



bay restoration commission

STEWARDS OF SANTA MONICA BAY

santa monica bay restoration commission 320 west 4th street, ste 200; los angeles, california 90013
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THE SANTA MONICA BAY RESTORATION COMMISSION TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

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WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman Ambrose called the meeting to order on September 22, 2011 at 9:25am in the Westchester Community Center, 7166 West Manchester Ave, Westchester, California. Round robin introductions followed. Linda Fernandez participated by web conference.

TAC Members

Rich Ambrose (Chair)	Present
Steve Bay (Vice Chair)	Present
Dave Caron	Present
Mas Dojiri	Absent
Linda Fernandez	Participated via phone. (Left at approximately 12:15pm)
Rainer Hoenicke	Present
Jenny Jay	Absent
Burt Jones	Absent
Karen Martin	Absent
Dan Pondella	Present

Staff Present

Shelley Luce, Executive Director	Diana Hurlbert, Project Manager
Guangyu Wang, Deputy Director	Karina Johnston, Restoration Ecologist
Lia Protopapadakis, Marine Scientist & Project Manager	Elena Tuttle, Program Assistant

Members of the Public

Bryant Chesney, NOAA Fisheries	Kat Prickett, Port of Los Angeles
Joe Gully, LA County Sanitation District	Eric Miller, MBC Applied Environmental Sciences

PUBLIC FORUM

Members of the public and representatives of organizations/agencies wishing to comment must fill out a comment card at the meeting and will be allowed up to 3 minutes to address the Committee and to provide public testimony on items not otherwise on the agenda. Speaker time may be reduced depending on the number of speakers or otherwise at the discretion of the TAC Chair.

None

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- a. Order of the Agenda.

The TAC approved the agenda with no changes.

- b. Approval of Meeting Minutes.

The TAC approved the meeting minutes with minor edits.

- c. Reports from the Chair, Subcommittees, and Staff

The Vice Chair, Steve Bay, attended the SMBRC Governing Board Meeting. The Governing Board approved the TAC recommendations on the Proposition 84 projects.

The MRAC Chair, Dan Pondella, recapped the recent meeting of the Marine Resources Advisory Committee Meeting held on September 2 on the Loyola Marymount University, Westchester

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Campus. The MRAC will be advising SMBRF staff on possible analysis of aerial surveys of boating activity in relation to MPAs, which are *now* expected to take effect 1 January 2012. They discussed the idea of providing input on habitat evaluation procedures for Port mitigation credits and recommended that the TAC consider conducting a literature review and authoring a White Paper.

TAC staff, Lia Protopapadakis, announced that SMBRF had received a grant from EPA in partnership with SCCWRP and CSU-Channel Islands to develop site specific wetland monitoring protocols that can be consistent across coastal wetlands. They start work on October 1 and plan on presenting a draft plan at the December TAC meeting. Lia noted that staff is working on developing guidelines for monitoring Proposition 84 projects. Staff's approach will be to have Rainer present SFEI's work in the arena at the December TAC meeting, then develop draft recommendations to bring to TAC by March, and have final recommendations ready by June. Other experts can be brought in at the June meeting. Guangyu Wang noted that monitoring is only required for one year under Proposition 84, without justification it is hard to ask grantees to do more. He added that we can implement new monitoring protocols in this round as long as the protocols are within the existing budgets.

- d. Member Comment (*TAC members may wish to comment on issues not otherwise on the agenda.*)

Steve Bay announced that SCCWRP was hosting a panel on December 8-9 to discuss Brine discharge and develop recommendations for amendments to the Ocean Plan.

Rich Ambrose noted that the OPC's strategic plan is complete and they will discuss at the SAT meeting on 9/30.

Public Comment

Bryant Chesney announced that NOAA is finalizing their Seagrass Monitoring Report, with help from Brock Bernstein and SCCWRP. Hope is to conduct mapping project focused in Santa Monica Bay with the intent of identifying where beds are in SMBay and develop ability to answer questions about the impacts on beds from shoreline nourishment.

