



bay restoration commission

STEWARDS OF SANTA MONICA BAY

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Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission Watershed Advisory Council Meeting March 10, 2015

Summary of Comments and Responses

The annual WAC meeting was held on March 10 at the Westchester Community Center. Seventeen members of the WAC and participants from the general public attended the meeting and provided comments. Comments were also solicited through an online survey, accessible through the SMBRC website (www.smbrc.ca.gov), from March 2 to March 20. The meeting included an overview of the SMBRC's Annual Work Plan and a facilitated rotating breakout session for group discussions and input on the work plan priorities. There were five breakout sessions/stations for each of the five work plan areas: water resource and quality improvement, wetland and other coastal habitat restoration, marine habitat protection and restoration, education and outreach, and planning, monitoring, and program management. All meeting attendants were given the opportunity to participate in all five breakout sessions through rotation. Two staff persons were assigned to assist each station and took detailed notes during the meeting. The detailed notes (available on SMBRC's website at www.smbrc.ca.gov) were further checked and edited for completeness and accuracy after the meeting.

The summary below was compiled from the detailed notes of the five sessions. Staff responses to each comment were first prepared based on careful review of each comment, then revised and finalized based on input from further review and discussion conducted among staff. In the summary, WAC comments incorporated in the work plan are indicated in the responses and highlighted in yellow.



<p>SMBRC governing board adopts a policy statement or policy change to make reclaiming and reusing water easier not harder. For example, requirement of RO for emerging contaminants made it harder for water reclamation districts to expand program to infiltrate treated wastewater into drinking water basin.</p>	<p>Agree conceptually but may need further clarification on the issue before forwarding to GB for consideration.</p>
<p>Educate cities about public landscape maintenance BMPs, specifically in regards to the use of herbicides.</p>	<p>TBF has initiated a public outreach campaign in partnership with water agencies for water and energy conservation, and will continue the campaign using electronic media. SMBRC and TBF will seek more funding and partnership opportunities for similar projects. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)</p>
<p>Encourage all agencies to do more outreach and get all cities involved in the Clean Bay Restaurant Program (CBRP) because it can be used to comply with MS4 permit. Get the word out what SMBRC can offer to all agencies. CBRP should attend EWIMP monthly meetings to tell people about great things SMBRC can do.</p>	<p>SMBRC and TBF plan to seek more resources to boost the capacity of the CBRP program and achieve further expansion. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)</p>
<p>Provide summary of city project successes to encourage other cities to implement similar projects.</p>	<p>SMBRC and TBF plan to use traditional and social media to highlight and promote successful projects in the watershed. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)</p>
<p>Conduct research on successes/failures/cost-effectiveness of different multi-benefit projects</p>	<p>SMBRC has supported efforts to research the effectiveness of multi-benefit LID projects. SMBRC TAC developed a standard monitoring protocol to ensure that such monitoring will be conducted and meaningful data are collected to evaluate the effectiveness of projects funded by the Prop. 50 and 84 grant program. SMBRC TAC also helped evaluating research projects conducted by partner organization. TBF has done detailed research on the cost-effectiveness of rainwater harvesting, and rain garden projects in Culver City. Cost-effectiveness research is also an important component of the on-going MWD rain garden project. SMBRC and TBF will continue to make efforts in this area. SMBRC will also ask the TAC to further discuss the need and mechanism for regional, collaborative research next year. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)</p>
<p>Support pre and post monitoring component for rainwater harvesting projects.</p>	<p>See comment above. SMBRC supports the inclusion of pre and post monitoring of storm water BMP implementation. However, this has always been challenging as the amount of a grant that can be allocated to monitoring is rather limited.</p>

