

Summary of Wetland Monitoring Group meeting of the San Francisco Bay Wetland Restoration Program held Tuesday, December 5, 2006, 1:30 –4 p.m. at 1515 Clay Street, Oakland, CA. 94612. (Notes taken by A.Breaux; send comments to abreaux@waterboards.ca.gov)

Attendees: Marcia Brockbank (SFEP), Andree Breaux (Water Board) Molly Martindale (U.S. ACOE), Phil Lebednik (LFR Levine-Fricke, Inc.), Luisa Valiela (U.S. EPA), Peggy Olofson & Ingrid Hogle (Invasive Spartina Project).

Budget:

2006:

\$3,000	to SFEI for website transfer & maintenance
\$2,000	for Monitoring Review Team (MRT) for Napa Salt Plant
\$2000-3,000	reserved for use by BCDC in 2007 for Wind-Wave Workshop

Balance = 0

2007: Proposed projects for the \$8,000 available in 2007:

\$2,000 -- 3,000 for MRT to review Monitoring Plan for Bair Island; \$2,000 for website development & maintenance and Wetland Tracker coordination by SFEI.

Other suggestions: MRT review of mercury monitoring for bay wetland projects if recommendations are completed in 2007 (Lebednik); design or monitoring review of Laguna Seca in Santa Clara County (but it may not be ready in 2007 [Valiela]). *Please send any other suggestions for use of the funds to review wetland monitoring or design projects in SF Bay to A. Breaux (abreaux@waterboards.ca.gov).*

Monitoring Review Team Projects for 2007:

Bair Island: This project is likely to be reviewed by the Monitoring Review Team in 2007 on **April 24** in the morning (other possible dates are March 6 or May 1). An announcement will be sent out to MRT members. Those accepting the invitation will be given a copy of the monitoring plan in the EIS and the US FWS Biological Opinion. At the meeting, Clyde Morris of the U.S. FWS will give a presentation on the status of the project. We would like recommendations from the MRT on how to achieve the goals of the Bair Island restoration project to adaptively manage the project with the minimal amount of monitoring. Other desirable monitoring parameters or experiments to test the efficacy of project design features can be included but should be recognized as additional elements to the basic monitoring program.

\$2,000 - \$3,000 for BCDC’s Proposed Wind Wave Workshop was approved from the 2006 budget and reserved for the 2007 workshop. Suggestions for the workshop include reviewing (1) the work performed by the Delta In-Channel Work Group to test biotechnical wave and erosion control structures (final monitoring report, June 2006, at www.delta.ca.org); and (2) the design of the Sonoma Baylands site and comments from the Monitoring Review Team on the need for experimental designs to test the utility of wind-wave peninsulas (www.sfwetlands.ca.gov). It was also suggested that the presentations emphasize field and aerial photo observations over theory, and that final products include a report with recommendations and/or a research plan. Finally, the type of waves and the environments in which they occur might be distinct, such as wind waves that effect salt ponds and boat waves that might have more impact in the Delta Islands. Mr. Charmain of ERDC in Vicksburg, MS was suggested as one possible expert in the field. DWR and U.S. FWS expressed interest in the workshop. Send comments or suggestions for national speakers to Steve Goldbeck at steveg@bcdc.ca.gov.

Updates:

