval of May 10, 2017 Executive Committee minutes**

**Vote:** Approved by consent.

**5. ACTION: Recommendation on Community Grant Application**

The committee discussed the grant application from Sea Otter Savvy to create waterproof handouts for divers. The materials would provide useful information for the divers such as maps and land features, as well as guidance on diving in areas with wildlife without causing disturbances. The committee had some discussion regarding content for the materials and methods of distribution. They also discussed having the materials reviewed by local divers to ensure that the content was useful.

**Vote:** Joel Neel moved to approve the grant application with the added condition that the Estuary Program staff review the produced materials before they are printed. Bruce Gibson seconded. Unanimous in favor.

**6. DISCUSSION:** Education & Outreach Updates

Staff provided updates on State of the Bay attendance numbers, the upcoming science speaker series, and the upcoming film screening of the documentary short *Of Marshes & Morros* which was produced by local filmmaking Simo Nylander. The documentary was funded in part by a Community Grant from the Estuary Program.

**7. DISCUSSION:** CCMP Evaluation

Staff described the CCMP evaluation process. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, staff will assess the EPA guidance and the CCMP to determine areas needing updating. We will work to create a plan for implementing these updates. In FY2019, we will be conducting the update.

**8. Adjourned** to next meeting of November 8, 2017 at 4:00 pm at the Estuary Program offices.

**Attachments sent with Staff Report:**

1. May 2017 EC meeting minutes
2. Community Grant application