

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Advisory Committee Meeting September 10, 2021, 10 am – 12 pm

Agenda and meeting materials are available at:

www.sfbayrestore.org

1. Call to Order

Jessica Martini-Lamb, Chair of the Advisory Committee (AC), called the meeting to order.

2. Determination of Quorum

AC member attendance: Sara Azat, Carolyn Bloede, Erika Castillo, Steve Chappell, Adrian Covert, Arthur Deicke, Letitia Grenier, Christopher Gurney, Shin-Roei Lee, Roger Leventhal, Jessica Martini-Lamb, Mike Mielke, Ana Maria Ruiz, Luisa Valiela, Diane Williams, Beckie Zisser

Staff Attendance: Jessica Davenport, Laura Hollander, Erica Johnson, Heidi Nutters, Taylor Samuelson, Caitlin Sweeney

Laura Hollander, Clerk of the Advisory Committee, called the roll and determined there was a quorum.

3. Public Comment

There were no public comments. Jessica Davenport, Deputy Program Manager, asked for volunteers from the Advisory Committee to serve as grant application reviewers for the current round, open until October 7. AC members Sara Azat, Christopher Gurney, Shin-Roei Lee, and Diane Williams volunteered to assist with reviews.

4. Approval of AC Meeting Minutes of May 14, 2021 (ACTION)

Item 4: Draft Meeting Minutes for May 14, 2021

Decision: There were no comments, and the meeting minutes for May 12, 2021 were approved.

5. Chair's Report from June 18, 2021 Governing Board Meeting (INFORMATION)

Chair Martini-Lamb reviewed the Ground Rules for ensuring a constructive, collaborative meeting. She also announced that the AC Equity Ad Hoc Committee will reconvene and will be led by Vice Chair Horowitz McCann. Staff is preparing its first yearly update on progress toward implementing the Advisory Committee's equity recommendations and will present it to the Governing Board at the October board meeting. The Equity Ad Hoc Subcommittee will review and comment on the update. Chair Martini-Lamb invited other AC members interested in participating in the Equity Ad Hoc Subcommittee to reach out to Vice Chair Horowitz McCann. Potential work of

this Ad Hoc Committee, in addition to reviewing the equity update, will be further discussed at the November AC meeting. The AC's charter will also be reviewed at the November AC meeting, as is required under the charter every three years, and Chair Martini-Lamb invited AC members to bring any questions or suggested changes to that meeting.

Chair Martini-Lamb gave a summary of the June 18, 2021 Governing Board Meeting. The meeting was Sam Schuchat's last meeting as Executive Officer of the Restoration Authority. Amy Hutzler is now the Interim Executive Officer of the Authority and Mary Small is Interim Executive Officer of the State Coastal Conservancy. The Governing Board approved six grants: Greenwood Gravel Beach Design Project, Coyote Hills Restoration and Public Access Project, Terminal Four Wharf Removal, Burlingame Shoreline Park Project, Colma Creek Restoration and Adaptation Project, and the Calabazas/San Tomas Aquino Creek-Marsh Connection Project. The Governing Board approved the FY21-22 Budget and Staff Work Plan, the release of 2021 Grant Round Materials. The Board also received an annual report on Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team (BRRIT) Performance and a presentation on the Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program (WRMP) Preliminary Proposal. Authority staff gave a presentation on geographic distribution of funds, which will be presented at the November AC meeting so that discussion of this issue can be integrated with discussion of the equity update.

6. Consider Recommendation of Support for Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program (WRMP) Draft Funding Proposal (ACTION)

Heidi Nutters and Caitlin Sweeney, San Francisco Estuary Partnership

Tony Hale and Cristina Grosso, San Francisco Estuary Institute

Item 6A: DRAFT Funding Proposal for WRMP

Item 6B: Presentation on Draft Proposal for WRMP

Caitlin Sweeney, Director of the San Francisco Estuary Partnership (SFEP) and Program Manager of the Authority, reviewed progress to date in the development of the WRMP. She noted that the Authority's AC, Oversight Committee, and Governing Board have provided feedback throughout the development of the WRMP Program Plan and Funding Plan.

