

**Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission  
Watershed Advisory Council Meeting  
February 9, 2017**

**Records of Comments**

(Received during the Meeting and through the On-Line Survey)

The annual SMBRC WAC meeting was held on February 9 at the Westchester Community Center. Twenty-seven members of the WAC and participants from the general public attended the meeting. Comments from ten participants were also received through an online survey, accessible through the SMBRC website ([www.smbrc.ca.gov](http://www.smbrc.ca.gov)), from February 2 to February 12. There were five breakout sessions focusing input on the following areas: water quality, natural resources – terrestrial, natural resources-marine, outreach and climate change, and program management and monitoring. All meeting attendants were given the opportunity to participate in all five breakout sessions through rotation. Two or more staff persons were assigned to assist each session and took detailed notes during the meeting.

**General**

- Get elected officials more involved to support funding of projects in Southern California and the Santa Monica Bay area.
- Provide progress update to the Governing Board by focusing one specific work plan program area at each meeting, bundling related projects in the program area.
- Pursue Prop 1 funding from multiple state agencies including the Resource Agency, Coastal Conservancy, State Water Resources Control Board, Ocean Protection Council, etc. for green infrastructure, water capture, and restoration projects for wildlife habitats.
- Recommend a representative from Caltrans be on the SMBRC Governing Board. Land ownership by the agency is high everywhere – especially in Santa Monica Bay, and there are opportunities for many restoration projects on Caltrans properties.
- Have the Governing Board empower the Technical Advisory Committee. Expand role of the TAC.

**Water Quality**

- Some cities still have ordinances that rainwater must go into street. Those cities should be encouraged to collect and reuse rather than street disposal.
- Encourage cities to look at developments in their city to ensure these development install storm water BMPs. Cities have an obligation to monitor development.
- Work in partnership with other non-profits to promote a unified message to encourage installation of rain barrels, infiltration, and capture of runoff.
- Promote more ocean friendly gardens and rain gardens. More projects will be helpful. Expand what we can do on public lands. Keep developing new partnerships and cross-promote. Also evaluate benefits of these projects provided to wildlife.
- Make the best possible use of resources and make entire watershed water self-sufficient and keep pollutants out of the bay from the watershed. Replicate projects completed by the City of Santa Monica and the City's goal to be water self-sufficient by 2020.
- Support implementation of EWMP. Periodically report on implementation progress of EWMPs in the watershed.
- Consider utilizing storm water as a resource a high priority.

- Keep in the work plan language about supporting projects that add water quality benefits to flood control projects.
- Identify the impacts of changes in water quantity in Ballona Creek, which is effluent dominated. The possible reduction of the flows if city/county takes water out of the creek may impact habitat restoration in the Ballona system.
- Facilitate treatment of a portion of storm flows through LVMWD's treatment plant for later infiltration/reuse. This is technologically feasible because the plant doesn't have industry waste water and the associated contaminants that can't be treated.
- Develop a priority list for water quality improvement projects that are unfunded to know how much funding would be needed.
- Make a statement regarding potential groundwater contaminants as a result of infiltration. Capture and treatment BMPs are seen at development sites but there are some conflicts: infiltration can be liability for groundwater contamination.
- Establish partnership/connection between water infiltration and ground water agencies. Research groundwater modeling to demonstrate the connection between infiltration and groundwater recharge. Open up potential funding opportunities from water providers.
- Support studies on whether chemical contaminants that wash down and get infiltrated will make into our drinking water supply.
- Need to keep pharmaceuticals out of the water. Continue to promote no drugs down the drain program through partnership.
- Do more to clean trash flowing into water in creek by sponsoring beach/ creek cleanups. Help improve access to groups to participate in cleanups.
- Educate and promote alternatives to toxic (i.e. roundup). Look into who uses what and promote alternatives to Pesticide such as Roundup. Reach out not just to the cities but institutions/ universities regarding use of environmentally friendly alternative.
- Capture more storm water, promote understanding about riverways. Promote water that is taken out of creeks /rivers to be treated then be put back in to be a source to freshwater wetlands.
- Promote design of a trash screen for storm drains that separates organic matter (leaves, soil, etc.) from trash and doesn't throw out the organic matter which is a resource and shouldn't be included with trash and disposed of.
- Copper TMDL outreach statement in the current work plan is inaccurate because paints are not primary source of copper in the water and copper is not harmful to aquatic life. The time and effort put into this will not result in tangible benefits.
- Copper is harmful to aquatic life. However, one primary source of copper may be the brake pads.
- Check and get the latest information and people can get the latest information from the LA Regional Water Quality Control Board on ongoing studies regarding coppers.
- Support the cleanup of copper in bottom paint in Marina del Rey.
- Keep track the cleanup of Marina del Rey and advocate for low development in the marina and along the coast. Promote developments with sustainability and encourage more open space in the area for its environmental and wildlife benefits.
- Support the work the SMBNEP is doing, especially multi-benefit projects like Oxford basin restoration.
- Oppose the proposed desalinization project by West Basin. Prefer wastewater recycling not desalinization because wastewater recycling will reduce effluent dumped in the bay, and less energy will be used to clean waste water as opposed to clean saltwater.
- Recommend West Basin and Hyperion to work together to achieve more wastewater recycling.