4. Presentation and Discussion: Scientific input on habitat evaluation procedures for Port mitigation (Bryant Chesney, NOAA Fisheries)

Bryant Chesney gave a presentation on habitat mitigation credits. The filling of subtidal habitats results in permanent loss of marine and coastal embayment habitat, which primarily impacts fish and birds, and requires compensatory mitigation. There are reasons for not always doing like-kind type conversions, which emphasize the creation of large amounts of intertidal and open water habitat. In 2004, the Corps wrote a new mitigation rule, which places more emphasis on watershed and ecosystem-based management and recognizes other regional priorities.

The restoration of the Ballona Wetland creates a potential opportunity for spending compensatory mitigation credits. But regional priorities, not mitigation needs, should drive Ballona restoration planning. For Ballona to be considered, a connection between the fish and bird resources impacted and the habitat restored in Ballona needs to be established

In light of the new rule, the TAC could examine additional ecological functions such as nutrient cycling, pollution removal, and primary productivity that benefit fish and birds; and advice on how these additional ecosystem functions can be incorporated into the evaluation process. If Ballona wetland restoration was pursued, SMBRC would be an appropriate participant on the Interagency Review Team (IRT), which advises the Army Corps of Engineers on establishment and management of mitigation banks.

Discussion

The TAC expressed interest in taking this project on and discussed the approach that should be taken and the timing. The MRAC will develop a scoping document which outlines the concept,

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timeline, work product, and lays out some ideas. This will be sent back to the TAC in a meeting or over email for feedback and then sent to the IRT for feedback. The purpose is to address translating mitigation credits for non in-kind habitats in wetlands generally, paying special attention to the types of habitats expected to be restored at Ballona. The goal is to have this information feed into the "Selecting evaluation species" decision point in the process and weigh in on how the mitigation goals are conceived.

Public Comment

Kat Prickett stated that the Port is currently in the process of developing an umbrella banking structure to bring the Port's existing Inner and Outer Harbor banks under the 2008 Mitigation Rule and has recently submitted a draft prospectus to the Corps. The umbrella bank structure will also include other habitat categories such as eelgrass, artificial reef, and wetland. This process is expected to take 12-18 months. The Port is also interested in restoration at Ballona for Port mitigation credits. Should the Port move forward with this effort, it would submit a project-specific bank prospectus and it is expected that SMBRC would be a member of the IRT that would assist in creating a Ballona banking instrument. SMBRC TAC input will help inform both banking structures.

5. Presentation and Discussion: Habitat Health Index Development Framework (Guangyu Wang)

Guangyu Wang presented a white paper discussing the framework for developing habitat health indices for natural habitats in Santa Monica Bay that SMBRF and the TAC is developing for our next State of the Bay Report. The draft framework incorporates input from SCCWRP. Identified "Management Actions" for each habitat type will address goals and expectations and guide indicator selection. Selected indicators will be in 3 basic categories: aerial extent, habitat quality, and biological response. The white paper also raised several outstanding questions. These include how to incorporate indicators of ecosystem services and human uses, what the appropriate number of indicators is, whether or not to standardize similar indicators across habitats, how to address the unevenness of data, and whether or not to add threshold values to the index.

Discussion

The TAC recommended separating the Management Actions from Goals. Both should drive indicator identification because each may lead to a different set of indicators. Goals can be very clear, fuzzy, or unclear (when there is no consensus). Thresholds are numerical targets and can be used when goals are very clear. Thresholds are valuable because they allow comparison across habitats, regions, etc and because they define "good" and "bad" performance. In cases where goals are fuzzy and thresholds are not defined, the assessment can start with "Best Professional Judgment." As we learn more, SMBRC can work toward defining these thresholds and goals better.

The indicator categories should be consistent across all habitat types even though the indicators themselves may not be consistent. The categories need to be defined and explained (i.e. habitat quality means physical, chemical, and biological structure; and biological response means spread of invasive species, fishery productivity, recovery of special status species). If the indicator categories were rolled together into an index, the extent and habitat quality should be kept separate, but habitat quality and biological response could be rolled together.

A separate indicator category for Ecosystem Services/Benefits & Values/Human Uses may be added later. This category would address cross-cutting issues that directly relate to humans and insect with many goals in the Bay Restoration Plan. Some examples are supporting services (nutrient cycling & primary productivity), provisioning services (fishing), and regulatory services (carbon sequestration). It will be important to be sure that there are data relating to selected indicators. Should ecosystem services be part of habitat quality (does it support human uses) or separate? Supporting services are farther removed from human benefits and are harder for economists to put value on.