Support implementation of copper TMDL in Marina del Rey through funding and boater education.	The SMBRC provides information regarding the implementation of the Marina del Rey Toxics TMDL as appropriate. The implementation of the TMDL is under the oversight of the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board. Due to differences of opinion within the GB, the GB did not make recommendations regarding the TMDL when considered by the the Regional Board. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)
Do not support the Copper TMDL.	See response above.
Help make the distinction between natural TMDL base levels and human increases to TMDL exceedances.	Loading from natural sources is already incorporated into waste load allocation in all TMDLs. New information on natural sources can be considered when TMDLs are reopened for mid-course correction. The SMBRC TAC can help to evaluate the need for and recommend for further studies.
Eliminate killing of fish larvae that occur during seawater intake for desalination or once-through cooling.	Objective 1.3 of the BRP has clearly stated the same.
Focus on a plan to cease existing near shore salt water intakes and prevent new intakes.	See response above.
Explore partnership opportunities with Ballona Wetlands Land Trust (BWLTL) on projects such as rain gardens, beach restoration, volunteer monitoring and maintenance, Stone Creek, school kid education, bird watchers, facilitation of PIE grant projects, etc.	Comments noted. The Commission welcomes opportunities for partnering on projects to restore the Santa Monica Bay.
Establish public stakeholder working groups to research issues regarding dewatering around Ballona Wetlands.	Comment noted. Issues relevant to Ballona Wetlands restoration will be addressed as part of the environmental review process being conducted by the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board may have information regarding dewatering projects.
Recommend support of revoking permits for dewatering around Ballona, Oxford, and Channel Gateway.	See response above. LARWQCB is the lead agency in issuing permit for dewatering projects.
Flow from dewatering at Playa Vista should not be sent to Hyperion. It should be kept on site and reused, or put into the wetlands.	Comment noted. LARWQCB is the lead agency in issuing permit for dewatering projects and regulating the Hyperion treatment plant.
Form a workgroup to address dewatering issues.	LARWQCB Board is the lead responsible agency on this issue. Comments can be submitted directly to the responsible agency through the existing channels.
Form a subgroup on groundwater issues in the Ballona Creek watershed	See response above. Also, see Ballona watershed hydrology study report.
Form a public stakeholder working group to address sediment contaminants from broken	Comment noted.

sewer lines.	
2. Wetland and Coastal Habitat Restoration	
<i>Oxford Lagoon</i>	
Use property adjacent to Oxford Basin for storm water treatment.	Comment noted. The Marina del Rey EWMP has solicited public input on potential storm water treatment sites and has been evaluating the feasibility of all potential sites within the area.
Storm water treatment wetland on adjacent property to Oxford Basin	See response above
Include fish surveys in Oxford Basin monitoring plan; have adaptive management component with regards to fish in the restoration plan	The SMBRC TAC reviewed and approved the monitoring plan associated with the Oxford Basin restoration project. Typically a fish survey is not required for pre and post project monitoring. A special study may be conducted if there is a specific issue of concern.
Need more stringent biological monitoring and SMBRC direct participation in Oxford restoration.	The SMBRC recommended allocation of Prop. 84 funding for certain aspects of the Oxford Basin restoration project, and provided technical review by its TAC to the project.
Phased Oxford restoration	Comment noted. Current restoration plan is phased.
Studies/research of runoff contaminants entering Oxford Basin	LA County has done extensive monitoring and study on runoff contaminants entering the Basin. Data and information can be obtained from the County directly.
Groundwater studies/research in Oxford Basin and surrounding area	See response above.
Public committee in advisory role for discharging / dewatering issues adjacent to Oxford Basin	LARWQCB Board is the lead responsible agency on this issue. Comments can be submitted directly to the responsible agency through the existing channels.
<i>Stream Protection and Invasive Species Control</i>	
Implement stream protection ordinance. Partner with Heal the Bay.	SMBRC and TBF have been active in facilitating adoption of a stream protection ordinance and looks forward to partnering with Heal the Bay and other organizations to reinvigorate the effort. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)
Research / studies on impacts of invasive species on streams and BMI scores	SMBRC and TBF supported efforts to obtain funding for a study by Heal the Bay on the impacts of New Zealand mudsnails on stream BMI scores. SMBRC and TBF will continue to help identify additional resources to support similar efforts.