## Natural Resources

### Wetlands

- Continue work on removing iceplant at Ballona because native species are returning.
- Disseminate more results and information about ongoing projects and the iceplant removal project in particular.
- Need accountability for non-native species returning to iceplant-removing area and accountability about each and every thing that happens for all projects.
- More recognition for slow, careful restoration. Need an alternative for restoration of seasonal freshwater wetland at Ballona.
- Evaluate whether the Ballona wetlands should be a salt water or fresh water restoration.
- Make Ballona a freshwater marsh
- Want to see hydrology studies.
- Conduct additional monitoring at Ballona Reserve to catalog the plants that are emerging after the recent rains.
- Research what rainwater harvesting and rain garden projects do for topsoil – microbiota and how do these things tie to Ballona Wetland Restoration.
- Link and evaluate data on how oil and gas under Ballona Wetlands will affect wildlife, especially if sediment is removed.
- Provide information on all species at Ballona wetlands.
- Present to SMBRC on the history of Ballona Wetlands.
- Have briefing on Ballona draft EIR for April Governing Board meeting
- Cooperate with BWLT, who is willing to fund iceplant removal and monitoring at Ballona.
- Have a plan to inform about Ballona's EIR/EIS. Need an interface and a better instrument to inform the public.
- Make clear that TBF staff operates the website [www.ballonarestoration.org](http://www.ballonarestoration.org) and specify the process by which changes to the website are authorized.
- Better outreach from Project Management Team re: Ballona DEIR timeline. Include both the most up to date projected release date and status of interim milestones.
- Publish a document describing the purpose, size and scope of the proposed parking garage in all Ballona restoration alternatives.
- Expand community restoration efforts and engagement similar to the iceplant removal project.
- Conduct active, not passive outreach with face-to-face events for Ballona wetlands restoration. Contact via social media, not just website.
- Have the Army corps be part of the conversation.
- Have some TAC role on the Ballona DEIR when it comes out.
- Find funding to continue Ballona Wetland restoration efforts.
- Continue the crucial post restoration monitoring at Malibu Lagoon.
- Work with State Parks on more projects in the North Bay like Topanga Lagoon restoration, and Topanga Narrows restoration. Help to find funding for these restorations. Topanga Lagoon restoration is approved but needs support to get the project started.
- Emphasize on habitat restorations inland that also benefit pacific flyway – storm water basins that are neglected could be great opportunities for habitat restorations. City of Torrance is a good example – having 14 sumps that provide freshwater wetland opportunities. Include these types of projects in the work plan.
- Look at wetlands as a bacterial filter for marine habitats.
- Reviewed Playa Vista DEIR.

### Riparian Habitats

- More fish barrier removal projects and small estuary restoration projects like Trancas and Topanga for steelhead.
- Keep prioritizing fish barrier removal projects with the State Parks – continue investigation for Prop 1 funding, and more collaboration.
- Expand work at Arroyo Sequit to other streams and lagoons to provide more steelhead passages.
- Support upland and inland restoration opportunities in urbanized areas – e.g. Inglewood, Centinela Park in Ballona Creek Watershed, with Baldwin Hills Conservancy support. Recognize more watershed components and connectivity; Stone Creek at UCLA is a good example. Connect communities to other types of environment. Partner with NMH habitat restoration program and projects.
- Continue support to remove Rindge Dam because sediments behind the dam would benefit beaches and make a great fish reef. Engage elected officials more. Make sure Army Corps gets good suggestions for Rindge Dam DEIR. Help facilitate getting information out about the DEIR for Rindge Dam removal.
- Need to examine the sediment TMDL for Malibu Creek and see if the TMDL eliminates sediment flow to beaches and adversely impact sand resources in SM Bay.

