

**San Francisco Bay Joint Venture
Restoration Strategy/Technical Committee
Friday, October 23, 2009 12:30 pm - 4 pm
State Coastal Conservancy 11th floor meeting room
1330 Broadway, Oakland**

Summary Meeting Notes

In attendance: Marc Holmes, Chair (*The Bay Institute*); Myla Ablog (*Literacy for Environmental Justice*); Lindsay Adrean (*Oregon State University*); Joy Albertson (*US Fish and Wildlife Service*); Doug Bell (*East Bay Regional Park District*); Ann Buell (*State Coastal Conservancy*); Tony Chapelle (*Wildlife Conservation Board*); Jill Bluso Demers (*San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory*); Scott Demers (*H.T. Harvey and Associates*); Arthur Feinstein (*Citizen's Committee to Complete the Refuge*); Tom Flynn (*Lawson's Landing*); Neil Fujita (*East Bay Regional Parks District*); Michelle Jespersion (*State Coastal Conservancy*); Marilyn Latta (*State Coastal Conservancy*); Moira McEnespy (*State Coastal Conservancy*); Eric Mruz (*US Fish and Wildlife Service*); Barbara Salzman (*Marin Audubon*); Maxene Spellman (*State Coastal Conservancy*); Reneé Spenst (*Ducks Unlimited*); Fari Tabatabai (*US Army Corps of Engineers*); Laura Valoppi (*US Geological Survey*); Julian Wood (*PRBO Conservation Science*);

Staff: Beth Huning, *Coordinator*; Sandra Scoggin, *Assistant Coordinator*; Sarah Rose, *SFBJV Intern*

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. New Project Presentation – Lawson's Landing

Joel Gerwein of the State Coastal Conservancy provided an overview of the Lawson's Landing Tomales Dunes Wetlands acquisition, including characteristics and biological values of the Tomales Dunes Complex, potential restoration opportunities, and the current status of property/opportunity for public-private partnership.

Restoration opportunities include:

- Beach grass control
- Restore natural hydrology
- Improve grazing management

The current status is as follows:

- Obtaining permits for new campground master plan: Marin County OK'ed master plan with reduced camping in seasonal wetlands
- Upcoming Coastal Commission hearing
- Landowners want to maintain camping while protecting and enhancing natural resources
- Required mitigation must be separated from voluntary enhancement/restoration
- Efforts to acquire conservation easement over dune complex are underway

The project was brought to the committee for adoption as a JV project. However, the committee has not yet had a chance to review the specific adoption criteria for the project. Once the information is completed by the project managers, it will be circulated to the committee and adoption will be revisited.

Action: Project Managers will complete the SFBJV Adoption Criteria and JV staff will circulate to the committee.

3. Caspian Tern Proposed Relocation

Fari Tabatabai presented the US Army Corps of Engineers and US Fish and Wildlife Service propose relocate Caspian Terns (CATE) from the Columbia Gorge to sites in the San Francisco Bay. The issue was brought to the SFBJV Restoration Committee for feedback on the proposal, proposed sites, and potential alternatives.

The presentation included history of Caspian Terns in the Columbia River Estuary, population and habitat trends, the regulatory genesis for the project, the site selection process, the status of the project and areas under consideration in the San Francisco Bay. Within the Columbia Gorge, the majority of the Caspian Tern population is on East Sand Island with a current population of 9,000-10,000 breeding pairs. The US Fish and Wildlife Service, as the lead agency for the EIS, in collaboration with the US Army Corps of Engineers and NOAA Fisheries, has initiated a relocation program due to over-predation on salmon by the terns.

The selected alternative includes the redistribution of the East Sand Island Tern colony and the reduction of habitat on East Sand Island. Redistribution will be accomplished through nesting habitat development and social facilitation. With the program, they are using existing islands along the Terns' migratory path and creating new habitat/islands in hopes that the birds will relocate. They are using social attraction techniques using decoys and recorded calls.

Project status:

The EIS is complete as are scoping meetings, which created additional selection criteria for the relocation sites.

Initial Screening Criteria:

- Suitable nesting habitat is present or minimal enhancement required.
- Site is available or could be managed.
- Site can support substantial number of breeding terns.
- Prey is available in most or all years.
- Potential predators are absent or controllable.
- Levels of natural or human disturbance are absent or minimal.
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Additional Selection Criteria:

- CATE management in California only at historic colonies.
- Relative stability and abundance of suitable prey
- Availability of or capability to improve/develop Caspian tern nesting habitat in the near future (2005-2008)
- Ability to attract nesting terns from East Sand Island
- Minimal conflict with ESA-listed species

Alternative Nesting Sites:

- 3 inland lakes in Oregon
- 3 sites in Upper Klamath Basin, California
- 3 sites in San Francisco Bay, California

Proposed sites in San Francisco Bay are Brooks Island where there is an existing colony, Hayward Shoreline, and the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge. NOAA Fisheries a conducted biological assessment of these sites and had no concerns about increasing populations of Caspian Terns at don

Edwards and Hayward. They did, however, have concern about Brooks because salmonids were about 3% of their diet.

