



Executive Committee Quarterly Meeting
Estuary Program offices, Morro Bay, CA

August 15, 2018
4:00 pm

Minutes

Attendees: Marshall Ochylski, *Los Osos Community Services District*; Jennifer Epp, *Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board*; Tim Duff (on the phone), *CA Coastal Conservancy*; Ethan Bell, *Stillwater Sciences*; Kristin Hardy, *Cal Poly*; John Flaherty, *Central Coast Outdoors*; Becca Kelly, *City of Morro Bay*; Matt Makowetski, *City of Morro Bay*; Lexie Bell, *MBNEP Staff*; Ann Kitajima, *MBNEP Staff*.

1. Introductions and Updates

- Matt: A city council meeting took place last night to consider the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Morro Bay Water Reclamation Facility. The council voted to approve, 5-0. There has been communication with the Northern Chumash tribe concerning burial grounds located along the projected path of the pipeline. Based on this, the path of the pipeline was altered.
- Ethan: The Chorro Creek pikeminnow eDNA work is wrapping up. They collected gut content samples of pikeminnow for UC Santa Barbara to conduct genetic analysis. Results show detection of steelhead in stomachs of pikeminnow, confirming that pikeminnow are consuming steelhead. No California red-legged frogs were detected in the pikeminnow gut content. Stillwater will be looking at the overall population level impact of pikeminnow predation. It's amazing that steelhead are surviving given the level of predation of pikeminnow. This data points to a huge potential to improve the steelhead population if we can manage pikeminnow. Preliminary results are in for the testing of eDNA from creek water samples. In Los Osos Creek, no pikeminnow or steelhead were detected in the lower portion of the creek. On Warden Creek, eDNA analysis of creek water indicated the presence of pikeminnow, steelhead, and California red-legged frog. Stillwater is working on the formal report. The results of this project are unique, and Stillwater would like to work with the Estuary Program and UCSB to publish the results.
- Ann: Construction on the Drought Response Outreach Program for Schools (DROPS) project is underway, which includes the construction of bioswales and wetlands to manage stormwater runoff at the Rancho El Chorro Outdoor School campus. There is also a Trout Unlimited project on Pennington Creek to replace a fish passage structure and improve a water diversion. Construction will last through September. Both projects should be completed this fall.
- Marshall: No updates from the Los Osos Community Services District. For the grant program in conjunction with money from the Estuary Program – they are in process of getting applications for low income people to connect to the Los Osos Water Reclamation Facility (WRF). The Basin Management Committee is moving forward with east side well and considering potential sites. The purpose of the well is to stop sea water intrusion. One prime site is indicated and has a willing property owner, but the neighbors got upset. The CSD is hosting a workshop on Aug 30 at 6 p.m. at the S. Bay Community Center to look at four potential sites and get public comments.
- Bruce: Seeing data going in right direction on sea water intrusion, with levels heading back towards 2005 levels. A little early to declare a trend, but looking good. Conservation is making a big difference - consumption dropped a lot. Denitrifying has begun in an upper aquifer well by Golden State, and this also takes demand off the lower aquifer. The County is about to go to the Coastal Commission to get them to understand the basin plan so they can start talking about a community plan to allow infill development. There is a meeting tomorrow on the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) which should be going to the Federal Register, and we could have a signed HCP in the near future. There are 73 connections yet to be made to the sewer in Los Osos. The City of Morro Bay will be coming to the county for land use permits for their Water Reclamation Facility. City and county staff working together on this. Cayucos broke ground on their sewer plant. Conservation effort are underway for the Chevron properties. They are trying to conserve

land so there isn't development in the area between Morro Bay and Cayucos. The Trust for Public Lands (TPL) is working on this. The County has a new director in planning department, Trevor Keith.

