



Morro Bay National Estuary Program

Implementation Committee Quarterly Meeting
CA Nature Conservancy - 895 Napa Ave, Suite B2, Morro Bay

February 2, 2017
12:00 pm

DRAFT Minutes

Attendees: Vince Cicero, *CA State Parks*; Becka Kelly, *City of Morro Bay*; Jen Nix, *Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District*; Kyle Walsh, *Land Conservancy of SLO County*; Michaela Koenig, *Caltrans*; Peter Waldberger, *Camp SLO*; Meredith Hardy, *CCC*; Brian Meux, *NOAA* (on the phone); Lexie Bell, *MBNEP Staff*; 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

- Becka Kelly: Dredging is about to start in the navigation channel with disposal over the beach north of the Rock. The road closures are starting, and they plan to work around the clock unless there are complaints about the noise. This phase should take about three weeks. The work is expected to take place down the harbor channel and entrance channel, by the Tidelands dock and to channel markers 17 and 18. After three weeks, the disposal pipe will be removed, and they will begin using the near shore disposal site. This is a \$4.5M Army Corps of Engineers project.
- Vince Cicero: State Parks is conducting work in the pine forest and on Black Hill using grant funds. They also have grants to do dune restoration work on the Sandspit, including weed work. They have a contract with the RCD to do weed control.
- Jen Nix: The Agricultural Water Quality Enhancement Grant just wrapped up. They are gearing up to write more grant proposals. The RCD and NEP should coordinate on future projects and funding opportunities.
- Kyle Walsh: Kyle is the Conservation Project Manager for the Land Conservancy. They are working on a few land deals and conservation easements in the watershed. They are hoping to close two easements in Chorro and Clark Valley using Army Compatible Use Buffer Program (ACUB) funding. They have some other ongoing projects for which they are seeking funding.
- Pete Waldberger: Camp SLO is monitoring the road erosion prevention project sites but can't get up to the highest ones right now due to the wet roads. In general, the sites are looking good. They are planning some riparian fencing projects and off-creek water systems. They have a weed contract coming up to address about a hundred acres of invasives.
- Meredith Hardy: The CCC started a new California program for tree mortality in the Sierras, so three of their five crews are out doing that right now and only two local creeks are available. So if partners need help, make their request early. Meredith had a crew out doing redd surveys on Chorro Creek. One has been found in SLO Creek. The FRGP Project Solicitation Notice just came out, and Chorro Creek and its tributaries are all on the list. CCC is working with CSLO on stormwater management planning on the base and the CCC Center.
- Lexie Bell: She met with EPA and other partners in San Francisco in late January. Two-thirds of the money for next year has already been received by Region 9, so we will have access to those funds since it is money that is already set aside for us. One-third of the budget for FY18 is unsure since it is budget not yet set in Congress. So we'll keep doing our work and communicating with our representatives in DC. The NEP has always gotten good bipartisan support. We have a meeting in DC in May to meet with partners and congressional leaders.

- Michaela Koenig: Caltrans is dealing with a lot of landslides and emergencies right now. There is currently a gap in NEPA delegation, which could delay local projects.
- Karissa Willits: We deployed our suspended sediment samplers on Walters Creek and Chorro Creek to monitor this active winter.
- Carolyn Doehring: The Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve 65% designs are now complete. We are applying for funding for the next phases of the project. Our pikeminnow TAC met to review our five-year plan. It will be finalized and released soon. We are working with Cal Poly to plan eelgrass restoration efforts.
- Brian Meux: No news regarding the federal change in administration. He will pass along any information that he gets.

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

3. **Presentation:** Jen Nix from CSLRCD

Jen Nix presented an overview of 25 years of restoration in the Morro Bay watershed. She gave an overview of projects from 2001 to 2008, as well as the CSLRCD's recently completed Agricultural Water Quality Improvement Project funded by a 319(h) grant. Over 50,000 feet of riparian fencing was installed between 2001 and 2008. A bioreactor was installed on private property to treat runoff from a tile drain system. The landowner is interested in running water from Warden Creek through the unit to reduce nitrate levels. On the Los Osos Creek Bank Stabilization project which ended November 30, things are looking great, despite the wet winter. The frogs and the fish are back. For the Road Erosion Prevention project, the CSLRCD contributed funding for five sites on Chumash Creek. This year there is actually water in that creek, and the treated sites are looking good.

4. **Agenda Revisions:** None

5. **ACTION: Consider Approval of August 4, 2016 IC minutes**

Vote: Vince Cicero motion to approve, Jen Nix seconded. Unanimous in favor.

6. **ACTION: FY2018 Workplan Input**

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 IC were:

Monitoring & Restoration: 1) Monitoring Program Coordination, and 2) Project Effectiveness Monitoring

Restoration: 1) Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve, and 2) Conservation and Restoration Project Development

Education & Outreach: 1) Education, and 2) Community Grants

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 a IC vote.

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

The Restoration Fund could be used for EPA grant shortfalls, but not for E&O or for staff time. The fund balance is \$1,580,000. This spending plan is for us, and not for EPA, so we are free to shift funding as we see fit.

In the new plan, the value of Land Conservation is unchanged. 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 support project such as the Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve and pikeminnow management

The IC decided they would like to see the plan again in May since funding needs might change when the Workplan is finalized.

Vote: Jen Nix moved to table the vote until the May meeting. Vince Cicero seconded. All approved.

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. The current FRPG grant for planning is about to end. We are in the process of applying to FRGP for implementation funding. We expect that other grant funds will be required to complete the work.

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. DISCUSSION: Update on State of the Bay Events and Data Preview

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. Staff also presented some of the climate change data, which will be available along with the full report in March.

11. Adjourned at 1:45 pm to next meeting of May 4, 2017 at 12:00 pm at the Estuary Program offices.

Attachments sent with Staff Report:

1. November 2016 IC meeting minutes
2. Workplan 2017
3. Eelgrass map
4. Sea Level Rise data from the State of the Bay Report