

**San Francisco Bay Joint Venture  
Restoration Strategy/Technical Committee  
Thursday, January 21, 10:30 – 2:30  
State Coastal Conservancy 11<sup>th</sup> floor meeting room  
1330 Broadway, Oakland**

*Summary Meeting Notes*

***In attendance:*** Marc Holmes, Chair (*The Bay Institute*); Betsy Bikle (*Mill Valley Streamkeepers*); Erica Brand (*PG&E*); Cecille Caterson (*California State Parks Foundation*); Tony Chappelle (*Wildlife Conservation Board*); Chris Choo (*Marin Co. Dept of Public Works*); Caitlin Cornwall (*Sonoma Ecology Center*); Jill Bluso Demers (*San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory*); Arthur Feinstein (*Citizen's Committee to Complete the Refuge*); Tom Gardali (*PRBO Conservation Science*); Joel Gerwein (*State Coastal Conservancy*); Rachel Kamman (*Kamman Hydrology*); John Klochak (*US Fish and Wildlife Service*); John Krause (*Ca Dept. of Fish and Game*); Peter LaCivita (*US Army Corps of Engineers*); Ariel Mercado (*City of Hercules*); Moira McEnespy (*State Coastal Conservancy*); Suzanne Olyarnik (*Audubon California*); Mike Perlmutter (*Audubon California*); Barbara Salzman (*Marin Audubon*); Cheryl Strong (*US Fish and Wildlife Service*); Arnie Thompson (*San Francisquito Watershed Project*); 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. Biological Considerations in Managed Pond Design for Waterbirds**

Cheryl Strong of the US Fish and Wildlife Service presented an overview of the different biological considerations in designing managed ponds in the South Bay Salt Pond project. Key points were that, essentially, it is important to consider the needs of target species in the design, implement experimental designs that will address the project goals, and manage in an adaptive way, adjusting designs as we learn more about what works for what species.

For example, many species use dry ponds or islands for nesting; so pond islands and levees are used preferentially over other habitats in the Bay Area. The islands being built at SF2 are of different sizes and configurations and will help the project determine which are most effective for these island nesters.

Design and placement of ponds and associated features in the landscape depend upon which are the target species. For example, diving ducks need deeper ponds with low salinity (for fish) while salt ponds specialists (such as phalaropes and eared grebes) use high salinity, shallower ponds. Nesting birds need protected islands with foraging sites and protective cover for chicks close by. All of these different needs must be considered in the overall design of the project.

### **3. Giacomini Wetlands: Observed and Predicted Change in Lagunitas Creek's Restored Estuary**

Rachel Kamman of KHE Inc. presented the history, background and overview of the Giacomini wetlands restoration project, summarized some post-breach monitoring data, and discussed how potential climate change scenarios may impact the wetlands.

Goals of the project include:

- Promote ecological diversity
- Re-establish geomorphic dynamics to sustain diversity over time
- Maximize value and minimize impacts during construction

Restoration included a comprehensive physical and biological monitoring program. KHE monitored between August 25 and November 24, 2008 capturing summer low flow conditions before, throughout and following levee breaching at Giacomini Wetlands.

Monitoring to track the Long-term pre- and post-restoration monitoring of restoration Project Area and reference sites:

- Employs "BACI" or Before-After, Control-Impact sampling design
- "Control" sites included natural – if not un-impacted – natural marshes
- Variables include:
  - water quality, hydrology, sediment quality, vegetation, zooplankton, benthic inverts, sedimentation, fish, and birds

Rachel presented extensive pre and post breach water level and salinity monitoring results as well as projected sea level rise impacts on the Giacomini Wetlands.

Conclusions regarding wetland restoration impacts on estuary salinity include:

- Tidal restoration altered the salinity structure on Lagunitas Creek
- Impacts attenuate with upstream distance
- Observed peak salinity increases ranged from 5-7 ppt at the marsh inlet a
- Primary source of impact was delayed marsh drainage
  - increased the concentration and duration of low tide creek salinity
  - increased the mass of salts available to move upstream with flood tide
- Impacts may be transient, if due to drainage inefficiencies

Conclusions regarding Sea Level Rise (SLR) Impacts include:

- SLR will significant shift the location and distribution of wetland habitats
- Expansive inter-tidal marsh plain, transitional and upland habit will permit temporary redistribution without significant acreage loss
- Inter-tidal habit compression will occur due change in BOTH tide range and salinity structure
- Salinity shifts are not linearly distributed
- Salinity impacts attenuate as a function of channel grade, not distance from tidal source

#### Overall Conclusions:

- Sea Level Rise will be a powerful force reshaping our landscapes.
- Giacomini Wetlands' will likely have some of the most robustly sustained and diverse brackish marsh habitat in the region.
- The ecological value and use of the Giacomini Wetlands will likely rise with the tides.
- Few other restoration projects have the this adaptive capacity
- Healthy riparian corridor and community habitats will be increasing critical for sustaining our coastal ecosystems.

