



# 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

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

Friday, September 2, 2011

1:00am – 3:00pm

Loyola Marymount University, Malone 460C (The Hill)

Note: Public comments are *italicized*. Items for staff follow-up are underlined.

### 1. Welcome and Introductions: Dan Pondella, Chair

The Chair convened the meeting at 1:10pm.

### 2. Public Comment (*items not on the agenda*)

*Eric Miller commented that the forage fish bill in the CA state assembly is unnecessary because all the fish covered by the bill are already managed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council. The State Water Board policy is now requiring power plant mitigation money to be paid to the Coastal Conservancy to support MPA monitoring.*

The Chair received 1 public comment card on Agenda Item # 5 & 6.

### 3. Approve Agenda and Meeting Minutes

Members approved the day's agenda. Members formally approved the MRAC portion of the minutes from the last meeting, which was held jointly with the TAC. The TAC approved their portion in April and the MRAC gave unofficial approval in April so that the minutes could be made available to the public.

### 4. Reports from the Chair and Staff

The Chair reported that the TAC has been busy with Prop 84 project proposal review and learning about Ballona Watershed activities.

Staff reported that due to the Office of Administrative Law review of the South Coast MPA regulations, the South Coast MPA implementation date had to be changed. The Fish and Game Commission will establish a new date at their September 15 meeting.

SMBRC is looking for funding to continue the aerial surveys of boater activity along the Southern California mainland coast and is seeking advice on ways to improve the data collection. Members were asked if they recommended having this discussion within the format of the MRAC, or if it should be a separate workshop. Members felt that an MRAC meeting would be sufficient. Burt noted that the Automated Information System (AIS) already collects data on the location of tankers and container ships, so the survey could increase efficiency by focusing on smaller crafts. The AIS data is saved on the SCOOS website.

The DFG conducted a peer review of the spiny lobster stock assessment and is planning for a Fishery Management Plan. They have completed the review of the halibut stock assessment and plan on revising this assessment in about three years before considering a Fishery Management Plan.

### 5. Discussion: value of estuarine habitat for fisheries

Shelley introduced the item. Bryant Chesney (NMFS) will give a presentation to the TAC at the September meeting. SMBRC is asking for MRAC input in advance. The Army Corps leads the decision process on what habitat can be used by ports for mitigation credits. Traditionally,

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they grant approve for creation of like communities. This has caused mitigation needs to drive restoration efforts (Bataquitos, 1989), instead of the needs of habitat driving restoration. However, this began to change in the mid 1980s with the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS) mitigation effort. There is new interest in determining whether non-like communities can contribute to mitigation. This is not an official policy, having never gone through a formal process. We would like to know whether mitigation money from the Port of LA could be used for the Ballona Wetland restoration even though deep basins, which are the traditionally approved mitigation habitat type, are not feasible at Ballona due to the hydrological connection under Dock 52.

Members discussed building this case by looking at ecosystem services and productivity rather than fish habitat. Mitigation credits for power plants and desalination facilities have been based on productivity equivalents (gm/fish) not particular species. If the Corps were to develop guidelines by region it would require a long formal process. A white paper considering how a functioning wetland effects the offshore environment may be feasible, because the data are there. In addition, it may be possible to extend the scope of the white paper to include the human dimension as data from commercial fisheries and Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessels are readily available. Including socioeconomics would be new and important, but may be difficult to clearly define. *Eric Miller noted that value for birds carries weight and birds are easily observable.* However, the politics are driven by fish. A literature review or white paper would give policy makers science to base their decision on. Any position could be derived from the biology and the productivity. There needs to be a basis for determining how many mitigation credits should be allotted to this type of mitigation. A literature review would provide sources for the Corps review team on which to base their decision. The State Water Board has a new policy on powerplant mitigation, which could demonstrate related policies.

Members concluded that SMBRC might like to have 2 documents: 1) a white paper demonstrating the value of wetlands to fisheries produced by the TAC or MRAC and 2) a position paper that reviews other policies and makes recommendations for a policy on mitigation credits for wetlands that the Governing Board adopts and sends to the Corps.

## 6. Discussion: Santa Monica Bay fisheries research

*Eric Miller commented that Ed Parnell and Doug Nielson are researching lobster survival and movement. Halibut are capable of moving great distances. Halibut recruit along the open coasts in warmer areas and in bays. Larry Allen is doing a study in Huntington Beach. SMBRC research could focus on open coastal areas. Consider whether water quality is an issue in these warmer coastal areas, where stormwater runoff is still a concern. Harmful Algal Blooms are connected to survival of larval fish. We already know that there are gaps in year classes of near shore fishes when there have been large red tide events. Red tides bloom with preceding wet winter and summer. What are power plants entraining? John McGowan completed a retrospective study on power plant entrainment that might be informative. Also consider a grow-out facility similar to the white sea bass pens.*

Lia introduced SMBRC's developing fisheries program, built around sustainable fish stocks, resilient fishing communities, safe and healthy seafood, and working collaboratively with commercial and recreational fishermen. The current focus is on halibut and spiny lobster.

Regarding halibut, the stock assessment finds halibut to be depleted to 14% of unfished levels in Southern California and lower in Santa Monica Bay. Why? There doesn't appear to be a subpopulation based on genetics. Studies of otolith micro-chemistry in San Diego can demonstrate the type of habitat a halibut grew up in, but not the location (ie which estuary).

Members suggested developing a process for identifying research questions of stakeholders. Consider holding a stakeholder meeting maybe as part of an MRAC meeting to gather input. Maybe

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hold a separate meeting to include managers. Rick Starr and Dean Wendt may be good resources as they do similar collaborative research.

*Eric Miller suggested that SMBRC look at the stock assessment and review and pay attention to why data were kicked out.*

**7. Member Comment (MRAC members may wish to comment on issues not otherwise on the agenda.)**

None.

**8. Adjournment**

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 3pm.

	<b>MRAC Members</b>	<b>Staff Members</b>	<b>Public Members</b>
x	Dan Pondella (Chair)	Lia Protopapadakis	Eric Miller (MBC)
	Jim Allen	Guangyu Wang	Marika Schulhof (USC Sea Grant)
x	Rich Ambrose	Shelley Luce	Charlynn Rachell (LADWP)
x	Burt Jones	Tom Ford	Kat Prickett (Port of LA)
x	Gerry McGowen		Amanda Rosenblum (CSULB)
x	Ana Pitchon		
	Shelly Walther		