Heidi Nutters, Program Manager with SFEP and Project Manager of the Authority, presented background information on the core aspects of the WRMP and the importance of regional monitoring. Since 2017, SFEP has been working to establish a program to better utilize existing data to address critical questions regarding wetlands in San Francisco Bay and that can help improve management and design on a regional scale.

Tony Hale of the San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) presented next steps for the WRMP, including further program development and implementation. He described the tasks for which SFEI is seeking Authority funding and how the WRMP will benefit restoration projects. In response to previous questions from the AC, he highlighted

planned efforts to engage community-based organizations, including an open house for stakeholders, and noted that the WRMP team has requested funding from the USEPA to engage a wider audience.

Details of the Authority funding proposal and budget were then presented. The proposed budget involves the allocation of approximately \$1 million per year for three years, would cover the following program elements:

- Operationalizing the monitoring site network;
- Aligning Authority performance measures with WRMP indicators; and
- Related expenses, including salary for a lead scientist, honoraria and subawards, and facilities and equipment.

Chair Martini-Lamb then asked AC members to disclose their involvement in WRMP to date and notified them that they would be asked to take action on whether to support the proposal at this meeting. Chair Martini-Lamb noted that AC members were previously asked in early August to submit questions by Aug. 20 to be answered at this meeting, but none were received.

- AC members Sara Azat and Carolyn Bloede disclosed involvement of their agencies and colleagues. Neither instance was deemed to present a conflict of interest. AC members Luisa Valiela and Letitia Grenier recused themselves.

Comments on draft proposal:

- An AC member asked if the WRMP will generate new data, or if this program will compile data that has been collected already. SFEI staff responded that they plan to survey existing data to make sure they are leveraging existing data, and that there will be some pilot field monitoring, as well, to demonstrate alignment/efficacy of site network, but this will be fairly limited.
- An AC member asked what data specifically will be gathered, if funding is for equipment or infrastructure, and if there is any coordination with other Authority-funded projects? SFEI staff responded that existing data and remote sensing data will be assembled, and there will be some piloting of new data: there are 27 indicators that are part of the WRMP Program Plan, and 5 high priority indicators that site network will be focused on. There are still some variables that need to be worked out, but a lot has already been explained in the Program Plan. They plan to select some Authority projects to assess how they would benefit.
- An AC member asked if this kind of regional monitoring will replace site-specific monitoring or if it will complement it, allowing use of data from individual sites to assess things on a regional scale. SFEI staff responded that they have been in close contact with agencies about what is required for monitoring in permits, and they hope to assess whether there is a minimum amount of project-level monitoring that can be collected to meet these objectives.

- One AC member suggested that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) could be more diverse, and specifically recommended that it include practitioners. SFEI staff replied that the WRMP Charter expands the criteria for the TAC and representation on the Steering Committee, and that they will take end-user and practitioner representation into consideration.
- One AC member commented that the problem isn't that monitoring data doesn't exist, but rather that none of it is synthesized in a way that allows for addressing specific questions that are very important at a regional scale. Another AC member added there is a need to make sure disadvantaged communities benefit from this use of public money.
- Chair Martini-Lamb asked how engagement with community-based organizations overlaps with this draft funding proposal. SFEP staff responded that such organizations will be on the Steering Committee, and that overall, having this platform will allow for communication with wide audiences, help inform community-based organizations, and allow them to own more restoration projects in the future. SFEI staff added that the proposal will help fund front-end engagement to include diverse communities.
 - An AC member suggested that metrics for engagement with community-based organizations should be included in the plan. Another AC member commented that it will be important to explore compensation options for community-based organizations. SFEP staff responded that this funding need is included in the proposal, as well as funding for agency partners that don't have funding to work on the WRMP.

Decision: The AC reached consensus on recommending support of the draft funding proposal for the WRMP.

