



**Executive Committee Quarterly Meeting
Estuary Program Offices**

**February 15, 2017
4:00 pm**

DRAFT Minutes

Attendees: Becka Kelly, *City of Morro Bay*; Marsall Ochylski, *Los Osos CSD*; Jennifer Epp, *Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board*; Tim Duff (on the phone); *CA Coastal Conservancy*; Red Davis, *City of Morro Bay*; Matt Makowetski, *City of Morro Bay*; Jeremiah O'Brien, *Morro Bay Commercial Fisherman's Organization*; Joel Neel, *Bay Foundation*; Ethan Bell, *Stillwater Sciences*; Suzanne Marr, *USEPA*; John Flaherty, *Central Coast Outdoors*; Lexie Bell, *MBNEP Staff*; Ann Kitajima, *MBNEP Staff*.

1. Introductions and Updates

- Marshall Ochylski: Sewer connections proceed. Conservation rebates and basin management plan continues.
- Tim Duff: The process of restoration planning for the Los Osos Creek Wetland project is underway with a site visit planned for late February. Some of the funding for the restoration planning was provide by the Estuary Program.
- Jennifer Epp: The March board meeting will be focused on the update of regulations concerning Agriculture. In the January board meeting, the board adopted a resolution that the human right to water is a core value. There are many areas in the state where people can't drink their tap water. There is an update on the cannabis program to figure out how to regulate it. It will either be a section of the ag order or a separate regulation. The 303(d) list was passed in the December meeting with few changes.
- Becka Kelly: Dredging is on-going. About 40,000 cubic yards of material has been moved down the beach. Merkel & Associates conducts weekly water quality testing. The north T-pier has some eelgrass near it and dredging was necessary in that location. It is expected that upon completion of the project, mitigation will be required. The work is moving in front of Tidelands this weekend. The city also demolished two boats recently as part of their vessel turn in program. A few more are left to demolish this year with their remaining grant funding.
- Red Davis: Red is newly elected to the Morro Bay City Council. He will be Matt's alternate but is attending today to learn more about the group and its function.
- Jeremiah O'Brien: Attending as an alternate from Trudy O'Brien. The fishing community is currently catching black cod and hagfish. The salmon season should start in May.
- Matt Makowetski: The season plover nesting closures are coming soon. The City Council released the Boat Haulout project to solicit Qualifications for a project. The private entity that was pursuing the project was not making any progress, so a Request for Qualifications has been issued.
- Joel Neel: No updates from the Bay Foundation.
- Ethan Bell: The Pikeminnow Management Plan for Chorro Creek has been drafted. The permits to do the work are now in hand. Work is underway to obtain funding to implement the plan this summer. The project would start at Chorro Reservoir and work its way downstream towards the estuary.
- Lexie Bell: Lexie was in the Bay Area at the end of January for meetings on eelgrass, ocean acidification, dredging, grant management, Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve (CCER), and other relevant topics. She updated the Coastal Conservancy on the progress of the Explore the Coast app which highlights 12 points of interest around the bay. The Association of NEPs will be holding its spring Tech Transfer meeting in May in D.C., which is a meeting for NEPs to exchange ideas and

lessons learned. In response to uncertainty about the EPA budget, we will develop alternate budgets. We might be requesting letters of support from EC members and their organizations.

- Suzanne Marr: Lexie met with the new Quality Assurance staffer as well as dredging staff. Discussions of eelgrass were very productive. For the future, EPA already has some NEP funding in their office, so that funding will definitely go out to the NEPs. They are unsure if there will be a Continuing Resolution. Climate work is also part of Suzanne's job, and she is uncertain on the status of that work.
- John Flaherty: Tourism is slow right now, as is typical during the winter. The Bird Festival was very successful with about 600 attendees, which is very strong attendance. The NEP will speak at his spring guide meeting to educate the guides on eelgrass. They'll be able to share this information with the nearly 2,000 people they take out on tours each year.
- Ann Kitajima: Please note that the date for the August meeting has been changed to August 23 due to vacation schedules.

2. **Public Comment** – None presented.

3. **Agenda Revisions:** Item #7, Executive Committee Bylaw Discussion, was changed to from a Discussion Item to an Action Item.