Implementation of invasive removals in streams that are the most impacted (prioritize based on research)	SMBRC and TBF have successfully carried out many invasive removal projects in the past and will continue to help identify funding and facilitate more project implementation.
Add zebra mussels as potential invasive species and develop plan for responding if/when invasion occurs	The Dept. of Fish and Wildlife is the lead agency in invasive species control and have control measures in place for zebra mussels. SMBRC and TBF also help to detect and report new occurrence of invasive species including zebra mussel through their annual survey of the watershed.
Conduct research / studies on Arundo donax (giant reed) removal techniques	SMBRC carried out Arundo donax removal projects before in partnership with land management agencies in the Santa Monica Mountains. SMBRC and TBF continue to support research of more effective technology for Arundo removal. SMBRC and TBF will also continue to promote efforts to prevent introduction of the invasive species, including the ban on sell of Arundo by DFW.
Prioritize Arundo donax (giant reed) removal in the upper watersheds	See response above. SMBRC will continue to support Arundo removal effort in the upper watersheds by land management agencies in the Santa Monica Mountain area.
Prioritize Greenway Plan projects; especially along the upstream reaches of Ballona Creek	SMBRC was one of the sponsors of the Ballona Creek Greenway Plan and has assisted in obtaining funding for projects identified in the Plan, including the Milton Park Green Street Project in partnership with MRCA. SMBRC will continue facilitating implementation of Greenway Plan projects and identify and seek several new funding opportunities. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)
<i>Ballona Wetlands</i>	
Prioritize the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve restoration, with a focus on improving ecological condition and maximum wetland restoration benefits/services.	SMBRC and TBF will continue to make this its priority. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)
Conduct more outreach and education on the BWER restoration process; combat the false information more stringently	TBF has been assisting and will continue to assist DFW in outreach to the public on BWER restoration related information. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)
Need more public dissemination on the information about the process.	See response above. DFW and its partners have the most extensive resources available to the public on the Ballona Wetland Restoration Project website (http://ballonarestoration.org).

On Ballona website explain the different organizations involved in the project and their roles.	SMBRC is not in charge of website; DFW is the lead agency. TBF has been assisting DFW, and will continue to assist the DFW in updating and improve the website. For additional information go to "the Path" section of the Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project Website (http://ballonarestoration.org).
Ballona Website should include more accessible information on draft EIR before it comes out. Make the information more easily understandable by the general public.	See response above.
More frequent and objective BWER website updates.	See response above. Again, SMBRC is not in charge of the website; DFW is the lead agency.
On the Ballona website offer different perspectives on the Ballona project, be objective/ educational not persuasive.	See response above.
Let public participate on BWER Project Management Team	SMBRC is not in charge of the PMT; DFW is the lead agency.
Form public stakeholder working groups for more public involvement in BWER restoration	SMBRC is not the lead agency with regard to BWER restoration and is not responsible for or in control of public participation opportunities. DFW is the lead agency for that project. DFW's environmental review process has provided and will continue to provide opportunities for public comment.
Provide public access to BWER	SMBRC is not in charge of access; DFW is the land manager. One of the main goals of the project is to increase public access.
Research effects of illegal drains in Ballona Wetlands and include results in staff reports	Comment noted. Issues relevant to Ballona Wetlands restoration are being addressed in the environmental review process by DFW.
Release DEIR ASAP for BWER	DFW is the lead agency. The draft EIS/EIR is scheduled for release for public review in late 2015. The schedule has been updated on the Ballona Wetland Restoration Project website (http://ballonarestoration.org).
<i>Malibu Lagoon</i>	
Publicize the annual reports for the Malibu Lagoon restoration project.	Annual reports are public and will continue be available to the public. The first year report is posted on TBF website (www.santamonicabay.org). A comprehensive 2-year monitoring report is being drafted.
Provide regular updates on Malibu Lagoon restoration for agencies and the public	TBF will make annual reports available to the public (see response above). The TBF will also publicize the reports on social media and provide detailed information to DPR for its Malibu Lagoon website. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)



Use Malibu Lagoon restoration and the Freshwater Marsh as success stories to promote wetland restoration; more outreach.	Agree and see response above. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)
<i>Other</i>	
Conduct a pilot beach restoration project in Santa Monica (can use Coal Oil Pt as example). Partner with Audubon Society	The TBF has initiated conversation to conduct the pilot project with multiple partners including the Audubon Society. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)
Include wind surveys in monitoring plan for beach restoration project. Partner with Audubon Society	TBF will discuss with Audubon Society and other experts to evaluate the need and feasibility of a wind survey.
Conduct more outreach / partnerships on Ballona Creek rain garden maintenance projects; update events on website pages. Partner with Ballona Creek Renaissance	TBF already has joint events with BCR and will further discuss with BCR and other community organizations for more collaboration opportunities. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)
Prioritize fish barrier removals to increase sediment transport downstream to beaches	SMBRC and TBF have facilitated, and will continue to facilitate implementation of more fish barrier removal projects, including removal of Rindge Dam. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)
Develop policy on beach replenishment and promote reconnection of watershed / streams to beaches	SMBRC participated in the development of a long-term sediment management initiated by Los Angeles County. TBF also supported and participated in sediment transport study off Point Dume and hydrodynamic studies on Palos Verdes Shelf. The SMBRC and TBF will continue to participate and promote watershed-based comprehensive sediment management and seek funding for further studies and pilot projects. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)
Protect and restore tide pools on PV Peninsula	Similar suggestion was brought up in previous WAC meeting and was included in the 2015 work plan. TBF provided information and other assistance to the Junior Ranger Program but could not be more involved due to limited resources. SMBRC and TBF will seek additional resources to contribute more to this effort and are open to suggestions. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)
Focus on tree preservation in the Marina del Rey area	Comment noted. LA County Department of Beaches and Harbors and Department of Public Works are land managers in the area.
SMBRC participation to help stop Mariners Village commercial property changes/upgrades	Comment noted.
Form a public committee in advisory role to stop Mariners Village renovations w/SMBRC support	See response above.