- Phyllis Faber asked (by email) if anyone has noticed excessive erosion in SF Bay tidal marshes since she is seeing some at Muzzi Marsh. She also noted that invasive cordgrass has doubled at the site over the last year. The Invasive Spartina Project reported that Muzzi was sprayed this year.
- John Callaway reported (by email) that the recently opened Pond A21 which is part of the South Bay Salt Pond project is showing fairly rapid sedimentation and has 8-10 cm. in just 6 months. He also reported that the State Water Board Mitigation Study is going through review and the final will be out early next year.
- CCMP Update from 1993: SFEP is leading workgroups on the revisions to the original CCMP. The final document is expected to be completed in June 2007. The wetland workgroup will go before the CCMP Implementation Comm. in Feb., and comments can be made at that meeting. For information contact Paula at PTrigueros@waterboards.ca.gov.
- State Water Board Propositions 40 & 50 funded 3 projects proposed by WMG members related to wetland/watershed monitoring or studies in the SF Bay for ABAG's TMDL implementation; SFEI's comprehensive wetland assessment & WWR's mercury studies in Suisun Marsh.
- SFEI's Wetland Tracker (WT) – The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Board has started to require the WT as a condition in some 401 permits. Other regions are investigating its usefulness, and the State Water Board is attempting to incorporate some of its features into the state 401 permit application form.
- Subtidal Goals Project. NOAA & BCDC are leading teams to complete the final report which will be available in early 2007. For information contact Adrienne.Harrison@noaa.gov.
- The Draft EIS/R for the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Program is expected to be released at the end of January 2007 and will provide a 45 day public comment period. For information see www.southbayrestoration.org or contact sritchie@scc.ca.gov or 510-384-4105.

Invasive cordgrass (Peggy Olofson; manager of the Invasive Spartina Program [ISP]).

The ISP has finished spraying the herbicide imazapyr on the non-native invasive cordgrass and its hybrids in the S.F. Bay and has reported success so far. The eradication program is designed to improve tidal marsh habitat for the endangered CA. clapper rails and other sensitive native species, and so far none are known to have been harmed by the herbicide. The ISP has worked with land owners around the Bay to assist with eradicating the highly invasive cordgrass. Scientists and land managers agreed in 2005 to try to stop its spread, and *it is essential that those opening up tidal marsh restoration sites in the S.F. Bay work with the ISP, which has a schedule for herbicide treatment for the next 3 years.* Information can be found on the website at www.spartina.org or contact Peggy at prolofson@spartina.org.

Costs for the ISP have been substantial and indicate the need to use caution in the planning and implementation of tidal marsh restoration sites in S.F. Bay. Estimated costs from 2003 through 2006 have totaled more than \$4.3 million. Future costs to eradicate and control invasive spartina and to continue monitoring for clapper rails and water quality for the next 3 years (2007 through 2009) are expected to be \$1.7 - \$1.9 million *per year*. This does not cover any hidden costs such as adverse impacts to biological species on mudflats or tidal marshes resulting from the herbicide application. The hope and expectation is that by 2011 the ISP will have effectively “eradicated” the invasive cord grass and its hybrids. Some program will need to be established to monitor and eradicate future isolated clones to assure their rapid removal.

Wetland Regional Monitoring Program (WRMP)

We ran out of time before the need for a WRMP could be discussed but A. Breaux provided the

comments below that can be discussed further at a future meeting.

A Wetland RMP should attempt to set up a unified program that could conduct some of the necessary wetland monitoring and assessments in the SF Bay Region using standardized methods and scientific study designs. As discussed at the previous WMG meeting, the goals should be changed from those presented by Water Board staff, which emphasized contaminants to include assessments of biological species, ecological communities, and landscape level processes. Mitigation banks (at least for public agencies) at large wetland restoration sites such as the SBSP should be encouraged. Efforts to remove exotic invasive species or control predators in wetland projects should be coordinated between landowners, regulatory agencies, and non-regulatory agencies. Wetland regulatory agencies should work with SFEI to further develop the WRMP with the newly awarded Prop 50 grant and to work toward further developing and standardizing inventories, tracking and rapid assessment methods, and scientific protocols for monitoring (see updates above). Funding for a permanent WRMP is unlikely to come from the dredgers' fees that fund SFEI's RMP, so other means should be investigated such as fees: 1) imposed directly on wetland projects; 2) already imposed on storm water permits by the State Board but that are not used directly by the Regional Board; 3) on automobile licenses.

Next meeting: **Tuesday, May 8, 2007 (1:30 – 4:00)**. Please send suggestions for the agenda or comments on this summary to abreaux@waterboards.ca.gov or 510-622-2324.