

**San Francisco Bay Joint Venture
Restoration Strategy/Technical Committee
February 5, 2009 10:30 am – 2:00 pm
State Coastal Conservancy 11th floor meeting room, 1330 Broadway, Oakland**

In attendance: *Marc Holmes, Chair, (The Bay Institute); John Brosnan (Sonoma Land Trust); Moira McEnespy (State Coastal Conservancy); Tom Gandesbery (State Coastal Conservancy); Maxene Spellman (State Coastal Conservancy); Brad Olson (East Bay Regional Parks District); Reneé Spenst (Ducks Unlimited); Stephanie Bishop (US Geological Survey); Barbara Salzman (Marin Audubon Society); Julian Wood (PRBO Conservation Science); Jill Demers (San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory); Cecille Caterson (California State Parks Foundation); Gail Seymour (California Department of Fish and Game); Todd Steiner (Salmon Protection and Watershed Network); Kate Symonds (US Fish and Wildlife Service – Partners for F&W); Giselle Block (US Fish and Wildlife Service); Michelle Orr (Phil Williams and Associates); Suzanne Olyarnik (Richardson Bay Audubon); Mike Perlmutter (Audubon California); Mike Lynes (Golden Gate Audubon); Lisa Micheli (Sonoma Ecology Center); John Klochak (US Fish and Wildlife Service SFBay Coastal Program).*

Staff: *Beth Huning, Coordinator; Sandra Scoggin, Assistant Coordinator; Caroline Warner, SFBJV Public Outreach Coordinator*

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Presentation - Concept to convert Highway 37 between Vallejo and Novato to a public toll road to expand road and fund large scale restoration of surrounding wetlands of the San Pablo Bay region

Jerry Meral, former Executive Director of the Planning and Conservation League, presented this concept and led a discussion. Highway 37 is very congested; the entire route is 4 lanes except the section across the San Pablo Baylands from Vallejo to Infineon. The road also acts as a levee for wetlands and water flow.

Jerry proposes that CalTrans study the possibility of a toll road as a way to fund expansion and improvements and to generate funding for wetlands restoration in San Pablo Bay. A toll road could generate \$900 million over 30 years, with \$500 million for restoration. The discussion included how to address sea level rise and need to increase public transportation and not encourage additional vehicle traffic.

Action: Jerry has asked the Joint Venture to endorse a CalTrans study. A concept paper and letter to officials requesting a study will be circulated to the Restoration Committee. Jerry will work further with individual groups and organizations to garner support.

3. State Bond Freeze

Partners discussed impacts of the bond freeze on their projects. Issues include money owed on projects that either have or have not yet been invoiced, work stoppages, bond administering agencies forced to cancel board meetings, and uncertainty when and if bond funding will be unfrozen. The Conservancy is encouraging submission of invoices. The Public Money Investment Board just released \$650 million, which will primarily be used to pay back invoices on contracts. The Conservancy staff are exploring stopgap funding. Federal grant programs are on track and should be considered.

4. New Project Presentation and Request for Adoption by the SFBJV -Lagunitas Creek Watershed - Golf Course Acquisition to Restore Floodplain Habitat for Coho Recovery in West Marin

Todd Steiner of the Salmon Protection and Watershed Network (SPAWN) presented the specifics of this acquisition and restoration project in Marin.

The site is San Geronimo Golf Course, a 110-acre facility built in the floodplains of San Geronimo and Larsen Creeks, two significant coho-bearing tributaries. The golf course is located in the San Geronimo Valley, headwaters of the 104 square-mile Lagunitas Creek Watershed (LCW), habitat for the most important and strongest remaining population of endangered Central California Coast coho (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), and critical to the recovery of coho throughout the State.