#### **4. Department of Interior Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs)**

Beth Huning gave an overview and distributed a handout about this new program led by the Department of Interior's US Geological Survey and US Fish and Wildlife Service. USFWS and USGS are receiving federal appropriations to address climate change. In a collaborative agreement, they are establishing LCC's to provide science to guide management at the landscape level, affecting multiple habitats and species, with a focus on climate change. They will also be creating climate change response centers through USGS in several locations around the country. FWS Region 8 (CA and NV) is one of the three regions identified for FY 2010 to initiate development and implementation of LCC's.

The SFBJV is trying to influence the location of one of the response centers. The SFBJV and Central Valley Joint Venture have actively been trying to help the FWS guide development and implementation in a way to help provide funding and serve the needs of both joint ventures to address and fund climate change needs. Determination of the distribution of \$850,000 for science this fiscal year will come after the LCC is established, and protocols are in place.

Priority science needs have been identified as:

- Predicting the impacts of climate change on coastal wetlands and the timing and availability of water supplies for inland wetlands: consequences for wetland habitats and wetland-dependent migratory birds.
- Development of spatially-explicit habitat tracking model(s) and periodic inventories of priority habitat types identified in JV M&E Plans.
- Periodic assessment of habitat quality to establish baselines and track changes in carrying capacity of priority habitat for priority bird species
- Periodic assessment of changes in population size, distribution, migration patterns, and habitat use of priority bird species.

Specific needs to address these priorities include:

- Science coordination for the SFBJV
- LCC Science Coordination for the
- Coordinate climate change models and data and GIS tools among JV partners
- Coordinate information modeling among partners

Recommendations from the SFB JV also include to contract with partners as much as possible, provide funding for monitoring, support carbon sequestration work going on in the bay and support the production of a regional “State of the Birds” report that will support efforts to pull together the needed information. The Central Valley Joint Venture has also submitted additional recommendations.

The next step will be a meeting in March to look at the recommendations from JVs and others. US Fish and Wildlife Service Region 8 will be there. The SFBJV formed a working group from the Management Board to develop recommendations on behalf of the JV. Those members were suggested to the FWS as representatives, and other volunteers were solicited at the meeting. Arthur Feinstein would like to be on that as chair of the Association of Joint Venture Management Boards) and Erica Brand also requested to be on the working group for PG&E as she is working on climate change issues. [Note: Jill Demers contacted the SFBJV immediately following the meeting to volunteer. It was suggested that she participate on the Bird working group.]

## **5. San Pablo Bay Access Mapping**

The San Pablo Bay Managers meet quarterly to discuss issues of concern to adjacent properties. Public access issues, particularly regarding restoration permits continue to be an issue. The managers recognized that there was not clear picture of existing and planned access points and trails. The SFBJV contracted with the Bay Area Open Space Council, which maintains the protected lands data base, to develop a comprehensive data base and map of current and planned access. The managers invited the Bay Trail staff to participate in the last meeting and review the map and data and discuss proposed or adopted alignments that might be re-routed to avoid sensitive habitats. As a result, a few changes were made to the map, and the Bay Trail staff are now meeting with managers to discuss those identified alignments. The map and data base will be adjusted as a result of any agreed upon changes.

The final map and data base will be available to JV partners for use, with one of the goals being to meet with BCDC staff to develop a comprehensive programmatic plan for access so that project managers are not negotiating access on a project by project, permit by permit basis.

The draft map was shown to committee members with the above explanation. Cheryl Strong and other committee members requested that a similar program be developed for the South Bay, and others requested that it be done for the Central Bay as well. It was noted that such expansion of the project were not in the work plan or budget for this year but will be considered in the future, if the Restoration Committee provides such a recommendation to the Management Board.

**6. The SFBJV Monitoring and Evaluation plan** - The JV has received \$50,000 from USFWS Region 8 to produce a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for the SFBJV. First steps will include creating a task group, which will finalize the scope of work, budget planning and ultimately, write the plan. Volunteers for the task force include PRBO Conservation Science, San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Geological Survey, Ducks Unlimited and

others. Individuals who have volunteered include John Klochak, Julian Wood, Susan Wainwright de la Cruz, and Tom Gardali. If you would like to participate on this task force, please contact Beth or Sandra.

