

**San Francisco Bay Joint Venture
Restoration Strategy/Technical Committee
Tuesday, December 11, 2007 10:30 am – 1:30 pm
State Coastal Conservancy Office - 1330 Broadway
11th floor meeting room**

In attendance: Marc Holmes, Chair, (The Bay Institute); Ken DiVittorio (PG&E); Abe Doherty (State Coastal Conservancy); Arthur Feinstein (Citizens' Committee to Complete the Refuge); Janet Hansen (San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory); Catherine Hickey (PRBO Conservation Science); Marilyn Latta (Save the Bay); Gary Miltimore (Marin Conservation Corps); Gillian O'Doherty (NOAA Restoration Center); Peggy Olofson (Invasive Spartina Project); Brad Olson (East Bay Regional Parks District); Michael Perlmutter (Audubon California); Eli Saddler (Golden Gate Audubon); Barbara Salzman (Bay Area Audubon Council); Phil Stevens (Urban Creeks Council); Kate Symonds (US Fish and Wildlife Service); Larry Wycoff (Ca Dept of Fish and Game).

Staff: Beth Huning, Coordinator; Sandra Scoggin, Assistant Coordinator

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. RST Committee 2008 Work Plan and Science Program updates

Beth summarized the work plan actions for 2008. The work plan consists of actions either identified by the Committee or requested of the Committee by the JV Management as a result of discussions at the 10/30/07 retreat. Committee members were asked to help identify a timeline for activities.

- A revision of the JV Implementation Plan will be launched in 2008. This update is expected to take 2-3 years and will incorporate new goals including seasonal wetlands goals updates. ***A scope will need to be developed. This will be addressed at the next meeting of the committee.***
- Implementation of a design review program will allow partners to seek technical advice on projects. Contract details are still being finalized and work is expected to begin after the first of the year. In addition to consultants and agency representatives, the SFBJV Technical committee will be represented on each review panel. ***Committee members were asked to let Sandra know if they would be interested in representing the committee on occasion. Other suggestions were made regarding review team composition that will be incorporated into the program.***
- Joint Venture Seasonal Wetlands goals will be updated. This includes revising the eastern boundary of the SF Bay Joint Venture to delineate the previously amorphous line between the SFBJV and the Central Valley JV. Acreage goals for the eastern part of the SFBJV will be recalculated. Ducks Unlimited is the contractor on this project. Potential restoration and protection opportunities will be scoped out in the spring through a series of focus group meetings in various

locations throughout the bay. A question was asked concerning consensus on a definition for "seasonal wetlands". Beth responded that the committee had previously discussed a simple definition of seasonal wetlands being those that have water some but not all of the year.

- Global warming and sea level rise, energetics of birds, and carrying capacity of Bay will continue to be considered within the workplan, particularly as applies to the Implementation Strategy Update that will be initiated in the coming year.
- Public and private funding opportunities will continue to be disseminated and further scoped.
- Public access issues and impacts to habitat will continue to be addressed and may take a more prominent role.
- Coordination with other planning efforts will continue and potentially increase. It was suggested that a chart or analysis of the overlaps and gaps of these various efforts be created by the committee. This will be added to the work plan. These efforts include the Upland Goals project, the Subtidal Habitat Goals project and Watershed coordination efforts.
- ***The work plan will be updated to incorporate these suggestions.***

3. SFBJV Creeks Sub-committee Report - Phil Stevens of the Urban Creeks Council (UCC) presented an update on the SFBJV subcommittee. Phil is working with JV Staff and others to clarify the future role and direction of the SFBJV Creeks Subcommittee.

There are at least three different venues in the bay where creek work is addressed - The Urban Creeks Council, The JV Creeks Subcommittee and a proposed but not yet created nor defined regional creek and watershed group that the Conservancy, Bay Area Open Space Council, SFBJV and UCC.

As the new JV Creeks Subcommittee Chair, Executive Director of the UCC, and potential lead on the new regional group, Phil is analyzing the different relationships to develop recommendations for the proper roles of the various groups. At the same time, the JV Creeks sub-committee is in transition with a new chair, determining who will be implementing the recommendations of the infrastructure barriers white paper, and updating the JV implementation plan.

There is much work to be done among the two or three groups. Some issues that may be addressed include:

- a perceived divide between the communities and individuals who work on freshwater and saltwater projects and issues. There is a need to build a more cohesive integration between the two ecosystems. And partners carrying out the restoration projects.

- coordinating more effectively with the Riparian Habitat Joint Venture (RHJV), which historically has focused on the Central Valley and Southern California rather than Bay Area creeks.
- working with academics and researchers to assess the biological results of restoration
- prioritize creek and riparian restoration projects
- re-assessing existing creek goals and accomplishments

Phil gathered input from members of the committee. The committee can look forward to future reports as the UCC program and Phil's recommendations for the committee are developed.

