



Morro Bay National Estuary Program

Implementation Committee Quarterly Meeting
Windows on the Water - 699 Embarcadero, Morro Bay

November 3, 2016
12:00 pm

DRAFT Minutes

Attendees: Vince Cicero, *CA State Parks*; John Sayers, *CA State Parks*; Becka Kelly, *City of Morro Bay*; Jen Nix, *Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District*; Tom Edell, *Bay Foundation of Morro Bay*; Ethan Bell, *Stillwater Sciences*; Lexie Bell, *MBNEP Staff*; Rachel Pass, *MBNEP Staff*; Sara Markham, *MBNEP Staff*; Cynthia Milhem, *MBNEP Staff*; Ann Kitajima, *MBNEP Staff*.

1. Introductions and Updates

- Jen Nix: The CSLRCD submitted a grant for the county-wide stormwater resource plan at the end of September. The county plans to fund it. Any MS4's that want Prop 1 funds must have a SWRP. This effort takes the approach of a single county-wide plan, rather than individual plans. The Upper Los Osos Bank Stabilization project was slated to start construction on November 7 and will complete a 319(h) grant that started in 2011. The Upper Salinas-Las Tablas RCD submitted a grant application for a WCB-funded grant to take on five priority species throughout the county, although only one of these, Limonium or sea lavender, is in our watershed. Partners on the project will include the CSLRCD, State Parks, and others.
- Vince Cicero: Controlled burning going on in Morro Bay State Park, with future burns to address the pine understory and eucalyptus understory.
- Carolyn Doehring: For our pikeminnow management project, we might do work in the Chorro Reservoir or the effort might focus more on a management plan. For the Ecological Reserve, work is on-going on the designs, with 30% designs expected to be completed by the end of the year. On eelgrass projects, we are working closely with CDFW and NOAA on two grant-funded projects focused on monitoring, research, and restoration.
- John Sayers: There's been some ice plant and beach grass removal work on the Sandspit as well as erosion control efforts in the Sharks Inlet area.
- Becka Kelly: The city has plans for 90 days of dredging starting in December. A company from Alaska was awarded the work by the ACOE. The work had a November 1 start date, but due to contractor availability, it's not expected to start until December 1. The work will take place in the main channel back to channel marker #20. Merkel & Associates are scheduled to conduct pre-dredge surveys soon. A Morro Creek clean-up took place recently. The CCC helped, along with city of Morro Bay employees. Large amounts of debris and hazardous waste were removed. Recently there was an underwater dive cleanup, with 53 people helping through Depth Perceptions Dive.

2. Public Comment – None presented.

3. Presentation: Ethan Bell from Stillwater Sciences

Ethan presented results of a regional assessment of instream flows throughout the county, which was a project with CSLRCD and the Upper Salinas-Las Tablas RCD that was funded by the IRWM. The Master Water Plan considered water needs from different sectors, including municipal, urban, agricultural, and environmental water demand (EWD). But the actual amounts of EWD needed to protect steelhead were not known. The study focused on identifying minimum flows at critical times of

year. The results are intended for county planning purposes and are not intended to be regulatory in nature.

The study worked to determine the minimum water levels and velocities at the watershed and sub-watershed level, based on the seasons. Stillwater analyzed existing data, collected field assessments, and then estimated and defined EWD. They analyzed the minimum flows (depth and velocity) needed in the spring for steelhead growth and in the summer for steelhead survival. Most streams typically had adequate flow for migration in the winter season. The study also incorporated county geology and slope data. The results were compiled in an interactive web-based map which is available on the CSLRCD website. As additional flow data is collected through the Central Coast Salmon Enhancement's WCB Prop 1 grant, it will be incorporated into the analysis. These minimum flows were established to allow steelhead survival and are not considered to be the preferred amount of water. In our watershed, Los Osos Creek was the only creek identified that has inadequate EWD to meet steelhead minimum needs. The next steps include additional flow monitoring and collection of data such as water temperature.

The analysis did not exclude areas upstream of barriers. So a reach of creek may have adequate water but lack access for steelhead. This information might support projects to store water during the winter and release it during the summer.

4. Agenda Revisions: None

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

Vote: Tom Edell motion to approve, Jen Nix seconded. Unanimous in favor.

6. ACTION: Recommendation on Community Grant Application

Simo Nylander resubmitted an application for a Community Grant for a video titled *Of Marshes and Morros*, a short documentary video and audio podcast focusing on past conservation efforts for the Morro Bay estuary. Simo has secured funding from a PG&E grant and from a private donor. He hopes to raise additional funds through a Kickstarter campaign in November. Filming, research, and editing are already underway. He sees this as a three-part series, but this application only focuses on the first part. He plans to edit a slightly different version for schools which incorporates educator feedback. It will be a 10 to 15-minute film, and he plans to submit it to a few film festivals. He expects to be done by the end of December.

The IC commented on the potential for controversial topics to come up in the video. They commented on the great reach it could have through schools and film festivals. Tom commented that the Bay Foundation thought the timeframe was tight, but staff had worked with Simo before. Also, Simo has committed to PG&E, so he would be responsible not only to us for completing the project.

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

7. DISCUSSION: Review Restoration Fund Five-Year Plan: 2013 to 2017

In the February 2017 meeting, we will propose a new spending plan. In preparation for that discussion, we presented what was spent in the last five years. Lexie explained reasons why actual spending deviated from the plan, which included unexpected grant funding, projects not receiving grant funding, delays in Community Grant implementation, delays in conservation easements, and permitting challenges.

8. DISCUSSION: Presentation of EPA Semiannual Report

Staff provided an overview of spending and match for the five-year grant which will be completed in April 2017.

9. DISCUSSION: Update on State of the Bay report and events

Estuary Program staff shared an update on planned events for State of the Bay in April of 2017. Additional details will be shared in the spring.

10. Adjourned at 1:30 pm to next meeting of February 2, 2017 at 12:00 pm at a location to be determined.

Attachments sent with Staff Report:

1. August 2016 IC meeting minutes
2. Community Grant Application
3. Summary of Restoration Fund Five-Year Plan: 2013 to 2017
4. EPA Semiannual Report