It is hoped to contract with a project coordinator and have a draft of the plan completed by the end of September.

**7. Process for collecting letters for Ramsar nomination** – Mike Perlmutter of Audubon California summarized the current status of the SF Bay Ramsar application process and explained the full application process for those who had not seen his previous presentations. Audubon will be sending out a request for comments and assistance to the committee via the JV. Please reply and help gather the remaining information needed. The final piece will be letters of support from the landowners and others. A template will be circulated, but meanwhile, please let your agencies and organizations know that this request is on its way. The benefits of Ramsar designation include global recognition, international conservation linkages, and enhanced publicity and conservation support. Please see the notes from the last meeting for more detail on the process and on the application for the San Francisco Bay or visit their website where you can find all maps and information at <http://www.ca.audubon.org/RAMSAR/>.

#### **8. Active Project list review**

Sandra Scoggin provided a summary of the new project review protocol, which is a two step process that includes reviewing the three SFBJV Tiered project lists to determine whether your project(s) appears on the appropriate Tier (see [http://www.sfbayjv.org/rstc/SFBJV\\_process\\_criteria\\_final.pdf](http://www.sfbayjv.org/rstc/SFBJV_process_criteria_final.pdf) for more information) and then logging into the SFBJV Habitat Project Tracking System (<http://cjvp.ducks.org/cajv/CAJVLogin.cfm>) to verify and update your project details. Project managers will soon be receiving quarterly reminders to update their project information, but are also encouraged to update project details as developments occur on your project as the JV frequently gets requests from funders with very little turn-around time and can only provide information on projects that are up to date. Also note that we need your 3-5 year funding needs estimate for your projects for the JV information packets that we will be taking to Washington DC in February and March.

#### **9. Announcements and Project Updates**

Beth Huning, Kate Symonds: Lawson's Landing – After the presentation at the last meeting, the project adoption was approved via e mail in late December, 2009. The JV does not typically do project adoptions via e mail, but there was an opportunity for CalTrans mitigation funding that had identified the project, and JV partners who were working on the project requested JV endorsement that funding be directed to the site. Adoption was confirmed in person with the committee members. There were no objections. Kate briefed the committee on the status of the project.

The JV received information that NOAA and the US Army Corps of Engineers' Estuary Habitat Restoration Council is soliciting project proposals for estuary habitat restoration projects. The

Council is seeking projects that achieve cost-effective restoration while promoting partnerships among agencies and between public and private sectors. Projects will be evaluated for their support of the Estuary Habitat Restoration Strategy. The deadline is March 16. This just missed our last bulletin, so we will send out a special notice with more information.

In September the SFBJV submitted a NOAA Partnership proposal with the Wildlife Conservation Board as the applicant and numerous projects included. We expect to hear soon and will keep the committee posted.

Mike Perlmutter: Tubbs Island Marsh Enhancement is 99% completed. The site is changing and more viable habitat has been created. Several SFBJV committee members were at the levee breach in December and commented on the event.

Caitlin Cornwall: The new North Bay Climate Adaptation Initiative, which came out of a recent conference sponsored by the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation, will focus on how to maintain ecosystem services in the light of climate change. It will work with the Sonoma County Regional Climate Change Authority, which is part of the Transportation Department.

Moira McEnespy: The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority will be meeting Wednesday, January 27, 2010 and will be discussing ways to go about securing regional funding for restoration. The public is welcome. The Authority has recently created an advisory committee. Beth Huning is a member of this committee.

Peter LaCivita: The US Army Corps of Engineers has a number of authorities that allow them to collaborate on restoration projects. They have monies available to do smaller projects. One of their programs specifically addresses ecosystem restoration. Projects get ranked on a variety of criteria – one is whether the project contributes to a nationally recognized authority. Projects get ranked more highly if they are on the SFBJV lists. The Ramsar designation will also help with that ranking. Peter will provide a description of the various corps funding opportunities.

Laura Valopi: The South Bay Salt Project celebrated a ground breaking event last week for Pond A8 in Alviso. By this time next year A8 and A6 should be completed and have water flowing. A8 will be muted tidal, and A6 will be fully tidal. Pond SF2 should be completed in August of this year.

**10. The SFBJV Restoration Committee meeting was adjourned early.**