### Beach and Bluffs

- Explore other areas for beach restoration pilot projects. Expand monitoring efforts – make sure to include ecological benefits + climate change + recreational / trash issues, if any. Conduct other beach restorations and evaluate all together.
- Evaluate Zuma Beach and include the County in discussions for beach restoration and dune restoration work.
- Support Santa Monica bluffs restoration which was held up because it is on CalTrans' property.
- Need to replenish supplies of sand to beaches through barrier removals. Anything impacting flow of sand needs to be evaluated and fixed. Evaluate holistically so that it doesn't solve one problem but create another
- Explore opportunities for climate change tied to beach management including sediment management plan.
- Observe, support, monitor and protect Broad Beach Restoration.

### Open Space

- Use non-parkland for new low income developments. The existing park lands should be enhanced for natural resources.
- Work to reduce homeless impacts in the open space areas. Address homelessness not only as a social issue but as an environmental problem. Make sure actions are appropriate for all community needs as well as environmental needs.
- Explore study and evaluation of factors regarding the association of bacteria exceedance and connection to homeless camps. Look into the environmental benefits of decreasing homelessness. Review the findings from the Bight '13 debris study.

### Marine

- Increase habitat in Santa Monica through restoration efforts and artificial structures (i.e. artificial reefs) that may attenuate sea level rise. Find data on existing artificial reefs in the Bay and examine if they enhance the fish and reef habitat.
- Ensure future artificial reef consider dual purpose of habitat benefits and surf breaks.

- Ensure regular communications with coastal commission staff on reefs and kelp forests status.
- More education and collection of data on the impact of irresponsible fishing and fishing debris on wildlife. Study and demonstrate impact of fishing lines and hooks on marine life, including fishing along the Ballona Creek.
- Study impact of plastic debris on birds and fish. Examine if a lot of fish and birds within the Santa Monica Bay have plastic in them.
- Pass along information about the effect of marine debris on wildlife to local jurisdictions to inform their management plans
- Evaluate the impact of plastic straws have on environment to inform statewide ban of their use.
- Organize cleanup efforts after rain event when trash is pushed towards the coast. Investigate new technologies such as the “Sea Bin” to help clean up trash in marinas, harbors and other water bodies.
- Recognize Marina del Rey as a significant nursery for fish.
- More protection of Mothers Beach from runoff as there are many leopard sharks, halibut, corbina that use it as a refuge.
- Promote “Greening the gray” urban environments such as marinas and harbors which can be looked at as habitat for many species.
- More education on how harvest impacts marine life and birds and promote the message that mussels should be left for wildlife.
- Promote the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife to formulate a halibut fishery plan, which is needed to see why halibuts are not doing well in Santa Monica Bay.
- Investigate the impact of nutrient levels on hypoxia and ocean acidification.
- Conduct studies of marine sediments in the Bay to look at the effects of sewage pipe leaking directly in the shallow water habitat.
- Monitor of firework displays and look at their effects in water.

### **Climate Change**

- Supports continued research like ocean acidification studies, wave action studies, and promotes regional communication.
- Connect effects of inland flooding and coastal flooding - how inland and coastal efforts enhance, relate to, and complement each other.
- Look into Infrastructure vulnerabilities in relation to climate change and endorse activities that examine it on a regional approach.
- Continue monitoring and evaluate recreation uses vs restoration benefits vs climate change buffering from storms.
- Monitor shifting species or change species composition due to warming water i.e. Baja species coming north. Examine how this affects Santa Monica Bay.
- Look into the Envision Rating System on [sustainableinfrastructure.org](http://sustainableinfrastructure.org), a new rating system for infrastructure like roads and bridges.
- Support the Santa Monica Bay beach restoration pilot project.
- More outreach, not just passive outreach, but have active outreach about the exceptional dune restoration projects. Conduct monthly outreach. Utilize the huge opportunity provided by being so close to the bike path to tell people about this project. Do walks with neighboring clubs and explore funding opportunities by reaching out to club members.
- Work with the City of Santa Monica’s education team that can help with outreach on Santa Monica beach restoration project.

- Support more climate change education (i.e. Santa Monica beach restoration pilot project). Fill the communication gap as a lot of people still don't know the real impacts of climate change.
- Encourages all the communication we can do to relay climate change information especially on how we can address sea level rise.
- More effort spent on educating people about ocean acidification impact and temperature changes.
- More education about the benefits of dense development near public transit.
- Consider creating a one sheet for "These are the effects of climate change" for general education about climate change and get people to understand the impacts. Share varying organization's efforts on communicating. Partner on hosting a workshop for enviro groups to create a one page fact sheet on climate change.
- Promote getting a consensus on climate change.
- Provide information that local cities and agencies can find out how to cope with climate change impacts at when designing projects.
- Clarify the extent to which SMBNEP can engage in prevention in addition to adaptation.
- Look into potential wave generators or offshore energy projects.

