



**SANTA MONICA BAY
RESTORATION COMMISSION**
MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

**SANTA MONICA BAY RESTORATION COMMISSION
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

Date: Thursday, March 18, 2021

Time: 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Meeting Location: Remote Meeting Only

Charlie Caspary chaired the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission's (Commission) Executive Committee meeting and called the meeting to order at 1:01 pm. Commission staff provided an overview of the meeting protocols. Introductions followed.

1) Comments from Members of the Public on Items Not on the Agenda and Public Testimony on All Agenda Items

There was no public comment.

2) Executive Committee Business

a) Order of Agenda

Caspary amended the order of the agenda to move Item 3 before Item 2.e without objection.

b) Reports from the Chief Administrative Director and Santa Monica Bay National Estuary Program (NEP) Director

Guangyu Wang reported on the Commission staff's work activities including the development of the Santa Monica Bay NEP Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Work Plan (FY22 Work Plan) and the revised Comprehensive Monitoring Program (CMP), grant management of Proposition 84 projects, and support of ongoing litigation. Wang also reported that the development of the draft amendment to the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Commission and The Bay Foundation continues to be on hold pending the outcome of the mediation process of the ongoing lawsuit against the Commission. Eric Gillman provided an additional update on litigation. Wang also announced his retirement for later this year. Claire Waggoner provided additional information about the transition plan for staff administration.

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Charlie Caspary reported on communications with Governing Board member Kevin McKeown regarding public access at the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve (Ballona Wetlands) and invited Randy Rodriguez to provide an update on public access at the Ballona Wetlands. Rodriguez reported that there were no updates or changes since the California Department of Fish & Wildlife's October 7, 2020 memorandum (CDFW Memo).

The Executive Committee directed staff to draft a resolution of non-binding recommendations to CDFW regarding public access at Ballona Wetlands for the Executive Committee's consideration at its next meeting. Rodriguez suggested for the resolution to reference the CDFW Memo as appropriate.

Member comments followed on consideration of potential impacts if CDFW were to permit additional public access, clarification of the Commission's role at the Ballona Wetlands, and the timeline for developing the resolution.

Caspary also reported on AB-963 (Baldwin Hills Conservancy (BHC): urban watersheds conservancy expansion) and requested members to review draft legislation and potential amendments. Rodriguez commented on CDFW's ongoing review of the AB-963.

Member comments followed on partnership with BHC, proposed changes in BHC's area of jurisdiction, and postponement of considering support of AB-963 until legislation language is finalized.

Tom Ford reported on the development of the Santa Monica Bay NEP annual report, availability of tools and resources for NEPs to identify underserved communities and address environmental justice, development of a logo and website for the Santa Monica Bay NEP, and advancements in coastal management and data-gathering, including autonomous vehicles and machine learning. Ford also reported on Santa Monica Bay NEP activities carried out by The Bay Foundation including development of beach site suitability assessments; research regarding mussels and microplastics; concept development to assess trash type and quantity near Ballona Creek; production of educational videos for boat composting toilets and marine protected areas; initiation of planting at Table to Farm gardens; development of project proposal to increase coastal access for youth from underserved communities; participation in virtual California Clean Boating meeting; conditioning of additional abalone for outplanting; development of experimental design for transplanting eelgrass into offshore environments; participation in CDFW bull kelp working group; informing potential State bill of funding and resource needs to further statewide implementation of kelp restoration projects; sediment accretion at Zuma Beach; additional staff to assist with beach and dune restoration projects; restoration at the Ballona Wetlands site; and monitoring at Malibu and Topanga Lagoon.

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i) Update on Informational Items List and Projected Agenda Items Calendar

Caitlin Gray provided an update on two planning tools for organizing Commission activities for the next six to 12 months, the Informational Items List and Projected Agenda Items Calendar (Calendar), and recommended that staff continue to use these documents for recommending future agenda items and to provide updates on these documents to the Executive Committee, as needed.

Member comments followed on the Informational Items List, including recording the date and the presenters of informational items that are held to track status and progress, addition of kelp restoration as a potential topic, and the Calendar, including the addition of a recurring presentation on Santa Monica Bay NEP annual accomplishments.

c) Consideration of Approval of November 19, 2020 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes were approved as published by roll-call vote. Moved: Timothy Lippman. Seconded: Tom Ford.

d) Establish the Governing Board Agenda for the April 15, 2021 Governing Board Meeting

i) Consideration of Approval of the Revised Santa Monica Bay NEP Comprehensive Monitoring Program (CMP)

Caitlin Gray introduced this item and outlined the purpose of the CMP, major changes to the 2007 CMP, progress to finalize the draft revised CMP, and the staff recommendation for the Executive Committee to schedule this item for the April 15 Governing Board meeting.

ii) Consideration of Approval of the Santa Monica Bay NEP Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Work Plan (FY22 Work Plan)

Caitlin Gray introduced this item and outlined the purpose and scope of the FY22 Work Plan, opportunities for stakeholders including members of the public to provide input, summary of input received, and progress and timeline to finalize the draft FY22 Work Plan. Staff recommended for the Executive Committee to schedule this item for the April 15 Governing Board meeting.

Member comments followed on US EPA's deadline for submitting the FY22 Work Plan and the February 24, 2021 Santa Monica Bay Stakeholders workshop, including the encouragement to continue to acquire professional facilitation services for future workshops, if possible.

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iii) Update on Restoration Activities and Water Quality Improvement Projects in the Santa Monica Bay Watershed: Topanga Lagoon Restoration Planning Project

Wang introduced this item and outlined staff recommendation to schedule an update on the Topanga Lagoon Restoration Planning Project implemented by State Parks and Resource Conservation District of Santa Monica Mountains (RCDSMM) and funded by Proposition 12.

Member comments followed on the presenters for this item. Wang reported that Clark Stevens of RCDSMM is anticipated to lead the presentation.

The following recommended items were added to the April 15, 2021 Governing Board meeting agenda by roll-call vote: Items 2.d.i, 2.d.ii, and 2.d.iii. Moved: Jonathon Bishop. Seconded: Martha Tremblay.

e) Closed Session

Eric Gillman announced closed session. Open session adjourned at 2:26 pm.

Closed session adjourned and open session reconvened at 2:48 pm. Eric Gillman reported there was nothing to report from closed session.

3) Member Comments and Announcements Regarding Matters not on the Agenda

Charlie Caspary commented on the February 24, 2021 Santa Monica Bay Stakeholders workshop.

Erica Yelensky commented on the new US EPA Administrator, Michael Regan.

The meeting adjourned at 2:49 pm.

Attendance:

Voting Members and Alternates of the Executive Committee:

Jonathan Bishop, State Water Resources Control Board
EJ Caldwell, At-Large Representative (West Basin Municipal Water District)
Charlie Caspary, Las Virgenes Municipal Water District
Kelly Clark, Public Member (Environmental/Public Interest), Los Angeles Waterkeeper
Timothy Lippman, LA County Board of Supervisors (3rd District)
Katherine Pease, Public Member (Environmental/Public Interest), Heal the Bay
Martha Tremblay, Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County
Claire Waggoner, State Water Resources Control Board

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Non-Voting Members and Alternates of the Executive Committee:

Tom Ford, Santa Monica Bay NEP Director
Erica Yelensky, US EPA Region 9

Commission and State Water Board Staff:

Eric Gillman, State Water Board
Caitlin Gray, Commission
Guangyu Wang, Commission

Other Attendees:

Dave Roberts, Las Virgenes Municipal Water District
Jim Stahl, Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board
Randy Rodriguez, California Department Fish & Wildlife
Tim Pershing, State Assembly 50th District