

**San Francisco Bay Joint Venture  
Conservation Delivery Committee Meeting  
July 7, 2011 10 am – 1 pm  
State Coastal Conservancy 11<sup>th</sup> floor meeting room**

*Meeting Notes*

**In attendance:** *Marc Holmes, Chair (The Bay Institute), Lisa Bankosh (Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District), Kathi Borgmann (Audubon California), John Bradley (US Fish and Wildlife Service - Refuge), Tony Chappelle (Wildlife Conservation Board), Susan De La Cruz (US Geological Survey), Jill Demers (San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory), Arthur Feinstein (Citizen's Committee to Complete the Refuge), Tom Gandesbery (State Coastal Conservancy), Jason Hassrick (Farallon Institute), John Klochak (US Fish and Wildlife Service – Coastal), Peter LaCivita (US Army Corps of Engineers), Marilyn Latta (Coastal Conservancy), Rebecca Lawton (Sonoma Ecology Center), Julian Meisler (Sonoma Land Trust), Mike Perlmutter (Bay Area Early Detection Network), Barbara Salzman (Bay Area Audubon Council), Kate Symonds (US Fish and Wildlife Service - Partners), Susanne von Rosenberg (GAIA), Bruce Wolfe (SF Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board), Laura Wainer (Save the Bay)*  
*SFBJV Staff: Beth Huning (Coordinator), Sandra Scoggin (Assistant Coordinator)*

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

**2. Funding Assessment - Status of current and prior funding sources, trends into the future and new opportunities**

Beth Huning presented information prepared for the San Francisco Foundation summarizing the state of funding for bay projects. The picture for funding of JV projects has changed dramatically over the past few years. The presentation summarized these funding trends from federal, state and private sources and suggested adaptation strategies involving existing as well as potential new sources to develop. *The information in this presentation will be compiled into a white paper and the presentation is also available upon request.*

**3. Carrying Capacity/Energetics Modeling**

Susan Wainwright de la Cruz provided a summary of USGS work in modeling foraging energetics of diving benthivores on San Pablo Bay shoals. She discussed habitat needs of diving ducks and what models are being used to get answers to some of the questions that the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture partnership has regarding the carrying capacity of the bay for diving ducks.

**Conclusions:**

- Model indicated that an additional large quantity of prey often remained above threshold densities when most ducks left SPB in Jan
- Birds may leave SPB “prematurely” because they can not find or access all patches above threshold densities that occur throughout this Bay
- The cost of searching for such patches as their incidence decreases might become prohibitive

**Additional data needs that could improve the model include:**

- Benthic prey availability and waterfowl diet, movements data from other sub-bays to expand the model to the entire the estuary
- Institute standardized prey sampling program to allow for updated determination duck use days
- More complete distribution and abundance data on competing ectotherm predators
- Information on habitat partitioning among waterfowl species and competing shorebirds so that model can include the intertidal

#### **4. Jack London Lake Project Adoption Discussion**

Becca Lawton provided further information on biological and habitat values of the proposed project. The committee did not agree to adopt the project, but *alternatives such as a letter of support from the JV in lieu of adoption are being explored.*

#### **5. Invasive Spartina Project - Forum Outcomes and Update**

Marilyn Latta gave a brief, but comprehensive background and overview of the project and briefed the committee on the plans to finalize treatment and implement a monitoring plan. According to Marilyn and the ISP, we are at a critical stage in the eradication project: we have achieved almost complete eradication of the 4 non-native species; the hybrid plants are difficult to identify; there is a need to identify the level of non-native genetic 'acceptability'; there are short-term treatment impacts to endangered species; and aggressive restoration activities are needed to expedite habitat development post removal.

Marilyn also summarized goals and outcomes of the recent Spartina forum.

Forum Outcomes included:

- Eradication of discernible hybrids is possible
- Focus on protecting native marsh structure and function
- Removing every last non-native allele is not possible
- Allowing neutral non-native hybrid Spartina alleles is acceptable
- Concern over re-emergence of undesirable traits

Future plans include:

- Planning for effective long-term monitoring
- Training multiple landowners and stakeholders
- Seeking additional funding
- 2011-13 Treatment of remaining non-native Spartina
- 2013 Zero detect acreage, 2016 Monitoring goal
- Develop long-term hybrid monitoring program
- Continued transition to ground-based intensive efforts
- Integration of targeted planting efforts
- Close coordination with monitoring staff

#### **6. Public Access Impacts on Wildlife Analysis**

Kathi Borgmann presented a summary of her literature review on the effects of human disturbance on waterfowl and waterbirds that she is working on for the JV.

Kathy's review of studies that have examined the effects of boating, walking, running, traffic, and recreation on waterfowl and waterbirds found that 72% of studies found human disturbance to negatively impact birds. These negative impacts can vary quite a bit from reduced densities at sites to poor breeding success. In general, depending on the level of disturbance, site quality is expected to vary. Low-level disturbance could result in birds habituating, but increased levels of disturbance can displace more sensitive species.

Impacts of disturbance documented in studies often focused on a change behavior which then results in decreased food intake and increased energy expenditure which then results in decreased reproductive

success either in the direct form of increased risk of nest predation or via poor body condition on the breeding grounds. Ultimately, these risks can decrease population size.

For a suite of shorebirds in the Bay area, we see that the distance at which birds first flushed varies by species and type of disturbance. For diving ducks and waterfowl, we see that species and type of disturbance affect when birds respond to a disturbance event. Species that may be more sensitive include Clark's Grebe, Common Loon, Double-crested Cormorant, Greater and Lesser Scaup, Red-breasted Merganser, and Ruddy Duck. All flushing when a disturbance was over 200 m away.

It is important to consider that flush distance may not be indicative of sensitivity. In a supplemental feeding experiment the fed group were more likely to take flight at greater distances from disturbance relative to the unfed group (Beale and Monahan 2004). Thus, birds in good condition may be more likely to respond to disturbance as there is a trade-off between perceived risk of predation and risk of starvation

Management recommendations include:

- Identify locations and times when birds may be more sensitive to disturbance
- Measure energy expenditure related to disturbance
- Suggest minimum set-back distances of 250 m
- Educate the public

*The full literature review will be available as a white paper and will be posted on the SFBJV website as soon as it is available.*

#### **7. SFBJV Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Review Status**

Beth Huning presented the current timeline for review and requested that *those interested in reviewing part or all of the draft M&E plan contact Christina Sloop by July 15 at csloop@sfbayjv.org.*

#### **8. Update on Oakland Airport Mitigation**

As follow up to a discussion at our March meeting, Bruce Wolfe provided more information about the runway safety mitigation efforts of the Oakland Airport that will require approximately 22 acres of mitigation. They will be going through the full analysis, but they do want to line up potential mitigation projects. They have already spoken to the water board and others about potential projects, but they plan to put out a request for information mid August. *It is recommended that committee members take a look at this request when it comes out.*

**9. Announcement:** The Water Trail is putting together their advisory team and looking for some people to represent the wildlife. *Barbara Salzman and Jill Demers volunteered.*

#### **10. The Conservation Delivery Committee meeting of July 7, 2011 was adjourned**