4. **ACTION: Consider Approval of November 9, 2016 EC minutes**

Vote: Matt Makowetski motion to approve, Jeremiah O'Brien seconded. Unanimous in favor.

5. **ACTION: Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Workplan Input**

The process is to gather EC input in the February meeting, finalize the plan, and present it at the May meeting. We are creating the Workplan assuming level funding of \$600,000. Our funding is known through April 2018, but beyond that is unknown. Staff will develop different budget scenarios, but it is easier to submit a larger budget and cut it back if it becomes necessary.

All participants selected two Workplan tasks from each programmatic area (Monitoring & Research, Education & Outreach, Restoration, and Program Management) as high priorities and one task they saw as the lowest priority. Participants on the phone were contacted separately for their input, which has been added in below.

The two tasks with the most votes as high priority by the EC were:

Monitoring & Restoration: 1) Monitoring Program Coordination, and 2) Eelgrass Monitoring & Research

Restoration: 1) Eelgrass Restoration, and 2) Land Conservation & Planning

Education & Outreach: 1) Education, and 2) Two tasks tied for second place: Community Grants and Communications

Program Management: 1) Manage Committees & Build Partnerships, and 2) Grants & Contracts Administration & Financial Management

The Estuary Program will finalize the Workplan for FY18 and present it at the next meeting for EC approval.

6. DISCUSSION: Restoration Fund Five-Year Plan: 2018 to 2022

This plan outlines Restoration Fund spending for the next five years. It was developed by staff with partner input. It is for the same amount as the last five-year plan, with some funding reserved for growth and investment.

In the new plan, the value of Land Conservation is unchanged. The Land Conservancy has two potential easement deals coming up in the watershed. The amount for Community Grants was unchanged. Spending on Monitoring was reduced due to the expectation of additional grant funding. Additional funding was added for Restoration to provide match for grants for the Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve project as well as to fund pikeminnow management efforts.

This spending is not tied directly to the upcoming Workplan because it spans the next five years. The FY18 Workplan will include the specific amounts planned to be spent in FY18.

The investment plan for the fund is managed by Wacker & Associates, using a relatively conservative strategy.

After some discussion the EC decided to vote on the plan.

Vote: Jeremiah O'Brien moved to approve, John Flaherty seconded. Unanimous in favor.

7. ACTON: EC Bylaws Update

Marshall and Jennifer formed a sub-committee to update the EC bylaws. The purpose was to update the relationships between the EC and the Executive Director, make the language consistent, and provide some clarification.

The subcommittee concluded that the bylaws should include a date for officer elections. After some discussion, the group agreed on two-year terms, with a limit of three-consecutive terms. Elections will take place at the first meeting of the calendar year (typically the February meeting) in even years.

Language was also added regarding e-voting. The vote must be unanimous and everyone must vote. The vote must be ratified at the next meeting. There is always the option to call a special meeting, with people calling in.

These changes will be brought back for approval at the next EC meeting in May.

8. DISCUSSION: Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve Project Update

The project now has 65% designs completed. If anyone is interested in providing feedback, let staff know. Staff will send out the main map and intro text. The planning grant is about to end. We are in the process of applying to the Fisheries Restoration Grant Program (FRGP) for implementation funding. We expect that other grant funds will be required to complete the work. We hope to start implementation in 2018 or 2019.

9. DISCUSSION: Eelgrass Update on Monitoring, Restoration, and Research

Monitoring is ongoing and is showing patches of eelgrass in areas with severe eelgrass loss. Plans are underway for a modest experimental planting effort which is slated to begin in March. We are studying the best methods for mapping bay-wide eelgrass, including sonar and aerial methods. Cal Poly research efforts are moving forward.

10. INFORMATION: Update on State of the Bay Events

Estuary Program staff shared an update on planned events for State of the Bay in April of 2017. Additional details will soon be available on the program website. The updated State of the Bay report card will be available in March.

11. Adjourned at 5:29 pm to next meeting of May 10, 2017 at 4:00 pm at the Estuary Program offices.

Attachments sent with Staff Report:

1. November 2016 EC meeting minutes
2. Workplan FY2017
3. Restoration Fund Five-Year Plan: 2018 to 2022
4. Draft Executive Committee Bylaws Update
5. Eelgrass map