



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

May 9, 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*; Joel Neel, *Bay Foundation*; Ethan Bell, *Stillwater Sciences*; Kristin Hardy, *Cal Poly*; John Flaherty, *Central Coast Outdoors*; Becka Kelly (on the phone), *City of Morro Bay*; Suzanne Marr, *USEPA*; Lexie Bell, *MBNEP Staff*; Ann Kitajima, *MBNEP Staff*.

1. Introductions and Updates

- John Flaherty: Things are going well.
- Ethan Bell: At the February Executive Committee (EC), we approved funding for the environmental DNA (eDNA) study. Stillwater and UC Santa Barbara started collecting samples this spring. EC members expressed a concern that steelhead were actually in the creek when sampling was occurring. Stillwater Sciences did a number of direct observation dives with the California Conservation Corps (CCC) looking for steelhead, and they were not seeing much. After the big storms in March, there was adequate water so that they started seeing fry about three weeks ago. During night dives, they saw fry at different age classes and observed an adult steelhead. So this confirms that the timing is good to collect pikeminnow for the eDNA work. Next week the UCSB tech will come up to collect water samples to test for pikeminnow in tributaries and Chorro mainstem. They will also test stomach samples of collected pikeminnow.
- Lexie: Bruce Gibson was unable to attend the meeting but provided the update that San Luis Obispo County passed a Styrofoam ban. The Morro Bay city council representatives could not attend. They are in the process of the draft EIR review for the Water Reclamation Facility. Comments are due May 18. The Estuary Program will be submitting a comment letter. There was a public meeting a few weeks ago that Lexie attended.
- Ann: No updates beyond the staff report.
- Suzanne: The Climate Collaborative held a resilience workshop at Cal Poly a few weeks ago. The workshop was a partnership, with FEMA funding, focused on building resilience into all kinds of systems. Lots of municipalities, scientists, etc. are involved. They are developing a rapid risk assessment. Cal Poly staff, professors, and students were also present. The group is encouraging Cal Poly to take on a financial role to act as the grant recipient for future funding awards.
- Kristen: No updates for Cal Poly or the Biology Department for the group.
- Jennifer: The Water Board meeting tomorrow and Friday will be focused on the status of groundwater in our region. Some of this information should be relevant info for this watershed. Michael Thomas, the Assistant Executive Officer, is retiring in June. In a future Board meeting, San Luis Obispo County is developing a Local Area Management Plan for septic system management. In the past, the Water Board delegated authority to local cities and counties. This worked well in some areas, but not all. In 2012, the State Board adopted a new policy that starting May 13, unless a local entity develops a plan that the State Board approves, they no longer have that authority and the state will manage the septic systems. SLO County wants to put septic systems on half-acre lots, but they haven't been able to demonstrate that this will be protective of water quality. Santa Barbara County has an approved septic plan. The Water Board is currently reviewing plans from Atascadero and SLO County. Jennifer Epp holds a different position at the Water Board, focused on permits of any waste that is a land disposal (pond, septic system, etc.). The Water Board has quite a few student interns graduating, so they are hiring. These positions are usually 10 hours/week during the school year and full-time in summer. They typically hire Cal Poly students that are environmental or civil engineering majors, although occasionally they hire biology students.
- Joel Neel: Bay Foundation has no updates.

- Marshall Ochylski: Update on Basin Management Plan in Los Osos. They are doing quarterly monitoring on seawater intrusion (previously doing it annually). April data showed a slight retreat in seawater intrusion, despite lower than normal rainfall.
- Tim Duff: No updates.
- Becka Kelly: The Yaquina is in town and dredging the harbor entrance until May 17. The Harbor Department completed the sea lion dock rebuild, and it is now in place and in use. The pipeline dredge project still has some pipeline left on the Sandspit buried near the high tide line in hard packed sand, about two miles from the northern end of the Sandspit. No one knows how long the section is, and it has not resurfaced yet. When it resurfaces, the dredge company will return and remove it. All other equipment has been removed.

2. Public Comment – None presented.

3. Agenda Revisions – None.

4. **ACTION:** Consider Approval of February 14, 2018 Executive Committee meeting minutes

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

5. **ACTION:** Recommend Approval of Fiscal Year 2019 Workplan (see attached)

Lexie reviewed the Workplan budget and projected match. The plan also shows how much of the Restoration Fund we plan to spend next year. Most of the Workplan tasks are the same as in previous years. The tasks are written to be broad and address on-going projects and efforts. New tasks for FY2019 are State of the Bay analysis and event planning, and Mutts for the Bay.

We did not make changes to the language in the Workplan for the pending changes to the Implementation Committee (IC). If we approve this change in how committees are structured in August, then we can submit a Workplan modification to Suzanne. This should be an easy change since it doesn't result in budget or task changes. Suzanne said there is a small chance of a little more funding for the Workplan. If this occurs, the EC may be able to review it remotely as it is a relatively small change.

Vote: Joel motioned to approve. Ethan seconded. No additional discussion or questions. All in favor.

6. **ACTION:** Recommendations on Community Project Applications (see attached)

Staff described the three project applications and answered EC member questions.

There were questions about the Harbor Department supply of spill cleanup supplies. The Harbor Department is the main responder to spills. If they use up their supplies, then the Coast Guard would help. If a spill occurs at a marina, they hope the spill kits could be utilized to begin responding before the Harbor Department even arrives. Increased access to spill response materials is just one more way to keep pollutants out of the bay. The Harbor Department would like to be able to continue to provide them free of charge to the public to increase use.

