

North Bay Watershed Association Board of Directors Meeting - Summary

July 9, 2021 | 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE ORDERS N-25-20 AND N-29-20 WHICH SUSPENDS CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS OF THE BROWN ACT, THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD VIRTUALLY VIA REMOTE CONFERENCING SERVICE — NO PHYSICAL MEETING

LOCATION

Zoom Meeting

www.nbwatershed.org

1. **Welcome and Call to Order—Directors or Member Representatives Present Included:**

Michael Boorstein – Central Marin Sanitation Agency	Andy Rodgers – NBWA
Jason Dow - Central Marin Sanitation Agency	Sabrina Marson – NBWA
Leon Garcia—City of American Canyon	Ann Thomas
Cory Bytoff - City of San Rafael	Steven Lee
Gustavo Goncalves – County of Marin	Patti D'Angelo Juachon
Chris Choo – County of Marin	Kate Powers - Marin Conservation League
Jack Gibson – Marin Municipal Water District	Susan Stompe - Marin Conservation League
Larry Russell – Marin Municipal Water District	Mark Brown – MWPA
Matt Sagues – Marin Municipal Water District	Bill Keene - Public
Shaun Horne – Marin Municipal Water District	Colleen Hunt - Public
Ryan Gregory – Napa Sanitation District	Ellie - Public
Rick Fraites – North Marin Water District	Aurora Mahassine - Public
Jean Mariani – Novato Sanitary District	
Pamela Meigs – Ross Valley Sanitation District	
Robert Carson – MCSTOPPP	
Elizabeth Patterson – Solano County Water Agency	

Nine NBWA board members attended the meeting comprised of 28 agency staff, stakeholders, partners, and interested members of the public.

Call to Order – Director Jack Gibson called the meeting to order at 9:30 am via Zoom.

2. **General Public Comment** - Director Meigs asked where one can get recycled water in Marin County and/or the region. Chris Choo mentioned that recycled water will soon be available in Marin. Leon Garcia added that recycled water is available in American Canyon.

[In an email after the meeting, Aurora was asked to share this link in follow up to the meeting discussion] Aurora shared an interview she participated in with Andy Lipkis of Tree People - an LA water organization, for SHE Living TV at the Bioneers conference in 2016:

https://youtu.be/FE_ntzsFvZ8

3. **Agenda Review and Approve Past Meeting Minutes**— Director Gibson asked for any Board members to speak up if there were requested changes to the agenda. No comments.

Director Meigs moved to accept the agenda - Director Garcia seconded. Unanimously accepted.

Director Patterson moved to approve the past meeting summary. Director Meigs seconded. Unanimously approved.

4. **Treasurer's Report**

Director Patterson moved to accept the Treasure's Report - Director Mariani seconded.
Unanimously accepted.

5. **Guest Presentation—Earth, Wind, Fire, and Water: A paradigm shift that calls for a new proactive collaboration to protect our communities from wildfire by strategically restoring and managing our watershed lands and resources**

Mark Brown, Executive Officer, Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority

Mark provided an overview of the MWPA and its core programs for wildfire prevention, and how these initiatives can go hand in hand with watershed protection efforts: planning for and mitigating massive wildfires by restoring our lands and preserving our precious watershed resources in the face of climate change.

MWPA History/Background

Marin County Board of Supervisors commissioned a multidisciplinary team to identify and report what lessons could be learned from the 2017 North Bay Fire Siege

Collaborative effort by key stakeholders including the Fire Chiefs, City Managers, County Administrators, County Supervisors and Law Enforcement

Key recommendation: Fire Agencies and municipalities need to unite under a County wide JPA with ongoing funding to reduce risk of catastrophic event

Measure C – Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority received 70.8% voters' support

Status of North Bay Wildfire Prevention Work:

MWPA is a 17 member JPA. They are now one year old.

10-year term - \$20M per year

- Wildfire Detection/Evacuation planning and improvements
- Vegetation Management
- Public Education – FIRESafe Marin
- Defensible Space, Home Hardening
- Evacuations Route Improvements

Napa County – Five Year Plan

- Napa County working in conjunction with Napa Community Firewise Foundation approved the Community Wildfire Prevention Plan
- Earmarks \$42 million over 5 years for Wildfire Preparedness fuels management, community education, wildfire response support, and critical infrastructure protection
- Supported by the wine industry producers and farmers, including the trade association Napa Valley Vintners

Challenges Ahead include: Residents to take personal responsibility to be informed and prepared to reduce hazards around their homes; A recognition that we are facing the new normal...droughts, floods, fires, and their impacts are unpredictable in their extent, but predictable in that they will happen. A paradigm shift where we link our wildfire prevention activities with drought response and watershed protection to have a focused approach to address the dynamic and emerging impacts of climate change.