Process comments:

- An AC member commented afterward that members who recuse themselves from action items should leave the meeting for the discussion and the decision.

7. Communications and Performance Measures Update (INFORMATION)

Taylor Samuelson, Public Information Officer

Laura Hollander, Sea Grant Fellow

Item 7A: One-Pager on Key Performance Measures and Updates, Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-2021 and Cumulative

Item 7B: DRAFT San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Performance Measures, FY 2020-2021

Item 7C: Map of Funded Projects, Cumulative through FY 2020-2021

- Taylor Samuelson, Restoration Authority Public Information Officer, presented a one-page summary of key performance measures and updates for FY 2020-2021.
- Laura Hollander, Sea Grant Fellow, presented the performance measures table for FY 2020-2021. A new habitat category has been created to track restoration of wetland-upland transition zone habitat.

- One AC member commented that it would be helpful to have a definition of transition zone in the annual report since it can mean many different things.
- Chair Martini-Lamb announced that the AC will form an ad hoc subcommittee to review the Annual Report. AC members Letitia Grenier, Adrian Covert, and Steve Chappell volunteered to serve on the committee. Jessica Davenport will email all AC members asking for more volunteers to participate.

8. Discussion of Sediment for Survival Report (INFORMATION)

Letitia Grenier, Resilient Landscapes Program Director, San Francisco Estuary Institute

Item 8A: *Sediment for Survival: A Strategy for the Resilience of Bay Wetlands in the Lower San Francisco Estuary, Executive Summary*

Item 8B: Presentation on *Sediment for Survival: A Strategy for the Resilience of Bay Wetlands*

- Letitia Grenier presented key findings from the SFEI study on sediment needs in San Francisco Estuary, including how much sediment is needed to maintain wetlands.
 - This study found that to maintain tidal marsh and tidal flats, 450 million cubic yards of sediment is needed to maintain tidal marsh and tidal flats.
 - We do in fact have this amount in San Francisco Bay, in the form of both dredged sediment and naturally-delivered sediment. However, current landscape and management approaches fall very short of fully-utilizing this sediment, and if the current approach were to continue, only about 30% of the sediment necessary to maintain marshes and mudflats would be delivered to these habitats by 2100.
 - We can access the full amount of sediment that is necessary and available if alter management practices in the following ways:
 - Continue to increase use of dredged sediment to nourish existing marshes (this effort is underway, but even more access is needed to this sediment)
 - Consider other resources such as excavated dirt, and reservoir sediment, and sediment behind dams.
 - There are three focus areas to ensure resilient baylands: dredged sediment, migration space/transition zone, and watershed management.
- One AC member asked for an explanation of barriers to using dredged sediment. SFEI staff responded that US Army Corps of Engineers must use the least expensive method of disposal, which is often ocean disposal, and there are also the issues of whether we can fill wetlands and stockpile dredge material. The BRRIT is working on this now. We are not well equipped to deal with providing migration space for marshes, and coordinating watershed management to release sediment (through pulse releases from dams) and have tidal marshes be able to receive them is a huge project.

- An AC member commented that the issue with USACE dredging and the federal standard, as well as for smaller dredging projects to be able to do beneficial reuse, is that it is more costly with our current infrastructure; e.g., off-loaders are all in the North Bay, and there is a cost for beneficial reuse. In South Bay there is not a lot of draft to move the material (i.e., it is not deep enough) so it is a challenge to get material into the restoration sites, and sometimes it needs to be trucked. SFEI staff added that the Delta is growing peat to increase elevation, and we could think about doing creative things like this, too, in the Bay.
- An AC member asked if there is some thinking around how to address migration space through planning standards. SFEI staff responded that the Adaptation Atlas was done in collaboration with SPUR, so transfer of development rights was something they looked at (i.e., transfer to further away from Bay). She suggested that the AC could ask someone from SPUR to talk about these non-structural approaches.
- Letitia Grenier added that anyone is welcome to use her presentation for their own purposes.

9. Announcements (INFORMATION)

10. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

11. Adjourn