3. Marine Habitat Protection and Restoration	
<i>MPA</i>	
Increase Marine program MPA project exposure.	SMBRC and TBF's Marine Program has conducted outreach and will work to do more in the coming year, including using social media to highlight projects that facilitate implementation of MPAs . (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)
Promote positive aspects of MPAs	SMBRC and TBF actively contributed to the MPA stakeholder process and promoted the establishment of MPAs in Southern California including Santa Monica Bay. SMBRC and TBF also contributed to data collection and compilation efforts for evaluating the effectiveness of MPAs, such as our Lighthawk aerial survey project and rocky reef surveys. TBF has participated and will continue participating in the LA MPA Collaborative to facilitate MPA management. SMBRC and TBF will also continue to seek new resources and promote MPAs in Santa Monica Bay. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)
Letter of Support for MPA enforcement expansion to agencies other than DFW.	SMBRC and TBF will work with partner organizations to develop a letter of support or resolution of support for Governing Board consideration.
Support MPA enforcement expansion to other agencies including local cities.	See response above.
<i>Fish</i>	
Continue Halibut work, develop catch data database, implement/ support a Halibut Fisheries Management Plan.	SMBRC and TBF will continue to seek funding for studies needed to support development of fishery management plans for halibut and other important commercial and recreational fish species. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)
Research to determine why there are reduced fish populations in the bay	See response above. SMBRC and TBF will continue to seek funding to conduct research and support and/or collaborate with researches by other agencies/organizations. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)
Study fish populations' migration patterns.	See response above
Monitor LA County bird list on Yahoo for # of bird's sightings up and down the coast, using it as indicator of fish population migration.	See response above
Addressing the issue of fishing in Ballona Creek through education or enforcement.	TBF partnered with Friends of Ballona Wetlands and conducted outreach and social survey about fish habitat in the Creek. TBF will continue publizing the survey results and the outreach effort.



<i>Abalone</i>	
Increase Marine program Abalone project exposure. Partner with Santa Monica Pier Aquarium	SMBRC/TBF will continue to explore partnerships with the Aquarium and other organizations to promote restoration of abalone. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)
<i>Other</i>	
Develop GIS locating system for research projects to ensure work in areas of special biological significance is not duplicated.	Comment noted. Need additional information regarding other work in the ASBS before recommending next steps.
Address algal blooms. Already in work plan but what work is being done?	SMBRC has limited resources to initiate its own specific project at this time, but a lot of work by other entities are ongoing in the Southern California Bight. SMBRC did secure funding for installation of high-precision pH/pCO ₂ sensors in the Bay. SMBRC will discuss with its TAC for advice on how SMBRC should further contribute effort in addressing the issue. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)
Need a new director of marine programs.	SMBRC and TBF will update their organizational structure based on their program needs.
Monitor invasive sargassum	SMBRC and TBF have limited resource to initiate its own project at this time, but will support and facilitate responsible agencies (most likely NOAA and DFW) to conduct needed monitoring
Start dialogue about desalinization.	SWRCB is in the process of developing policy and regulations addressing potential impacts of desalination. SMBRC and TBF will continue to participate and contribute to the on-going discussion on this subject.
Create artificial reefs. Partner with Doug Fey.	SMBRC does not have plans for an artificial reef project at this time. NOAA/MSRP has a plan to restore lost reef habitat on PV Shelf using rocky reef modules.
4. Public Education and Outreach	
Work with cities on outreach plans to ensure consistency of language and avoid duplicating efforts.	SMBRC and TBF will continue to coordinate with cities and the County on outreach projects.
Step up collaborative efforts with CBOs such as Ballona Creek Renaissance, Cash for Kitchens, South Bay Energy Services Center to do more outreach and education events that promote a sense of ownership.	SMBRC and TBF will continue to partner with these and other organizations to conduct and support more outreach activities. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)
More education on the current state of certain areas such as Oxford Basin.	Comment noted. See response above.