Purchasing the golf course would allow:

(1) restoration of riparian forest; (2) installation of large in-stream woody debris; (3) re-connection and restoration of floodplains; (4) elimination of a permitted diversion of water from the stream and a well that may be impacting stream flow; (5) eradication of invasive species (bullfrogs, bass, bluegill and the aquatic plant parrot-feather); (6) removal of salmonid migration barriers; and (7) the cessation of inputs of pesticides and fertilizer, including at least two pesticides currently used that are known to be toxic to salmonids.

Action: The project was enthusiastically adopted by the committee and will be added to the SFBJV tiered project lists. JV staff and partners will assist SPAWN as needed on this effort.

5. Update on the Invasive Spartina Project (ISP)

Maxene Spellman of the California Coastal Conservancy gave a status update on the ISP. The project has been heavily impacted by the bond freeze, as bond funds comprised the majority of their budget. They have been able to get some foundation funding to do bare bones pre treatment planning. They received settlement funding from an accident in the Palo Alto Baylands, but it is required that this funding be used for treatment in the South Bay. PRBO has agreed to be the fiscal sponsor to make funding solutions easier and are also helping with clapper rail monitoring, along with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

The priority treatment for 2009 will be problem areas in the South Bay. The bad news is if the project doesn't get money for management or bond money doesn't come through the project could disband. Even if bond money becomes available with no money for monitoring, they could face a \$3-4 million increase in project expenses because the project would be set back 2-3 years. Maxene requested that in this lean time for the project, that JV partners please follow the invasive spartina best practices and communicate with the ISP.

6. Suggested Guidance on Climate Change for Potential Grantees

Michelle Jespersen of the California Coastal Conservancy presented a brief overview of the current draft of the Conservancy's guidance document for projects on how climate change will factor into the Conservancy's project funding selection process. The document is very much a draft and input is welcome. Comments are encouraged, and there is currently no deadline.

Discussion included issues of balancing ecological function and diversity with carbon sequestration, importance of ongoing research and adaptive management, the dynamic nature of this document as our understanding evolves, funding for assessments not currently covered by Conservancy funding, issues of scale and ecosystem migration and being flexible as we continue to learn more. The importance of

funding for monitoring was strongly noted as per the new concerns posed by climate change. It was noted that there may be some funding mechanisms associated with AB 32.

7. Audubon's California Important Bird Areas GIS layer

Michael Perlmutter of California Audubon presented this new resource available to partners. It is an international effort to conserve birds and their habitats and includes 145 sites in California. Sites are selected based on a set of four criteria Audubon California has compiled GIS info for all sites in the state. The work is completed and will be released in March. Contact Mike (mperlmutter@audubon.org) to receive a dvd or visit <http://ca.audubon.org/iba/> for more information.

8. Outreach Committee interface with Restoration Committee Projects

Caroline Warner, SFBJV Outreach Coordinator, let partners know that there are tools and products available to help project managers with outreach on their projects. Examples include the messages, events, and communications that the committee has put together about the Stop Work order, the Hwy 37 campaign the climate change white paper, which is available and will be updated periodically.

In addition the JV will host decision-maker tours in spring and fall to education new legislative staff and committee members about the importance of wetlands as green infrastructure, etc. The Restoration Committee helps select projects to visit; so Caroline will be in touch with Marc about the process.

The Outreach Committee is also involved in the planning of the *State of the Estuary* conference in the fall and is looking for program suggestions involving projects. Contact Caroline (cwarner@sfbayjv.org) with your ideas.

Podcasts are still funded by PG&E and the Conservancy and being produced approximately twice a month. If you have an idea for a podcast, please contact Caroline.

The JV fact sheets were distributed for editing and input prior to publication for DC and Sacramento trips. Participation on the JV Outreach Committee was invited.

9. Tiered project list review - Review of Tier 1, Tier 2 and Other Active Project lists

The project lists were circulated for updates. It is important to keep project information up to date as there are frequent requests by funders and others. Updates are continuously accepted through the online Habitat Project Tracking system. Please contact Sandra (sscoggin@sfbayjv.org) for a user name and password.