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An indicator matrix for each habitat should be developed to identify all possible indicators that the ones used in the habitat assessment can be selected from. The indicator matrix would identify goals (with numeric targets where available), lists stressors that impede each goal (a few per goal), includes management actions that relate to each stressor (a few per stressor), and identifies indicators which are best for each stressor. This would provide a systematic and transparent framework for identifying indicators and justification for populate the assessment matrix. It also will identify gaps in data and provides an easy place to make adjustments later, if needed.

Staff needs to identify and clearly state what the screening criteria will be, such as the timeframe in which change can be detected, the ability to evaluate management actions, and the feasibility of obtaining data (should not be strict). Staff should also write a paragraph that describes key characteristics of each habitat, identifies important stressors, and explains why these stressors are important.

The TAC requested staff to continue this discussion in December. Staff will make changes to the assessment matrix, and will outline an indicator matrix/diagram for one habitat. Then TAC members will try to do one or a few habitats as “homework” between meetings to help focus the discussion.

SMBRF’s goal is to have the matrix peer reviewed by March of 2013. The next Bight effort may provide an opportunity to fill in some data gaps. Planning for that will begin in June of 2012. We should have indicator matrices filled in by then.

The TAC agreed that effort should be made to coordinate with other entities engaged in similar assessments (SCCWRP, NCEAS, MPA Monitoring Enterprise) and bring in experts for each habitat in a working group format.

Public Comment

Joe Gully warned against selecting indicators based on management measures. Management actions should be evaluated separately from assessing habitat. He suggested identifying main stressors and drivers for each habitat to make sure management actions address stressors. Joe encouraged the use of a big matrix because it would help identify data gaps.

Eric Miller cautioned that the framework should identify what causes the stress before identifying actions. He suggested changing “management actions” to “potential management actions” to capture the full range of indicators to be used.

6. Discussion and Possible Action: New TAC membership

Lia read the revised Policy on TAC membership. TAC membership will be reviewed every two years at alternating end-of year meetings. The TAC will present recommendations to the Governing Board regarding renewal/non-renewal of current members, renewal/selection of chair, and selection of new members if necessary.

Lia presented staff recommendation to renew the membership of Richard Ambrose, Steve Bay, David Caron, Mas Dojiri, Rainer Hoenicke, Burton Jones, Karen Martin, and Dan Pondella; and retain Rich as the Chair. A quorum was not present, so the vote will be conducted over email at the next meeting.

Staff needs to replace two members, Dr. Jenny Jay (environmental microbiologist) and Dr. Linda Fernandez (natural resource economics). This item will be on the next agenda. Recommendations for Jenny’s seat include: John Dorsey (microbiologist) who was the former chair of the TAC and is involved with monitoring at Ballona, Jim Moffett (chemical oceanography, environmental chemistry, and toxicology) who could be a new seat, Jed Furman (microbiology), and someone with source identification expertise. Other sources to consult for ideas include asking Jenny for a recommendation and browsing the Sea Grant funding awards for the last few years for good new faces. Recommendations and discussion for Linda’s seat include: Ryan Dwight, Richard

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Carson, Darwin Hall, and Chris LaFranchi (working with Ecotrust). Other ideas include the Director of the Wrigley Center, UCLA's Institute for the Environment and Sustainability, or someone from Ecotrust. Staff will follow up on these recommendations and bring this item back at the next meeting.

Staff has identified a need for a new seat with hydrology/engineering/geology expertise. Staff identified two candidates (Stanley Trimble and Terrie Hogue) and invited feedback and additional suggestions. Stanley Trimble would be great but he lives in Virginia and has just retired. Terrie would be terrific, but she is somewhat narrowly focused on local streams. Mike Stenstrom would be a good, but would be unlikely to attend. Rich recommended considering Ken Susilo. He works for the consulting firm Geosyntec and has done a variety of work with Rich and SMBRC on LID projects. Staff would need to consider whether we want to have someone from a consulting firm on the TAC and whether there could be potential conflicts of interest when reviewing Proposition 84 projects.

The TAC recommended staff consider adding and another new seat with inorganic environmental chemistry expertise, which could be filled by Jim Moffett.

Adjournment

The next meeting will be held on December 6 at 9:30am on the LMU campus. The meeting adjourned at 3:10pm.