Create more opportunities to work with public stakeholders for information sharing and addressing current or new issues	See response above.
Have a couple public meetings per year in targeted area where SMBRC is doing work to get public support and buy in on specific projects.	SMBRC or TBF will work with partner agencies/organizations either hold public meetings or through other outreach mechanisms to solicit public input and gain public support for planned projects.
Increase public outreach regarding the history of our organizations and any conflicts of interest.	Comment noted. SMBRC and TBF will continue to make effort to inform stakeholders about the history of the Santa Monica Bay National Estuary Program and all its partner entities. Detail of Santa Monica Bay National Estuary Program (SMBNEP) is available on SMBRC's website (www.smbrc.ca.gov).
5. Planning, Monitoring, and Program Management	
<i>WAC Related</i>	
Like to see WAC meeting more than one time per year.	Comment noted. SMBRC is already fully occupied with followup work recommended by WAC members at the annual meeting and does not see the need for additional meetings.
WAC with stronger advisory role in SMBRC and WAC members to have more opportunities for involvement	Comment noted. WAC members have provided many valuable suggestions which were incorporated into the BRP and annual work plans in previous years. This year will be no exception.
WAC makes presentations to SMBRC Governing Board	Comment noted. SMBRC will summarize WAC comments and present them at the Governing Board meeting. Individual WAC members can make additional comments at the GB meetings.
Form WAC subcommittees	Comment noted. SMBRC do not see the need to form any subcommittee at this time, but is open to such possibility in the future if recommended by staff or requested by the Governing Board.
Conduct a more thorough survey about how the WAC is functioning, whether it is successful at contributing to SMBRC.	Comment noted. SMBRC has received valuable comments from WAC members and incorporated them into the work plan. SMBRC will continue to use the existing process to receive input from WAC members and other stakeholders.
<i>Other</i>	



SMBRC should serve as a clearing house (google spreadsheet, google map) to house and disseminate all research and monitoring going on in the watershed.	This has been a desirable objective of the SMBNEP but it has not been able to perform this function due to the lack of funding and staff resources. SMBRC and TBF are also open to other suggestions in the future.
Clarify SMBRC structure and funding and improve communications	SMBRC and TBF will continue to make efforts to inform stakeholders about the history of the Santa Monica Bay National Estuary Program and clarify the relationship among all its partner entities.
Focus more on existing projects before adding new projects.	Agree conceptually but will continue to seek grant funding for continuation of existing programs and new projects.
Promote Citizen Monitoring group and high school students to test and monitor bacteria	SMBRC has frequently supported citizen monitoring groups and projects. SMBRC and TBF will continue to look for partners and opportunities to conduct more citizen monitoring projects.
Improve reporting on progress of BRP. Have a progress report to identify how we are doing on BRP, which provides more detail than the Annual Report.	SMBRC will continue to make efforts to assess and report on the progress of BRP objectives and milestones with adequate details on a regular basis, while highlighting specific projects. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)
Have more frequent progress reports and a more detailed SMBNEP Annual Report	See response above.
Create an information dissemination section on our webpage to make information easier to get to.	SMBRC and TBF will continue to maintain and improve their websites to make information readily available to stakeholders and the general public.
Have a document that list projects we need funding for.	SMBRC and its partners always confront need for funding to achieve objectives and milestones laid out in the Bay Restoration Plan. TBF has also developed material to highlight specific program and project areas targeted for fundraising. (Addressed in FY 16 work plan)
Make clearer distinction between SMBNEP organizational groups and their roles in specific projects	See response to similar comments above. SMBRC and TBF will continue to make effort to inform stakeholders about the history of the Santa Monica Bay National Estuary Program and the relationship among all its partner entities.
Have an SMBRC workshop on accountability and transparency.	Comment noted.