The issue of JV staffing needs for the creeks committee was raised and will need to be addressed in the Creeks Committee work plan as it develops.

4. RAMSAR designation for SF Bay - Mike Perlmutter of Audubon California gave a presentation on RAMSAR, the designation of wetlands of international importance. Mike's presentation provided an overview of RAMSAR, benefits of the designation, and the process of nominating a site. Through a brief discussion it was determined that JV staff and partners are interested in pursuing designation of SF Bay as a RAMSAR site, depending upon how time-consuming the application process is. The Bay would clearly meet many of the program's criteria. The designation could help in pitching funding proposals for the Bay and bring more public attention to the Bay. If land ownership proves to be an issue, it was suggested that we could pursue the designation solely for the publicly owned parts of the Bay, and let private landowners opt in if they desired.

Mike will do some investigation of the process and previous applications, send out a link to the application. The nomination will be discussed further at the next committee meeting.

5. Chelsea Wetlands - Liz Warmerdam of the City of Hercules presented a new wetlands restoration project and requested that the JV consider adopting the project. Adoption by the JV provides benefits such as increased visibility and potential access to a variety of resources as the project would then be added to the tiered project lists maintained and distributed by the JV.

The project is adjacent to the Pinole Creek Demonstration project and adds the tidal floodplain to the restoration of the area. An information sheet on the project was distributed ahead of the meeting and Liz also circulated a variety of informational sheets with maps and sketches of the potential project.

There was general agreement that this project seemed appropriate for the JV, and it was noted that Pinole Creek is already a JV adopted project.

Information specific JV project adoption criteria will be circulated, and adoption will be determined at the next meeting.

Liz also noted that the City of Hercules has many wetland areas, and that this is likely the first of potentially many projects that we may see proposed.

6. Oil Spill Fines -The Migratory Bird Treaty Act authorizes fines for resources impacted by the oil spill. Information was distributed that described the potential for the JV partnership to help direct how some of these fine monies are spent by creating a NAWCA fund for SF Bay projects.

There is a council of trustees that helps to determine the damages and fines. It is likely that the process will proceed more quickly than in previous spills. Previous spills (89 Exxon Valdez, 96 North Cape, and 03 Bouchard) showed inconsistency in how fines were utilized. It is also possible that NFWF could administer the fine moneys. There was a general consensus that restricting fine money to projects that are analyzed for biological values would be welcome. A few pertinent questions were: what would overhead be from NAWCA? Would monies be guaranteed to be spent in SF Bay? Are upstream priorities covered?

Beth will contact the Fish and Wildlife Service, pose the questions, and research options for SFBJV to direct oil spill money into a NAWCA account.

7. JV Project Funding

NAWCA standard grants are due March 8, 2008. Please contact Beth soon if you are considering applying. The Sonoma Baylands Wetlands Restoration NAWCA standard application has been approved by NAWCA Council. When the NEPA analysis is completed, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission can fund the project.

The California Council of Land Trusts has offered to put on a workshop for JV partners on how land acquisition and restoration fits into Prop 84 structure. There would be a nominal fee of approximately \$25 to cover materials (comprehensive binder). The committee was very interested. ***The workshop will be scheduled within the next couple months, and partners will be notified.***

8. NAWCA small grant ranking – The JV was recently informed that it will need to rank the four NAWCA small grants that were submitted this cycle. After a discussion of the potential process, it was decided that Beth would contact NAWCA to find out it is an absolute requirement that we rank the projects. (NOTE: Subsequently the JV was told that we will need to rank the projects if they are to be competitive nationally). ***A subcommittee of Marc Holmes, Arthur Feinstein and Catherine Hickey was identified to develop a ranking process for the small grants. Larry Wycoff and***

Kate Symonds will assist by reviewing the projects. Ranks needs to be submitted by January 23, 2008.

9. Project reports, updates, and announcements from participants

Peggy Olofson, Invasive Spartina Project: Over 95% of known infestations were treated in 2007, including newly discovered sites. Pesticide (Imazapyr) spraying is typically done to kill, although if vegetation is needed for wildlife spraying can be phased. A less potent application leaves vegetation alive, but inhibits seed production. This was done at Colma Creek to maintain Clapper Rail habitat. A trap and move program is being considered there for Clapper Rails.

Monitoring shows increases in Clapper Rail numbers over the last 3-4 years in most eradication sites. Clapper rail surveys start in January. At least one Clapper Rail was shown to move from the South to the North Bay.

Items of concern:

Caltrans has imported invasive Spartina to the east side of Hwy 37.

Spartina moving into the upper reaches of creeks and sloughs.

Densiflora seed shown to last 3-4 years, not the 1 year as previously thought.

