

with a long list of Bay area studies and policies such as the South Bay Salt Ponds Restoration Project, the Sonoma Creek Baylands Strategy, the SF Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals, the SF Bay Subtidal Habitat Goals, SF Bay Joint Venture’s Implementation Strategy, BCDC’s Coastal Management Program, and more. We recommend that the Authority formalize this existing consideration into a coherent framework, and ultimately provide a tool to identify and nurture projects that are particularly important to complete the landscape.

With respect to judging project success, the Oversight Committee supports making a concerted effort to integrate project data (largely done on a permit-by-permit basis) into system-wide information, not only by tracking progress toward its primary obligation of meeting campaign goals, but also its contribution toward the broader ecosystem goals described above.

Project sponsors need to collect data and information on permit compliance, but also on the delivery of ecosystem services that are delineated in those permits. These are two very different activities. The first is relatively simple and is a recitation of whether things were done as stipulated in the permit conditions. The second is more elusive and requires multiple levels of temporal and spatial analysis. We suggest that the WRMP is the best body to help with identification of overarching metrics (and associated methods) that each permit holder can perform, which will assist with answering system-wide questions about ecosystem function. The WRMP should work closely with the BRRIT to stitch together the regulatory requirements for monitoring so that duplication is eliminated and streamlining is maximized. In so doing, projects funded by the Authority can and should contribute to answering the broader management questions (such as “are we meeting the Measure AA Campaign Goals?”) while simultaneously addressing project-specific questions about site performance. These two levels of monitoring dovetail through coordination. In so doing, the data collected should be comparable between and among projects, thus saving on monitoring costs through greater efficiency and the elimination of duplication.

The Oversight Committee understands that these recommendations, while important, are a big ask and that the Authority Staff is already working at full capacity. For this reason, we endorse the notion of contractual assistance to assist in these efforts. Particularly in the case of integrating project data, contractual assistance may be necessary to compile this information, synthesize who is doing what and to what end, and to make recommendations to wetland and aquatic resource managers, including the Governing Board, on ways to integrate monitoring efforts.

EcoAtlas Dashboard

Last year, we encouraged the Authority to fund the production of a video or tutorial on the use of the EcoAtlas or to have Staff create one so the public can use this interactive tool. This year, we reiterate that recommendation in order to encourage the public and even prospective

applicants the opportunity to drill deeper into the EcoAtlas' capabilities of showing project data.

As for overall efforts to understand how the restoration projects are performing and how they can be improved, the Oversight Committee continues to advocate for an efficient, forward-looking approach using tools like the above-mentioned goals and WRMP, in addition to the EcoAtlas, to document progress towards our restoration objectives.

Outreach and Communication in Unsettled Times

The Oversight Committee recommends that the Authority's project managers put deliverables, project schedules and milestones, funding information, and how a particular project is contributing to meeting Campaign Goals on the website in a form that is readily available and understandable to the public. Staff informed the Oversight Committee that there will be an update to the website next year, and we think this would be a good time to address this issue.

Last year, we congratulated the Authority for its efforts to deal with the dual challenges of the pandemic and unsettled social times. We are pleased that the Authority's staff has kept up a "focus on environmental justice and partnership with people of color" as these issues have not gone away. If anything, because of the expected long-term effects of the economic slowdown due to the coronavirus, there is a greater need to reach out to historically marginalized communities to ensure engagement in the Bay's restoration efforts and with its recreational opportunities.

This report was approved by the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee at its meeting held on May 27, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Paul Jones
Independent Citizens Oversight Committee, Chair