

SLOSEA

San Luis Obispo Science and Ecosystem Alliance

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Notes

12:00 - 5:00 p.m., Thursday, December 4, 2008
Inn at Morro Bay, 60 State Park Road, Morro Bay, CA

Members Present: Rick Algert, Dan Berman, Nick Franco, Henriette Groot, Don Maruska, Carole Maurer, Leslie Rebik, Gary Ruggerone, John Steinbeck, Lars Tomanek, Dean Wendt, Karen Worcester

Guests Present: Annie Gillespie, Ruth Norris, Juventino Ortiz, Linwood Pendleton, John Penvenne, Jim Phillips, John Shores, John Stephens, Mrs. Tomanek, Johanna Weston

Members Absent: Deborah Barker, Elizabeth Clarke, Mel de la Motte, Tim Duff, John Field, Susan Lichtenbaum, Steve McGrath, Carolyn Moffatt, Christine Pattison, Henry Pontarelli

[Advisory Committee oral comments, questions and suggestions in italics]

Ecosystem Updates by Resource Managers:

During working lunch, resource managers reported current activity areas for their agencies. *Don Maruska expressed appreciation for everyone's efforts on the recently completed Strategic Plan and appreciated. He introduced a special guest, Ruth Norris, who is a full-time consultant for RLFF. Ruth indicated that she is observing the meeting, in order to get to know SLOSEA better. John Shores, her husband, also attended the meeting as an observer. He is also a consultant, who works on National Park planning and financing. Jim Phillips, Chair of the City of Morro Bay Harbor Advisory Board, came as a guest of Rick Algert. Jim is working on rejuvenation of the State Park and Marina areas. Rick Algert reported that he is working on permits for liveboards in Morro Bay, and is reviewing the ordinance. Although there is no evidence that the liveboards are the source of pollution, there is a perception that there is improper sewage disposal that is occurring. Carole Maurer reported that a draft 3000-page EIR on the Los Osos sewer is under review. Response to review of the document has been good. Cable Channel 20 has been airing several videos of conservation of water usage, as well as careful use of all resources. Annie Gillespie said that MBNEP has finished transects of eelgrass monitoring. They are reviewing macroinvert bioassessment data from 12 sites from Spring 2008, and have already done the 1st Flush monitoring. Don Maruska suggested that MBNEP share its data with other estuaries along the Pacific Coast that are trying to understand variations in eelgrass.. Dan Berman reported on the completion of a restoration project to build a riparian fence on San Luisito Creek. Dan has also been elected as National Chair of the National Estuary Programs. Gary Ruggerone is carefully watching markets as they relate to investments of the Bay Foundation. John Steinbeck indicated that he is preparing data and a report for an international meeting in January 2009. Additionally, Tenera is working on a non-SLOSEA project during which they are observing many tumors in gobies. It was suggested that he communicate with Lars Tomanek for possible data correlation. Nick Franco reported on the*

opening of Harmony Headlands in November, and the continued land acquisition in hopes of linking Avila with Montana de Oro. Juventino Ortiz is currently serving as an operations manager for State Parks, in which he “makes visions happen”. Unfortunately, there is no funding for staff positions at Harmony Headlands, so they are using State Parks volunteers, as well as occasional patrols by regular staff. The Irish Hills project will have similar issues. Parking is already an issue at Coon Creek, with maximum limits being reached regularly. The Bluff Trail (south of Spooner Ranch House) to Coon Creek is planned to be modified to ADA standards. The scope is being explored and permits are being secured. Henriette Groot reported that there is no expectation of a new power plant in Morro Bay; however there is some discussion of a renewed outfall lease, and the OPC plans to retain ocean cooling as a priority item. Linwood Pendleton gave a brief summary of last summer’s survey: 85% of respondents were not from Morro Bay, people spent an average of \$75/day, hiking is the #1 activity pursued, beachgoing is #2, and dining is #3. John Penvenne reported that 2 of the 4 water quality monitoring stations have successfully passed their first anniversary in the water, and all four are providing live data. Many staff and students are now kayak-certified, which provides a low-impact solution for station monitoring. The real-time weather station is almost ready to deploy on the bay station. Johanna Weston was introduced as a graduate student who is working with Mark Moline on the water quality monitoring efforts. She will be producing a Master’s Thesis utilizing the water quality data. Leslie Rebik offered her appreciation for the time and effort of all who were involved in the evaluation of the first phase of SLOSEA, and the subsequent preparation of a strategic plan for the 2009-2011 years. Karen Worcester reported that she is in the midst of processing over 10,000 lines of information for the water board. Contract funds are being cut, and funding for watershed monitoring is not looking good. John Stephens indicated that he is reviewing partyboat, SMURF, and Morro Bay trawl data.

Update on Funding and Opportunities:

Dean Wendt began with an overview and conceptualization of Morro Bay and SLOSEA. He indicated that through the strategic planning process and prioritization of strategies, we have now narrowed our future focus to 6 strategies. Five of these strategies were developed by the SLOSEA Advisory Committee and other participants in the Spring/Summer 2008 workshops; one strategy (Climate Change) was identified by the Leadership Team as an ever-present concern which was then classified as a strategy. These strategies were condensed into a 3-year Strategic Plan and funding request.

