

North Bay Watershed Association

Draft Summary - the North Bay Watershed Association (NBWA) Board of Directors.

Date: Friday, June 5th, 2020 – 9:30 a.m. to 12:35 a.m. Location: Zoom Conference call

Directors or Representatives Present Included:

Board Member	Agency/Organization	Board Member	Agency/Organization
Michael Boorstein	Central Marin Sanitation Agency	Megan Clark/ Judy Schriebmen	Las Gallinas Valley
Pam Meigs	Ross Valley Sanitary District	Jack Gibson	Marin Municipal WD
Amy Peele	City of Novato	Jean Mariani	Novato Sanitary District
Damon Connolly	Marin County	Rick Fraites	No. Marin Water District
Elisabeth Patterson	Solano Co. Water	Paul Jenson	City of San Rafael
Ryan Gregory	Napa Sanitation Dist.	Grant Davis	Sonoma Water
Susan Gorin	Sonoma County		

1. Call to Order – Jack Gibson called the meeting to order at 9:34 am via Zoom.
2. Public Comment - No public comment.
3. And 4. Approval of Agenda and May 2020 Summary. No Treasure’s Report

5. Bryan McFadin, Senior Water Resources Engineer, NCRWQCB [RB] Gregory Andrew, Fisheries Program Mgr. MMWD

Bryan began this item with an overview of State planning efforts underway to enhance and protect instream flows and some specific planning efforts to enhance stream flows in the north coast. The Regional Board office is actively working on this issue. Bryan started with defining “beneficial uses” as it is used in both basin planning and in the water rights process. He reviewed state authorities related to water quality and highlighted the Department of Fish and Wildlife’s authorities in setting instream flow recommendations (through the streambed alteration permit) and he differentiated between **ecological flow criteria**, which is a science-based range of instream flows, whereas **environmental flow objectives** have regulatory effect. Bryan described the work underway to set Navarro River flow objectives that will be done in conjunction with other responsible agencies. The RB is in the process of developing narrative flow objectives- and then work on an implementation plan. The RB has also been doing a lot of stream flow monitoring, as there is a lack of good information. He noted the work of the California Sea Grant folks who have worked to assess the conditions of Coho salmon and the dissolved oxygen [DO] situation in the Russian River. DO is a big part of the mortality issue; the over-summer survival for the fish is greatly related to DO availability. The scientists asked if there was a flow related threshold as well. They looked at 12 study sites in three streams,

and did a significant amount of monitoring. Data was evaluated and it turned about the riffle/crest thalweg [see online presentation for definition and graphics] is a very strong predictor of adequate DO. Next up is work to see if this relationship holds up in other watersheds and across water years. The end practical result will hopefully be a regulatory tool to help protect the fish. The State is also working on action plans in “priority streams”; 5 rivers and creeks, including the So. Fork of the Eel, and Mark West Creek. Bryan mentioned the work of the California Environmental flows workgroup that has been meeting for over a year. There is an analogous group working from the science side and using that information to assist in the regulatory world. Bryan mentioned the voluntary flow agreements already in place in the region, including work with the Jackson Family wines, Camp Meeker Park District. There were questions from the audience including comments on adding native knowledge into this work and questions about how priorities are set for streams.

Gregory Andrew, Fisheries Program Mgr. MMWD. Greg focused on the stream flows within the MMWD watersheds. 14% of MMWD storage is dedicated to instream flows for Lagunitas and Walker Creek. Coho and steelhead exist in Lagunitas creek, and now are only able to access 50% of the watershed for habitat, the rest having been blocked by district reservoirs. Greg noted that 96% of Walker Creek is privately owned and that Coho were introduced into Walker Creek. Greg explained the specific flows required for fish. The ultimate result of MMWD management is that the district has released more water during the summer, and results have shown a modest to strong response to the required migration flows, with the establishment of additional spawning redds. The fish also get access to more parts of the banks of the creeks. But Greg noted that fish prefer the natural flow when it is available since it brings with it key indicators on migration-they key on smell and other factors that come with natural outflow.

6. Pam Jeane, Assistant Manager, Sonoma Water

Pam described the current status of the Potter Valley project. She provided an overview of stream flows in the Russian River and noted that the Potter Valley Project moves water from Lake Pillsbury down to Lake Mendocino and is important to the reliability of Lake Mendocino. Pam described the history of the Project, noting that PG&E (1906) built and owned the project, which was modified under a recent (Fed Energy Regulatory Commission) FERC permit with less water now available to Lake Mendocino. In January 2019, PG&E decided not to relicense the Project, so FERC issued a solicitation to see if any other entities wished to apply for a relicense. Pam described Congressman Huffman’s Ad Hoc Working Group now considering this Project and how the group first established shared objectives. A Notice of Intent was submitted by the working group, along with a process plan and schedule, which was accepted by FERC. The first thing the group completed was a Feasibility Study (by Stillwater Sciences). The plan includes removal of Scott Dam, sediment and vegetation management in the footprint of Lake Pillsbury, and modification of the fish passage facilities at Van Arsdale Diversion. Under these plans, this would become a run-of-the-river project and would require a water supply project for Potter Valley agriculture uses. See Pam’s posted presentation for details.

6. Announcements and Adjournment Meeting adjourned at 11:35

Next Meeting: July 10th, field trip

SUBMITTED BY: Judy Kelly, Executive Director, NBWA