10. Announcements and project updates - All Participants

Brad Olson: The Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) for the Cosco Busan spill is continuing. Brad sits on the committee that is reviewing the project proposals. They are working on a process of setting priorities and determining how well the projects match with the damage. The trustee agencies will be starting in a process with the responsible entity to vet some costs. Initially funding will be go to the area that was oiled. If there is not a good project to fit with a particular damage they will other impacted areas or species; so partners are encouraged to submit projects even if they are outside of the area. There is an online form for submitting projects. Applicants were encouraged to fill out the requested information completely.

Berkeley Meadow Phase Three has completed final design and is awaiting state funds release. They have until June to start work, otherwise will have to wait a year.

Lisa Micheli: Stuart Creek Fish Passage Barrier project has money in hand. Nathanson Creek is now a River Parkway, but the funding was frozen in December. See the tiered project lists for more information on these projects and on Upper reach of Sonoma Creek and Napa RCDs Rutherford Reach.

Barbara Salzman: A report on Vegetation Management in Terrestrial Edges of Tidal Marshes of the San Francisco Bay, funded by the Joint Venture, was completed by Peter Baye and is available. Although intended for volunteers, the guidelines apply to everyone who works in or manages these habitats. The JV will help coordinate a presentation and possibly a workshop as well.

Marin Audubon is advised to not plant anything at Bahia due to the lack of rain. This will set the project back a year.

There is a potential acquisition of eelgrass property called Sausalito Marina. The property is in foreclosure.

Tiscornia Marsh was donated but needs funding to plan restoration.

Moira McEnespy: The Conservancy has authorized an additional \$1 million for Yosemite Slough.

Sandra Scoggin for Isa Woo: The Fish and Wildlife Service with USGS and partners hosted a climate change workshop in the Pacific Region Jan 29-30 2008 in San Francisco. It was well attended. USGS has a video of the plenary sessions, Bays and Estuaries, and Species/Population Management sessions. Visit the links below for directions and information.

<mms://video.wr.usgs.gov/workshop> and

<http://www.fws.gov/pacific/ClimateChange/meetings/coastal.cfm>. The website for directions for opening the video files from the climate change workshop:

<http://www.fws.gov/pacific/ClimateChange/meetings/coastal/webcast.html>

For Natalie Cosantino Manning: NOAA may soon award funding to projects from the Cosco Busan settlement. They have been determining how much injury and how many acres were affected and applying formulas to determine amounts and locations for this funding. They have been developing a database of eligible projects working with individual partners and lists provided by the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture and others. The geographic scope they are looking at is as follows:

East Bay - Just slightly north of the Richmond Bridge south to Crown Beach Central Bay - San Francisco waterfront north to Richmond Bridge Coast - Point Reyes to Montara. The bird subgroup is looking at injuries to specific species and specific local and non-local restoration projects to benefit impacted species.

NOAA has also been working to secure restoration funds in the economic stimulus bill.

Mike Lynes: There was an article in the New York Times attacking the stimulus bill in the senate.

Beth Huning: The SFBJV presented to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) committee in January. Three years ago the NAWMP Assessment Team conducted an assessment and provided recommendations to JVs. Susan Wainwright de la Cruz and John Takekawa represented the SFBJV in waterfowl, and Beth did a presentation addressing joint venture administrative recommendations.

The San Pablo Bay Managers Working Group has been discussing public access planning and coordination. The plan to map existing and planned public access points for all of the San Pablo Bay projects to be able to analyze the least impactful locations for access.

The Record of Decision (ROD) was signed for the South Bay Salt Pond Project, and Phase 1 can now move forward.

Michelle Orr: PWA has a revised carbon sequestration white paper that has been funded by the Resources Law Group (RLG). It should be available for release within days. The JV will link to it once it is available.

11. The meeting of February 5, 2009 was adjourned.