- Handout: CD of SLOSEA Strategic Plan 2009-2011

Dean Wendt indicated that we have financial commitment to this plan for 41% of the requested budget so far. He further explained that some of the strategies are extensions or modifications of previous work, while others are new strategies. *It was asked how we could move forward and prioritize with the current funds available.* The group was reminded that SLOSEA faced a similar situation in 2006, as not all sponsors granted their funds simultaneously. *Karen Worcester indicated that Steve Saiz is writing a staff report on priorities for the next 3 years entitled “Triennial Review of Basin Plan”. She suggested that SLOSEA begin discussions with him to get a “placeholder” on the report.*

Review State of SLOSEA Strategic Plan/Agency Partnerships:

A. Key Pollutants

Dean Wendt introduced this strategy and indicated that the OPC is interested as a potential partner. However, OPC indicated that that it would like to see a regulatory agency (e.g. RWQCB) partner on this strategy.

- Handout: letter to Sam Schucat entitled, “Protecting California Coastal Environments from Unregulated Pollutants”

Lars Tomanek presented his data on Nonylphenol (NP).

Data Update on Key Pollutants:

Lars Tomanek gave a PowerPoint presentation which included: an overview of Morro Bay, pollutant candidates, discovering indicator species, characterization of tumor growths, definition of Nonylphenol, chemical properties of NP, preferable environments for NP, EPA’s classification of NP, toxicity to mammals & humans, water sampling in Morro Bay, sediment sampling, environmental pathways of NP in Morro Bay, possible sources of NP, and European bans of NP. *Karen Worcester suggested adding examination of Sea Otter livers to the study. The confidence level of linkage between NP and tumors in gobies was discussed.*

- Handout: DRAFT Management Action Memo “Protecting Coastal Environments from Immediate Pollution Danger”

Don Maruska introduced the Management Action Memo, with the explanation that we want to submit it as a formal comment to the draft EIR for the Los Osos Water Treatment Project. *Comments and suggestions were made as follows: Change the title from “Immediate” to “Ongoing”. Expand to source(s) of nonylphenol in “next steps”. Perhaps we should go to the State Legislature to request a ban on NP. What we should use instead of NP should be part of the argument. More data are needed. It is too soon for a science-based organization to call for a ban. What does a “ban” really mean? Discussion of “registration” of a chemical and proper uses. Include discussion of effects of NP on top predator species. The arrow goby is not currently recognized as an indicator species. The Sierra Club tried to encourage a legislative ban on NP in 2006. We don’t want to set up Morro Bay as a “poster child” for NP contamination. Our current audience for this MAM is RWQCB, Los Osos WWT, and OPC. Good idea to expand distribution to California Mens Colony and Morro Bay – Cayucos Wastewater Treatment Plants. Perhaps we should expand to include the suite of chemicals around NP. Morro Bay is not broadly polluted, so it provides an excellent setting to assess the chain of impacts and how to manage NP. Review which agencies register and regulate the use of chemicals. Contact SWRRP and other players who have an interest.*

Review State of SLOSEA Strategic Plan/Agency Partnerships (continued):

(these items are in a different order from the agenda, due to scheduling needs)

D. Climate Change

Dan Berman indicated that the EPA has pledged a limited amount of dollars to be available to support monitoring efforts. EPA is working on a budget and will then solicit

applications. Perhaps they can use State level efforts (Coastal Conservancy/OPC) as leverage? Don Maruska indicated that the Governor's Executive Order directs agencies to plan for climate change. Perhaps we should contact Assemblyman Blakeslee? Linwood Pendleton added that the California Energy Commission is finishing papers (PIER), which might support integrated modeling.

A. Human Access

Nick Franco indicated that State Parks manages about 1/3 of California's coast. They are looking carefully at the current perception of human impact versus science-based results. Current focus is on the Harmony Headlands and Hearst properties. Suggestions were made to add a study on how people react to human access restrictions, study the value of education of the public to increase or decrease use, determine how to use the Public Resources Code, and contact PG&E and/or Coastal Commission as potential partners.

- Handout: letter to Sam Schucat entitled, "Science Based Guidelines and Recommendations for the Management of California's Intertidal Resources"

C. Regional Fisheries Management

Don Maruska indicated that the OPC is interested in this strategy. The CDFG wants to improve their knowledge of data-poor fish stocks. The MLPA is an extension of the collaborative research to new regions. The Nature Conservancy could act as a complement with its community based fishing initiative. Environmental Defense and Sustainable Fisheries could use the data to evaluate a new stock assessment model. OPC is seen as a strong fit, and is supportive of collaborative projects between fishermen and scientists. Suggestions were made to evaluate the ripple effect of fisheries improvements, link this strategy with tourism, track impacts in diversity, get buy-in (not necessarily in \$\$\$) from agencies, pursue tandem partners (if one potential partner is reluctant to jump in alone), and work with NOAA on coastal resiliency.

E. Marine Economy

Linwood Pendleton gave an overview of the strategy, indicating that it is a very large picture. His preference now is to integrate this strategy into the other strategies going forward. Tie this strategy to "green jobs". Look at marine economy as "contributive", not just "extractive".

F. Marine Invasives

Dean Wendt indicated that this strategy is linked with the West Coast monitoring group to detect a specific group of new invasives. This strategy does not coincide with the current interests of the Coastal Conservancy and CDFG. San Luis Obispo County already has a boat cleaning policy in place for the lakes. Perhaps we should work with the California Department of Boating and Waterways?

* Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

* Dates for future SLOSEA Advisory Committee Meetings to be determined.