



# bay restoration commission

STEWARDS OF SANTA MONICA BAY

santa monica bay restoration commission 320 west 4<sup>th</sup> street, ste 200; los angeles, california 90013  
213/576-6615 phone 213/576-6646 fax www.smbrc.ca.gov

## THE SANTA MONICA BAY RESTORATION COMMISSION MARINE RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

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### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman Dan Pondella called the meeting to order on July 31, 2012 at 1:45pm in the ECC 1857 room of University Hall on the Loyola Marymount University Campus, 1 LMU Drive, Westchester, CA 90045. Round robin introductions followed.

#### *MRAC Members*

Dr. Dan Pondella (Chair)	Present
Gerald McGowen (Vice-chair)	Present
Dr. Jim Allen	Absent
Dr. Rich Ambrose	Present
Dr. Ana Pitchon	Absent
Shelley Walther	Absent

#### *Ad Hoc MRAC Members*

Dr. Christine Whitcraft	Present (on phone)
Larry Simon	Present (on phone)

#### *Staff Present*

Lia Protopapadakis, Marine Scientist & Project Manager  
Karina Johnston, Wetland Ecologist (on phone)  
Diana Hurlbert, Ballona CEQA Project Manager (on phone)

#### *Members of the Public*

Eric Miller, MBC (on phone)  
Kat Prickett, Port of Los Angeles (on phone)  
Bill Paznokas, DFG (on phone)

### PUBLIC FORUM

None

### GENERAL BUSINESS

- a. Order of the Agenda. – Approved
- b. Approval of Meeting Summaries. – 3/21/2012, Approved; 4/23/2012, Approved; 5/29/2012, Approved
- c. Reports from the Chair, Subcommittees, and Staff – The Chair had nothing to report.

Lia reported that the Notice of Intent for the Ballona Wetlands Restoration has been published and the scoping meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 16, 2012 at the Fiji Gate in Marina Del Rey. Lia also announced she is serving on the Lobster Fishery Management Plan Advisory Committee, representing marine scientists. She will be reaching out to for thoughts on various topics as that FMP progresses. There was a short discussion about a proposal to open the Santa Monica Bay to commercial lobster fishing, followed by a suggestion to involve the Governing Board.

- d. Member Comment (*TAC members may wish to comment on issues not otherwise on the agenda.*) - None

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AGENDA ITEM 3. Review and Discuss: The value of vegetated coastal marsh habitat in compensatory mitigation for lost subtidal habitat, draft white paper

## Discussion

The Committee discussed the draft white paper at length. Specific recommendations for improving the draft are as follows:

- Title: keep as is.
- Organization: keep as is with habitat descriptions separate from function discussion.
- Terms:
  - Use BEHs to refer to Bays, Estuaries, and Harbors.
  - Pick a term to refer to the subtidal-BEHs-marsh-upland system, define it, and then be consistent. Right now, using estuarine-marsh system, which has its problems.
  - For common name vs Latin name of species, use the common name in the document and create a table in the appendix where the common name, Latin name, and the functional, taxonomic, or ecological grouping (whichever is ultimately used in the paper) are all listed. This table can also list alternative common names and previously used Latin names.
    - For *Spartina foliosa* can refer to it as “cordgrass”, but every time the document refers to cordgrass that is not *S. foliosa*, the reference must be qualified with the correct Latin name. When the source doesn’t distinguish, attempt to get Rich, Christine, or Karina to identify, but then note that a leap has been made (i.e., assumed to be...).
- Do not need to include the prospectus as an appendix. Should remove reference to it in the document.
- Habitat types:
  - The current draft is focused on fully tidal systems. Non-tidal systems have different set of habitats and species. The differences are relevant to understanding and crediting intertidal habitats. The draft should discuss non-tidal systems in the introduction and habitat description, to give a better historical perspective on the range of wetlands that have existed in southern California. Seasonally closed wetlands should be discussed in the introduction, but do not need to be included in the functions discussion because there is not that much data and they are even less likely to be considered for mitigation.
  - The draft should do a better job at including brackish marsh habitat in the functions discussion. Some salt marshes have been converted into brackish marsh due to larger more frequent freshwater inputs related to development within the watershed. And some restoration projects consider the value of converting these back to fully tidal. Including a short description that considers brackish marsh juxtaposed to fully tidal salt marsh would inform those discussions. Also connectivity between brackish and saltwater marsh is a good point to emphasize.
  - Dry habitat types need more consideration in the draft.
- Species identified:
  - In the habitat descriptions, only the top five most important or common species of birds and fish for that habitat type should be listed.
  - Include a table or matrix in the habitat discussion that lists fish and bird species by habitat type. Top 5, plus species likely to be included in port mitigation crediting decisions and therefore the species that can make the connectivity argument later on in the functions discussion.
  - The nature of how they use the habitat is important to identify in the habitat description, in particular for birds.

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- For some species, such as gobies and shorebirds, it may be better to list them in a group. However the choice of group: foraging guild, functional or taxonomic, will not be easy as each has its benefits and drawbacks.
- Birds need to be given more consideration throughout the document, or at least explain why document is fish-focused up front.
- Conclusions:
  - Main conclusion is that there is no hard and fast division within a wetland and benefits extend up and therefore there is no hard and fast division of usage at varying gradation. The result is that it is not so much what is included in mitigation crediting decisions, but what the basis is for the inclusion.
  - This document does not need to get into recommendations for methods to determine mitigation credits.
- Figures:
  - Build a habitat diagram similar to PWA's aerial diagram that includes freshwater and brackish marsh.
  - If using the habitat type list, flip the order so that sub-tidal is at the bottom.
  - Diagram of generic food web or other connections is helpful. Better if species are grouped in some way or use a representative species. Features to include are:
    - Habitat breakdown
    - Species groupings
    - References via numbering system.
- Other:
  - Double-check the 90% wetland loss fact. This may be true across the entire state, but a rough estimate based on the Coastal Conservancy T-Sheets for southern California may put it at closer to 75% loss. Also, what time period is this in reference too? Could also get this from Dahl and Johnson (1990) but would have to ask for the raw data.
  - The document references different tidal datums. Should pick one and stick with it. Perhaps get feedback from the IRT on this.
  - Throughout document, should emphasize empirical results more and include figures and tables from these reports.
  - The bibliography needs to be proofed. In particular, check the Lafferty reference.

Next steps: Staff will revise the current draft. The revised draft will be distributed to a wider group of reviewers including the MRAC, select members of the IRT, and the TAC. The next meeting of the MRAC will be scheduled via a doodle poll and will be an online meeting.

*Public Comment.* Taken in the course of the discussion.

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting has yet to be determined.

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