### **Outreach**

- Increase public education (children and adults) regarding what happens to our water, how things work, and how to capturing water on your land. Conduct tours of Hyperion treatment facility.
- Need macro, micro, and multilingual communication plan.
- Inform the public about the successes of our programs and efforts.
- Produce more fact sheets (infographics) including a general "Who is SMBRC and what do we do" factsheet. Also consider producing factsheet on project and study results, which can be modeled after the factsheet the City of LA Environmental Monitoring Division developed on what they found in their monitoring during the one-mile outfall diversion.
- Present and share research and monitoring results with simple, public friendly publications similar to the snapshots produced by the California Ocean Science Trust.
- Expand outreach and try to recruit high school teachers and develop lesson plans on marine biology for their classroom. Make lesson plans available on website for teachers and youth counselors.
- Conduct aquarium outreach.
- Love the Southern California Boater's Guide. Add Yacht Clubs and their telephone numbers to the Guide.

## Research and Monitoring

- Increase public knowledge of the science that is happening here in SMB. More public outreach and information on the monitoring of beaches, fish, and other habitats and who are doing the monitoring.
- Promote more studies of the coastal interface of our drainage and storm water system with regard to how the system is impacted by rainfall and storm events throughout the watershed. Collaborate among groups to fill data gaps and identify key areas that could be affected by climate change, specifically storm water. Increase collaborative research through the SMBRA.
- Put out information on what is being monitored in regards to MPA. Put out the info very simply on one sheet on what has been done for the bay. Compile all relevant studies and who has done them all together.
- Try to meld the estuary and marine systems in research.
- Complete restoration projects with scientific reports on top of it. Continue expanding with other research questions from current projects.
- Look “up” the watershed. Look at how upstream can affect downstream, e.g. what happens east of Centinela, and bringing the topic of Ballona Creek to upstream communities.
- Focus on the economic side of our work and make an economic evaluation with regards to investments and long term cost savings.
- Provide an interface for monitoring elements, e.g. fresh water management in urban sub-watersheds.
- Support ongoing Mussel Watch program by NOAA which now includes analysis of emergent contaminants. The program collects good data because mussels are filter feeders. More sampling locations should be added near outfalls.
- Continue monitoring and data collection on steelhead and state listed species.
- Secure long-term monitoring to evaluate the restoration.
- Focus on knowledge gaps in many areas of the comprehensive monitoring program, e.g. marine mammals.
- Need monitoring of marine mammals. Collect more tissue samples and conduct more tests. Work with Marine Mammal Care Center in San Pedro and California Wildlife Center’s Rescue Team to conduct testing of stranded mammals. Embed staff member to work with these agencies. This will fill gap for the State of the Bay report.
- Tap into knowledge of marine mammal experts and resources at local universities for marine mammals.
- Get master students from LMU, UCLA, or USC to work on data gaps, for instance gaps on the pelagic system.
- Work to fill other data gaps: pelagic areas, slopes in deeper water, and fish.
- Have LACSD be part of the TAC and revive Marin Resources Advisory Committee to work on the State of the Bay report.
- Work on creating a story and narrative to support efforts making data relevant and understandable to the public. Explain to the public the whys and communicate it within a story.
- Need a countywide database and map for water quality so that all data collected under the coordinated storm water monitoring program are assembled and analyzed.
- Educate people to understand bacterial testing and show results. Raise awareness on Ballona creek TMDL.

- Share the monitoring results to the public. Make monitoring data more available and in a timely fashion.
- Include monitoring in the work plan that are part of the EPA grant.

### **Program Management and Others**

- Have the NEP inform the status of projects and who is doing what, beyond the Ballona area.
- NEED Accountability in WAC. Need organized breakout groups to facilitate discussion of specific projects.
- Need accountability for projects that SMBRC approves (i.e. Oxford Lagoon, prop 84 projects).
- Have subcommittee to monitor how a grant proceeds.
- More opportunities for dialog rather than just input.
- Need more consensus and take a one-voice approach on topics.
- Include in the work plan of projects that SMBNEP would need funding to complete in order to raise awareness of need for increased resources.
- Discuss in the work plan methodology for valancing various legitimate public interest that sometimes conflict with one another such as biodiversity, recreation, education, flood control, health codes, etc.
- Cite in the work plan relevant federal regulations governing the National Estuary Program and the roles of each entity pursuant to those regulations.
- Clarify in the work plan which entity or entities are awarded EPA Section 320 grant funds.
- Have all EPA funding go to the Commission.
- Same person should not be the Executive Director for both positions for the TBF and the Commission.
- Allow the public to speak and have responses to input.
- Respond to and work with the public.
- Be inclusive, work with groups like the BLTT.