Committee members were thanked for all their assistance in various aspects of the eradication effort. They were also **encouraged to report any infestations observed.**

Marilyn Latta, Save the Bay:

The winter planting season is underway. 30,000 seedlings of 25 species representing mid marsh, upland marsh, and grassland transition will be planted in 7 sites in the SF Bay which include. A monitoring summary is planted at all sites. ***Save the Bay is looking for groups to help, so please contact Marilyn.***

Native oyster monitoring is occurring at 6 sites with oysters being found at four of these sites. They are finding native oysters in the water, but they lack sufficient attachment surfaces.

Kate Symonds, Partners for Fish and Wildlife:

Cost share funding is available for any land that is not state or federally owned. Grants are of no more than \$25,000. The Coastal Program is also in its funding cycle, tending to focus on a wide range of project types. **For Coastal Program funding contact Rick Morat**

FWS grant programs want to expand efforts to connect children with nature.

Barbara Salzman, Marin Audubon:

Marin Audubon is awaiting the BCDC permt for restoration at Bahia .

Catherine Hickey, PRBO Conservation Science:

The San Francisco Baywide Shorebird Survey has been completed with the assistance of SFBBO, USGS and Audubon. The two years of data will be presented at an upcoming technical committee meeting.

South Bay Salt Pond EIS/EIR is being released with a preferred alternative being Alternative C, 90% tidal and 10% managed ponds and pannes. We will hear more about this in coming days.

Brad Olson, East Bay Regional Parks District:

Work on Breuner Marsh property condemnation continues.

Berkeley Meadow phase two construction at East Shore State Park will happen next year, and phase three is scheduled for the following year. Thanks to funding from the State Coastal Conservancy, the entire project is funded.

23 miles of EBRPD shoreline property were affected by the Cosco Busan oil spill. About 400 birds rescued mostly scoters and grebes from Brooks Island. Damages will likely be in the millions of dollars. EBRPD will likely pursue a separate settlement. The District just bought an airboat which will help with access over on consolidated mud. This was useful in bird rescues. Clapper Rail surveys are being completed now. It appears that numbers have increased.

Eli Saddler, Golden Gate Audubon:

Alameda Point is a major advocacy effort. The Navy and Veterans Affairs are trying to develop a hospital and may be trying to circumvent NEPA by splitting the project. Golden Gate Audubon is seeking partners to sign on to advocacy letter. ***Eli will send this letter to Sandra to distribute to the committee.***

Janet Hansen, San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory:

SFBBO is launching a study of gull use of landfills. They will be looking at hazing/abatement techniques: pyrotechnics, sheep herding dogs, falconry, etc.

They have finished the field work on their study of birds and power lines.

Snowy Plover monitoring will resume in January. They will also continue to monitor shorebird use of salt ponds.

Mike Perlmutter, Audubon California:

Mike reiterated Audubon's participation in completing the SF Bay Shorebird Survey.

Audubon California was very active in the oil spill response, particularly in Richardson Bay.

Larry Wycoff, California Department of Fish and Game:
Karen Taylor is back from her leave.

Napa Sonoma Marsh restoration is going well. Ponds 3, 4, and 5 are complete, as are 1, 1A, and 2. The design for the upper ponds is now being started.

The Napa Plant site has completed designs and is ready to go to bid, but they are still awaiting BCDC permits, which are affecting funding.

Abe Doherty, State Coastal Conservancy:

*Abe is interested in efforts to **develop specific oil spill recommendations and suggested that it be on the agenda at the next meeting.*** He wants to ensure that the various efforts are coordinated. The Subtidal Goals project is discussing specific recommendations. Natalie Cosantino Manning of NOAA is part of the primary working group that is putting together a plan of what should be funded with settlement money from the spill, including a list of potential projects. They plan to have a draft of the plan available by spring with scoping meetings held in summer. The Cosco Busan ship (valued at \$80 million) is being held as collateral. Natalie is hopeful that it will be an expedited process, thus we need to act fast to have input on projects.

Abe would like to receive suggestions from committee members of what studies or planning needs to be done to get projects ready to be eligible to receive oil spill mitigation funds.

Gary Miltimore, Marin Conservation Corps:

MCC is working on many of the JV projects, including partnering with Friends of Corte Madera Creek to hand remove Spartina, helping with planting at Giacomini, working on Bel Marin Keys levee and bank stabilization, Mud snail eradication. They have completed approximately 30 miles of creek enhancement with various cities, and will also be helping with restoration of Lower Redwood Creek.

Beth Huning, San Francisco Bay Joint Venture:

Roche Ranch acquisition is closing imminently. This acquisition will provide connectivity from Tolay Lake and creek all the way down to the Refuge on the Bay.

The Navy has announced that it will release an RFP for a conservation conveyance of Skaggs Island. The Center for Urban Watershed Renewal on the East Coast will respond to the RFP. If awarded the conveyance, they will do the clean up then transfer the property to the state or FWS. The JV is still learning about this proposal.

Scoping comments for the Water Trail are due by the 18th, but they will accept them until the 23rd.

The next South Bay Salt Pond Stakeholder Forum is December 14th. The final EIS/R will be presented.

10. The meeting was adjourned.