- Tim: The Coastal Conservancy (CC) is holding a board meeting in Morro Bay on December 6, and it would be great to have an NEP representative to give a five-minute update on what is going on with the estuary. They are working with TPL on a Toro Creek acquisition. This would be a \$1M grant for acquisition of properties. The caveat is the need for TPL to raise more local funding. CC will add \$50k to MCAS for the East Sweet Springs project. For the Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve, the board will be considering the request for \$400k to help complete the restoration effort along with California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW) funding. The CC will be touring on Dec. 5 at Toro Creek. They would like Bruce to attend. For Prop 68 funding, we won't be seeing funding from that until the next fiscal year (FY). They received \$60M not yet earmarked for a particular project. Unlike Prop 1, they are not required to do formal grant rounds but rather can work directly with partners. They are hoping to see some funds come to Morro Bay and SLO County. Prop 3 is an \$8B water bond on ballot in November. If it passes, it will provide state grant funding for projects.
- Kristin: Jennifer O'Leary left Cal Poly to go to Africa working for the Nature Conservancy. Cal Poly will be hiring a new Sea Grant staffer, ideally with an aquaculture or coastal marine fisheries background. Erin Aiello did her defense this morning on eelgrass restoration work in Morro Bay.
- Lexie: The Bay Foundation has a new board member, Sally Krenn. She recently retired from PG&E as a terrestrial biologist. She has an outreach and education emphasis, so she is a nice addition to the board. We had a visit from the Regional Administrator from EPA in August. We had a lot of help from partners around the table, and it was a good opportunity to highlight our organization and partnerships. We will be going to San Francisco in October for the national NEP meeting, which is focused on technology transfer and building partnerships. Central Coast Aquarium is planning on a small fundraiser for their feasibility study of a Morro Bay aquarium. The study then makes them eligible for a USDA loan. We are supporting them with content and outreach partnerships in the interim. We already partner with them on fieldtrips for students to go out on boat with their biologist and do experiments out on the water. This partnership allows us to reach Title I schools.
- John: Happy that Highway 1 reopened. Waterfront businesses seem to be experiencing a little bit of a lag with weak sales through end of July. But first half of August has been good. John is seeing that too. He is on track in August to take out the most people ever in a month. He is working with Gena Bentall of Sea Otter Savvy to form a group to address disturbance to all wildlife on bay.
- Becka: The IC restructuring is exciting but times of change can be challenging. Looking at the new Workgroups, she's excited to see more names filling the spots and more involvement.
- Jennifer: The Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (CCRWQCB) has had some recent staffing changes that impact who we work with. The Assistant Executive Director is now Matthew Keeling. Karen Worcester's position managing the Central Coast Ambient Monitoring Program had been filled by Julia Dyer. She is also managing on Groundwater Assessment and Protection (GAP) program. The new Senior for the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) group is Mary Hamilton, filling Jennifer's previous position. At the last Board meeting, technical information was shared related to preparation for the renewed ag order. Also under discussion was the local agency management plans, which are the ability for local entities to approve septic systems that are not connected to the sewer. SLO County is still working on theirs and in the meantime, plans are coming to the CCRWQCB for approval. They are pleased to see that the County has a mechanism to follow up with folks who aren't yet connected to the Los Osos WRF. They also had an update on the environmental justice work they're doing, which reaches into all programs to make sure all communities are informed and engaged. There was an update on supplemental environmental projects (SEP). She could share more details if we want. Lexie commented that Matt didn't feel like there was much to tell us yet. Due to the cumbersome process of WB oversight, it is difficult to manage small SEP projects.

2. Public Comment – None presented.

3. Agenda Revisions – 1) Changing the IC structure and bylaws affects the EC bylaws. Lexie printed up the EC bylaws but since the EC did not have them seven days prior, we will discuss but not vote on

them. 2) Update the minutes from the May 2018 EC meeting to reflect the e-vote to approve the Workplan revisions.

4. **ACTION:** Consider Approval of May 9, 2018 Executive Committee meeting minutes.

Vote: Matt motioned to approve, Ethan seconded. Unanimous in favor.

5. **ACTION:** Restructuring of Implementation Committee (see attached)

There were no changes to the plan from the version distributed at the May meeting. We did not receive any more feedback from either the IC or EC requesting additional changes. Lexie made only minor edits to the plan and included a summary of the process we went through and the next steps on how to create the new TAC Workgroups. The IC approved the proposal. Bruce said that it seems important that it's clear that the EC appoints the members of the TAC. Tim asked how to best recruit members for the TAC. The initial focus is making sure people currently active on the IC find a home within the TAC structure so that we don't lose anyone. Also on this agenda is an item to get suggestions from the EC on membership. On page 3 of the EC bylaws, it states that the chair may appoint members to the TAC. The bylaws don't say who appoints the chair. Bruce would like to add an official recognition by the EC to affirm by vote any TAC appointments. We will work on EC bylaw edits before our next meeting to capture these suggestions. They will be discussed at the November meeting.

Vote: Bruce moves to approve the restructuring plan. Becca seconds. All in favor.

6. **ACTION:** IC Bylaw Revision (see attached)

The group decided to table both sets of bylaws (IC and EC) and reconsider them at the November meeting. Organizations and agencies are invited to be part of the group, and they can appoint their member. For example, the Bay Foundation would be appointed to be participate, and they would appoint their representative. We will add language about the appointments being subject to approval.

Becca commented that it has been difficult to get members to participate in the IC, so it's a good idea to make it as easy as possible to get people to join.

Lexie will make edits to the bylaws in consultation with Marshall and Jennifer, and then they will be distributed for an e-vote.

7. **DISCUSSION:** Technical Advisory Committee Membership

Lexie will send an email soliciting input on potential membership.

8. **DISCUSSION:** Kandarian Farms Easement

The deal is back on. The Estuary Program pledged \$140,000 of Restoration Funding for the easement. The deal is expected to close by the end of September.

9. **DISCUSSION:** Program Updates

Staff are in the process of applying for the last portion of the funding needed for the bathymetry survey. If none of these attempts are successful, staff may come back to the EC with a request for Restoration Funding for the last \$10,000 needed for the survey.

10. **ACTION:** Ratification of Minutes for May 2018 EC meeting minutes

Staff will update the May 2018 EC meeting minutes to reflect the e-vote to approve the revised Workplan for FY2019.

Vote: Bruce moved, Matt seconded. All in favor.

11. Adjourn at 5:00 to next meeting of November 14, 2018 at 4:00 pm at the Estuary Program offices.

Attachments:

- Minutes from May 3, 2018 EC meeting
- Proposed Plan for Implementation Committee Restructuring
- Updated Implementation Committee Bylaws