



Executive Committee Quarterly Meeting
MBNEP Office

February 4, 2016
4:00 pm

DRAFT Minutes

Attendees: Gary Ruggerone, *Bay Foundation*; Trudy O'Brien, *Fishing Interests*; Becka Kelly, *IC Chair*; John Flaherty, *Tourism Interests*; Jennifer Epp, *Water Board*; Ethan Bell, *Environmental Interests*; Suzanne Marr, *USEPA*; Tim Duff, *CA Coastal Conservancy*; Marshall Ochylski, *LOCSD*; Bruce Gibson, *SLO County*; Kristin Hardy, *Cal Poly/Research*; Lexie Bell, *MBNEP Staff*

1. Introductions and Updates

- a. **Jennifer Epp** – At the recent Water Board meeting, the board re-elected the chair and vice-chair each for an additional term.
- b. **John Flaherty** – Winter Bird Festival was a success, with more than 500 attendees and only one field trip cancellation due to weather.
- c. **Bruce Gibson** – In late March, the Los Osos sewer will go online. Los Osos has experienced a quick spread of an invasive plant, Sahar mustard, due to disturbance from the sewer construction. Citizens are concerned and organizing around removal efforts.
- d. **Kristin Hardy** – There will be a SLOSEA (San Luis Obispo Science and Ecosystem Alliance) meeting on March 24 at Cal Poly from 9-1pm. Cal Poly just hired a new biological oceanographer that will start in Fall 2017. The Marine Science bachelor's degree program is moving ahead to start next fall with new students.
- e. **Trudy O'Brien** – The Dungeness fishery is still closed due to high levels of domoic acid. Testing indicates that crabs in the San Luis Obispo area are clean, but the fishery will not open until the whole state is approved. It may open March 1, which would be a very short season with huge economic losses.
- f. **Becka Kelly** – The dredge is coming into the bay in May to address shoaling in the harbor entrance, which is now as narrow as 20 feet wide in one spot. There has been increased shoaling this year due to heightened wave activity from an active storm season so far. Gene Douady, a contractor that cleans the city's moorings, has found a sponge species that is new to our bay and native to Baja California. Becka will send photos to the group and Kristin Hardy will talk to other professors at Cal Poly to learn more about the sponge.
- g. **Ethan Bell** – Additional flow monitoring in the County has been funded through grant opportunities.
- h. **Gary Ruggerone** – The Bay Foundation board is recruiting, but may soon welcome the return of Dave Paradies, who has expressed interest in becoming a member again.
- i. **Tim Duff** – The Coastal Conservancy board will consider a grant for the Estuary program to develop content for the statewide Explore the Coast app at its spring meeting. The application was recommended for funding by staff. The Coastal Conservancy is also working with the Resource Conservation District (RCD) on developing a plan for restoration and management on the newly acquired Morrissey property in the Los Osos valley.



- j. **Suzanne Marr** – Suzanne suggested that the Estuary Program staff coordinate with permit folks at EPA to get some early ideas about Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve design.
- k. **Marshall Ochylski** – Marshall reported that the Los Osos Basin Management Committee has begun monthly meetings. The Committee does not have funds for infrastructure or other projects yet. The Committee is working with the County to apply for basin boundary adjustments.

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

3. **Agenda Revisions** – None presented.

4. **ACTION: Consider Approval of November 18, 2015 minutes**

Vote: Bruce motioned to approve the minutes, with edits emailed by Jennifer Epp. Gary seconded the motion. Unanimous in favor.

5. **Discussion: EPA Program Evaluation Update**

The EPA issued the final letter summarizing the results of the recent 5-year program evaluation. The letter highlights strengths and challenges for the program, and confirms that the Estuary Program passed the evaluation. The letter acknowledges our good work in outreach and public involvement, restoration, and capacity building. Areas for us to focus on in the next five years include climate change, monitoring, eelgrass restoration, and nutrient and sediment reductions.

Discussion: Lexie discussed the Estuary Program's plan to check in with EPA headquarters biannually or annually over the next five years to ensure that the program stays on track with the recommendations in the letter. Bruce and Marshall expressed concern over the difficulty in setting a target for eelgrass restoration. Jennifer Epp encouraged setting a realistic target to drive progress on the issue. Executive Committee members requested that Lexie reach out to other NEPs about what has happened when they have not met a target.

6. **Presentation: 2015 Annual Report Review**

Estuary Program staff highlighted results from projects in 2015, including Road Erosion Prevention Project, Give a Day for the Bay, and Monitoring Program activities.

7. **Discussion: 2017 Workplan Input** – See 2016 Workplan

Estuary Program staff will be preparing the 2017 Workplan over the next few months and presenting it for consideration at the May committee meetings. Current budget projections indicate level funding at \$600,000. Some current (2016) workplan tasks will continue (see 2016 workplan document for details):

- Land Conservation
- Freshwater Flow
- Restoration Maintenance and Monitoring



- Conservation Planning
- Other Restoration
- Eelgrass Monitoring
- Monitoring Program Coordination
- Monitoring Program Reporting and Analysis
- Monitoring Program Data Management
- Monitoring Program Quality Assurance
- Communications
- Education
- Community Grants
- Other E&O Tasks
- Manage Committees and Build Partnerships
- Grants and Contracts Administration and Financial Management
- General Administration and Human Resources Management
- Tracking Implementation of the Management Plan and Workplan

New tasks that may be initiated in 2017 include:

- Next Steps on the Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve
- Stormwater Management Project Planning
- Nature Center Update

Discussion: Bruce suggested broadening the Eelgrass Monitoring task to include Research, since there is already collaboration occurring with Cal Poly on research. Ethan suggested workplan tasks could address pikeminnow in Chorro Creek and tidewater goby habitat. He reported that partners in the county continue to look for funding to address pikeminnow in Choro Creek. Some work is also happening with UCLA, Cal Poly, Humboldt State, and USFWS to learn more about where tidewater gobies are using habitat in the bay.

8. Adjourn to next meeting of May 11, 2016 at 4:00pm at the MBNEP Offices.

Attachments to February Staff Report:

- 1. November EC meeting minutes**