

Lagoon Management Working Group Meeting #2 | Meeting Notes

Prepared by the Consensus Building Institute
Dec. 5, 2018

Meeting Highlights

Lagoon Management Working Group members met to discuss management considerations and lagoon management objectives and actions, building off previous conversations in the working group and with the planning group. Several members were unable to participate.

FishBio prepared a summary analysis of water quality and fish population monitoring data between 2010 and 2016. The analysis confirms most assumptions – that the lagoon water is relatively warm and breaching the lagoon to the ocean has a significant effect.

Action Items

ICF / Agency	Request TNC wildlife mapping data / study
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Salinas River Lagoon Water Quality and Fish Population Monitoring Data 2010-2016

Elizabeth Krafft introduced the memo. She summarized that the memo has confirmed her suppositions – lagoon temperature is warm, and the lagoon opening has a significant effect.

One person wondered if the lagoon was always open historically. Pescadero stays open all summer, and fish grow there. Sometimes it warms up, but the fish still survive. The lagoon varies dramatically. In 2017, the lagoon was open for nearly 200 days. This summer it opened slightly.

The data confirmed the model that diversity of habitat is beneficial.

Next Steps

Staff will update the Pescadero reference to reflect the existing management approach and conditions.

MCWRA just did a Goby survey recently. That report is drafted, and MCWRA will share.

Management Considerations

The planning group reviewed the management considerations memo at its previous meeting. ICF's Kathryn Gaffney refined the introductory language to improve clarity and intent of the memo based on feedback received at that meeting, but had not yet incorporated feedback provided via the meeting or written comments. ICF will incorporate all the feedback received as it develops the LTMP document text.

The group offered the following suggestions and insights.

Consider adding the need for a data clearinghouse. The Central Coast Wetlands Group has worked around California to help programs manage data. One example is the Santa Clara Valley Water District. Data on projects (project tracker), water quality, and research are examples of information that would be very helpful to share.

Appreciate the acknowledgment that MCWRA does not own the land or have the budget necessary to manage effectively. The IRWMP process also struggled with having an entity to receive grant funds and administer the plan. The stormwater plan, under development, has the same challenge.

Review a recent study evaluating sand transport in southern Monterey Bay, and the study's conclusion that sand mining is the primary cause of high sand dune and shoreline recession rates.

Clarify why mitigation funding is mentioned since projects may and may not be mitigation. The thinking on mixing funding for mitigation and non-mitigation projects is changing. An example is the state's resource conservation investment strategy program, which is designed to ensure the highest value conservation is pursued, even if the conservation is also mitigation. The state is using the strategies to identify high value ecology / natural resource value areas and priority areas around the state. The strategies also aligned with mitigation banking concepts. A final suggestion was to be clear that some projects proposed through the LTMP would be or require mitigation (whereas others will not be mitigation).

Make sure that landowners are involved in discussions regarding potential to flood some agricultural lands and do not base this analysis on Ag lands being unprofitable.

Consider the need for a management entity (entities) and governance structure. Someone expressed concern about the supposition that one entity could encompass all things LTMP-related. Another participant expressed optimism of having the overarching plan and partners assuming responsibility for different components.

Recommend providing citations or explanation of numbers cited in page-8 bullets, connecting the Lagoon to Headwaters.

Recommend providing more on terrestrial connectivity. TNC previously completed mapping on wildlife connectivity. The LTMP has some information on terrestrial connectivity in Chapter 3, which will be brought over into this section.

Exercise caution on connectivity for fish between headwaters and lagoon. One participant suggested being cautious about implying fish connectivity between the headwaters and the lagoon given that this connectivity does not always exist.

Consider modifying to reflect the multi-benefit approach. One example is the Salinas River stream management program outlined a multi-benefit approach. Bottom page 8 – *areas along the Salinas River are believed to have once supported wooded riparian areas thousands of feet wide....(SF Estuary Institute 2009)...While some riparian remains, there may be opportunities for restoration.*

Modeling data on flood flows forthcoming. The Central Coast Wetlands Group is working on Gabilan watershed modeling that will have additional information on flood flows.

Lagoon Management Actions and Objectives

Table 1 reflects the management actions from the 1997 plan. Many of those items have carried forward to the LTMP as is, or were updated as appropriate. The 1997 plan items will be captured in Chapter 2 on related programs and planning efforts.

Working Group Recommendations

Delete the reference to Pescadero. The Pescadero lagoon system differs from the lagoon conditions text in the memo although it would apply for other locations on the coast.

Consider adding a management action for not allowing motorized boating on the lagoon. The lagoon is shallow and motors are disruptive to other recreationists, and possibly to wildlife.

Action LAG-14. Develop a reservoir flow release prescription....for steelhead

This was written several months prior to the biological opinion timeline being known. Now, the biological opinion is underway, and more understanding is emerging. This action item doesn't seem to suggest the extensive nature of the revised biological opinion. Maybe the action should be to follow the regulatory process of the biological opinion or at least distinguish that the flow prescription is a separate regulatory process.

Salinas River

Long-Term Management Plan

Confirm that the Central Coastal Wetlands Group’s plans to for habitat restoration in the lower Salinas in included in the plan. This work is already funded. The Group is creating a restoration plan for the OSR using channels that the farming community is not using or only just disking because the lands are too wet. The goal is to enhance the OSR so it has better habitat and flood capacity. The Group is working with engineers to study how to increase capacity.

Clarification on Table 1, Measure 4 status. The OSR was dredged once after the Lagoon Management and Enhancement Plan was completed, but was not done multiple times.

Clarify Action LAG-6. It’s repeated, but the text is not the same in both places. Should not include the parenthetical suggesting that species needs is the only parameter guiding lagoon breaching.

Add an objective to research obtaining funding for un-funded action LAG items and maintenance.

A table that identifies the status of any action LAGs currently in progress or completed should be included in the memo. e.g., The General Order in which the MCWRA is enrolled requires Action LAG-30.

Participants

Federal government participants were unable to attend due to the national day of mourning.

Kim Sanders	Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
Kevin O’Connor	Central Coast Wetlands Group
Ross Clark	Central Coast Wetlands Group
David Shonman	Coastal Biologist
Abby Taylor-Silva	Grower Shipper
Brent Buche	Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Paul Robins	Resource Conservation District of Monterey County
Tim Frahm	Trout Unlimited
Elizabeth Krafft	Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Shaunna Murray	Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Kathryn Gaffney	ICF
Gina Bartlett, Facilitator	CBI