The numbers of and breeding success rates of breeding Caspian Terns in the SF Bay are going down. Historically the Bay has supported lots of Caspian Terns. Project managers argue that the issue is not necessarily bringing them back, but where they are located. Current sites and numbers of Caspian Terns in the San Francisco Bay are:

- Brooks Island – 650 pairs
- Agua Vista – 5-10 pairs
- Eden landing – 70 pairs, but the habitat will be removed in the current restoration project
- Redwood and Ravenswood – one pair each
- Stevens Creek – 60 pairs

Historic and current use of the San Francisco Bay was discussed with the Restoration Committee, as well as issues related to fisheries and impacts on other prey and non-prey species. Questions included:

- What other avian species would they be impacting and in what ways? (Least Terns, Forster's Terns, California Gulls)
 - Project researchers suggested that where the Least and Caspian Terns nest together, there is evidence of positive effect. Committee members noted examples of negative effects. It was suggested that Leora Feeney be contacted to clarify this issue. East Bay Regional Parks District would like to receive evidence of no negative impact on Least Terns.
- What prey species would they impact?
- What will be the long-term impacts of the project?

The project planning team took suggestions from committee members and agreed to periodically attend and brief the Restoration Committee. They will notify the JV about EA release.

4. JV Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

The SFBJV has received \$50,000 from USFWS Region 8 to produce a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) Plan for the JV. A task force will create the scope of work, budget planning, and ultimately write the plan. We expect the task force to include PRBO Conservation Science, San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Geological Survey, Ducks Unlimited, possibly someone from the Citizen's Committee to Complete the Refuge, and others.

5. Subtidal Goals Project

Marilyn Latta, Project Manager with the State Coastal Conservancy, provided an update on the Subtidal Goals project. Following the overview, history, and reviewing subtidal habitat types and locations, she showed new GIS maps and Subtidal Habitat Conceptual Models created by Wim Kimmerer. A major new planning concept focuses on increasing ecological integration within project designs.

Elements of Design Integration include:

- Reduce habitat fragmentation, increase connectivity
- Plan for more shallow water habitat and maximum edges
- Design gradual slopes and a variety of topography
- Pay attention to "subtidal transition zones"
- Optimize natural sediments to promote self-maintenance

Artificial Structures

- Reduce and modify hard structures to protect habitat
- Monitor existing native species
- Survey existing subtidal resources and species use
- Enhance current habitat for aquatic species
- Restore offshore shellfish, eelgrass beds, fish habitats

Manage invasive species

- Survey for Aquatic Invasive Species
- When feasible, eradicate invasive species

Control marine debris

- Identify trash hot spots, prevent sources of debris

Photograph at low tides

- Photo-monitor sites at extreme low tides

Assessment projects include native eelgrass, shellfish, and creosote pilings, and living shorelines, which is a soft bioengineering approach employing natural habitat elements to protect shorelines from erosion while also providing water quality benefits and critical habitat.

Living Shorelines: Issues for study in SF Bay

- **Scale:** what acreage is needed to slow wave action?
- **Suitability:** must be matched to site conditions
- **Permitting:** fill considerations in the subtidal zone
- **Monitoring:** functional connections between habitats
- **Pilot:** test effectiveness thru experimental designs

Proposed Living Shoreline Projects

May 2010- May 2011:

- Monitor existing populations; Final Design/Permitting Summer 2011:
- Install two acre project at 3 sites:
 - Outboard of Corte Madera Creek
 - Eastshore State Park
 - Eden Landing/South Bay Salt Pond Project

Proposed 2011- 2013 Monitoring Tasks:

- Number of oysters recruited/year; number of adults persisting/year
- Number of eelgrass shoots propagated/year, persisting/year
- Presence/absence and diversity of species use (epifauna, fish, birds)
- Change in sedimentation and erosion rates
- Change in flow velocity/ wave height rates
- Comparison of results between replicates at 3 sites

The recommendations will be reviewed by the Science and Restoration Committees, and when finalized will be incorporated in the draft document for public circulation and review in summer 2010.

6. Review of Proposed Restoration Committee Work Plan 2009-2010

The committee briefly discussed and approved the content of the proposed work plan for the coming year, which will be presented and discussed for adoption by the SFBJV Management Board at the SFBJV annual planning on October 27.

7. Updates on Ramsar Nomination Process

Mike Perlmutter presented the background on the Ramsar designation and process. The benefits of Ramsar designation include global recognition, international conservation linkages, and enhanced publicity and conservation support.

The process is as follows:

- Demonstrate meeting or exceeding 1 or more of the 9 RAMSAR criteria
- Provide geographical data
- Provide baseline ecological info
- Provide cultural and management info
- Furnish maps and supporting documents

Mike demonstrated how the San Francisco Bay meets or exceeds all 9 criteria.

The next steps are:

- Review application packet
- Obtain letters of support from:
 - each landowner willing to enroll in Ramsar
 - local and state wildlife or natural resource agency
 - a member of congress representing the geographic area
 - other stakeholders
- Submit application to the Director of the US Fish & Wildlife Service.
 - If accepted, the application will be forwarded to the Ramsar Secretary General. Further information may be solicited by the Secretary General, or the application may be accepted and the site is added to the Ramsar list of Wetlands of International Importance.
- Report major site changes to the Ramsar Secretariat.

Audubon and the JV will be contacting many restoration committee members for letters of support.

The SFBJV thanked Mike Perlmutter for the excellent job he has done preparing the application.

8. Announcements and Project Updates

Mike Perlmutter: Tubbs Island received the BCDC permit, and construction may start construction next week. There will be two or three breaches that will open the area to tidal exchange.

9. Adjourn