There was some discussion about fully funding the Harbor Department request and partially funding the wildlife camera request since spill materials directly impacted the estuary. If we didn't fully fund the OSCAR ask, Becka said it would not jeopardize readiness for on-the-ground spill response. They would purchase all 27 kits for the individual marinas with the funding and purchase a slightly reduced amount of SPARES back stock. If there was a big spill, Becka said they could seek federal funding from the Coast Guard, plus the Coast Guard would provide supplies if local stock ran out. The EC encouraged the Harbor Department to come back with a Community Project request next year if needed.

Dr. Perrine's offer is a generous one because data analysis and reporting can be a very large expense for this type of project. For a relatively small contribution, the Estuary Program would get a great deal of benefit that we likely could not afford if we had to pay in full. Overall, the group was not interested in reducing the number of cameras as it would impact the quality of the research.

The EC saw the value in a partnership with the library for future education and outreach efforts. A few pilot kits would give us a role in developing the curriculum. We'd be able to see how they work, see what people are learning, and if we developed a good project, a future application would be strengthened.

Vote: Joel moved to approve along staff recommendation, with the addition to the wildlife camera project that all hardware remains in the watershed once the effort is completed. Staff recommendations were as follows: fully fund the wildlife camera request, awarding \$3,700 in FY18 and \$700 in FY19 (utilizing funding set aside for Community Projects); fund the Harbor Department request for \$4,192; and do not fund the SLO Library Science Kit request and instead work with the applicant using program funds on one or two kits. Kristen seconded. No further discussion or debate. All in favor. Becka and Marshall abstained.

7. DISCUSSION: Presentation of Semi-Annual Report (see attached)

Staff provided a brief overview of the semi-annual report. Staff provided an update on the status of the Kandarian Farms conservation easement. Unfortunately, the family had a disagreement so the property is now for sale, and they are no longer interested in an easement. The Land Conservancy is still talking to a few partners who are interested in purchasing but they aren't feeling optimistic. They are working on another easement, which is also located on the Los Osos side of the watershed. We don't have a specific funding request yet from the Land Conservancy, but we are hoping to have something by the end of the fiscal year. At that point, we can decide if we should formally return the funds to the Restoration Fund spending plan or whether they would go to another easement.

8. DISCUSSION: Pennington Rainwater Catchment Summary Data

Staff presented some data on the rainwater catchment system at the Beef Center on Cal Poly's Escuela Ranch. The group expressed interest in an update on the system in the future. The system sustained some damage during the winter of 2017, and Cal Poly indicated that FEMA would assist with funding for repairs. The group wanted to be kept informed on the status and source of funding for the repairs.

9. DISCUSSION: Implementation Committee Restructuring Ideas (see attached)

The EC asked that we re-send the survey with the meeting minutes so that they have another chance to respond to the proposal.

Suzanne like a flexible approach to how often meetings take place. She advised us to put comments and feedback of reviewers into our next Performance Evaluation to show support for the restructuring.

To date, we've received quite a bit of positive feedback on the proposal. If this continues, then the plan is to bring a formal proposal to the committees in the August meetings. The process would also require some minor bylaw revisions, which staff would prepare and present to the committees. If the restructuring proposal and bylaw changes are approved, then we would start FY2019 with the new committee structure.

10. DISCUSSION: Performance Evaluation Letter Update (see attached)

Staff created a summary of the status of the issues brought up during the Performance Evaluation (PE) process. A few highlights on the status update: We continue to work on the CCMP update process; we

are making good progress on the conservation planning effort, for which we've held two meetings this FY and expect a draft plan at the end of the year; we've expanded sharing of environmental results, in particular with the Science Exploration talk series; we completed a monitoring plan; and we are conducting monitoring, research, and restoration to support development of eelgrass acreage goals. Our next PE review will be in 2020.

Developing acreage goals for eelgrass is very challenging. Suzanne recommended graphically showing the steps we've taken on the path to determining acreage goal for eelgrass. This helps illustrate how difficult it is to create an acreage goal and emphasizes the extensive work already accomplished.

To support the goal of sharing our environmental results, Kristin said we would be welcome to participate in the Cal Poly Pier Open Houses, which take place twice a year. Lexie and Kristen will discuss further.

11. DISCUSSION: Program Updates

Our upcoming Science Explorations talk will be on Thursday, June 14 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the SLO Botanical Garden, and the topic will be fisheries.

12. Adjourn at 5:40 to next meeting of August 15, 2018 at 4:00 pm at the Estuary Program offices.

13. As of May 29, 2018, the EC conducted an electronic vote (e-vote) on approval of the revised Workplan, which required updating because EPA awarded additional funding to the Estuary Program to support bathymetry mapping. This necessitated updating of the Workplan tasks and budget. Via email, all representatives of the eleven seats on the EC had responded with a 'yes' vote. This included Becka Kelly, Bruce Gibson, Ethan Bell, Jennifer Epp, Joel Neel, John Flaherty, Kristin Hardy, Marshall Ochylski, Sam Schuchat, and Trudy O'Brien.

Attachments:

- Minutes from February 14, 2018 EC meeting
- FY19 Workplan Draft
- FY18 Semi-annual Report Draft
- Proposed Plan for Implementation Committee Restructuring
- Community Project Application: Large and Medium-Sized Mammals in the Morro Bay Watershed
- Community Project Application: Oil Spill Containment and Response
- Community Project Application: Science Kits for Public Libraries
- Program Evaluation Status Spring 2018