Collaboration Opportunities

- Large Watershed/Landscape Scale Forest Health Projects that protect our regional water supply, prepare us for wildfire, and promote biological diversity

- Collaborative outreach/education on the benefits of Fire-Smart/Drought-Smart landscaping and that they are essentially the same
- Managing our lands for wildfire/drought are essential for water and power system reliability during a major wildfire event
- Advocate for Bond Funding/Federal Infrastructure Funding for projects/programs that make the link between wildfire preparedness/drought/watershed protection (Climate Change Response)

Idea for Collaboration – State Bond Funding/Federal Funding

- SB 45/AB 1500 – Up to \$2.2 billion for wildfire prevention, drought, or other natural disaster prevention and community resilience from climate change impacts
- Federal Infrastructure Bill – \$1.2 Trillion for Transportation/Water/Power/Boardband/R&D including climate change
- State Bond Funding
 - SB 45/AB 1500 identify funding for the following:
 - Pre-Hazard Mitigation including projects/programs to address wildfire/flooding/drought
 - Forest Health/Forest Restoration including land conservation
 - Regional and local collaboration and approaches,
 - State Parks Preparedness
 - Workforce Development to achieve state goals

Comments and Questions:

Gibson: [in reference to the MWPA Organization and Fundamentals slide] Has the technical committee already been put in place? Why isn't the Water District more involved?

Brown: For the 2020/21 the operations did all the work. For 21/22 the technical committee is fully engaged. The Water District will be more engaged in the future, but they don't meet the qualifications to be a member, but they can be an ad hoc member.

Mariani: She was on the Fire Flow Committee convened by Supervisor Brown and MMWD, even though not required by law to provide water for fires, does have taxing authority and chose to impose a Fire Flow Tax to improve its services for firefighting.

Patterson: Is that broad taxing authority like they have at the Solano County Water Agency? Can you comment on why that is such a tightly constructed taxing authority?

Brown: Regarding specific taxing authority for fire protection, it was the City Managers and Fire Chief's best way to build the JPA covering all the jurisdictions and prevents overlapping. He will connect with Patterson after the meeting for further explanation.

Fraites: Did you indicate that the fire departments are no longer doing fire breaks in the natural environment?

Brown: They are looking at different ways to approach moving towards shaded fire breaks that are healthier for the environment and may provide fire routes.

Goncalves: Regarding the defensible space evaluations, can you share more information for community members? What does the evaluation look like? Do they need to enroll? Does the program start in areas more prone to fire? Lastly, where do things stand as far as how many homes have been evaluated?

Brown: The overall goal is evaluating every home in the jurisdiction every three years, regardless of the threat. The evaluators are going home to home, so there is no enrollment. Recommendations are provided and homeowners can track what has been done. They completed over 10,000 reviews last year and are in the process of reviewing more.

Gibson: There is opportunity for the NBWA to assist in grant support and outreach. He is looking forward to relationship building after the meeting

Meigs: She attended many of the Ecological Sound Practices meetings. She was in awe of the strong environmentalists interacted and contributed to the draft.

Brown: The ESP participants have been great at bringing up both concerns and possible solutions-the partnership has been great.

Gregory: What parts of your campaign were most effective with the parcel tax? Have those messages changed since running the program?

Brown: The messages haven't changed. Things that rang true in polling: environmentally sound practices and costs containment. They have a cap of 6% of overall budget on administrative costs. The development model provided for local communities to have participation and control. Voters need to have trust in the process and transparency on the actions taken.

Lee: The site visits, are the recommendations compulsory with penalty fees?

Brown: The approach now is education and "carrots" not "sticks". To cite, there needs to be a mechanism, like an ordinance, but that takes a lot of time and costs. The app shows where they are not in compliance with state or local ordinances, along with recommendations. They hope to have metrics to show the success of the program with education.

Gibson: Has the drought impacted the approach or the procedure for the future?

Brown: the shift in the fire environment was seen before the drought; they are taking climate change as a whole into account. He doesn't see the future approach impacted by the drought.

Andy circled back to the presentation slide regarding Collaboration Ideas and how NBWA can be involved. If there are things that jump out to board members that can be acted on now, let him know.

Patterson: She didn't see land use planning in the presentation. She would like to see this valuable information shared and discussed locally. How to manage a watershed with these intense fires.

Meigs: Are they looking at materials for new homes that are more fire resistant?

Brown: Yes, the building code is being looked at. There is data that can provide insight.

Powers: What about home hardening assistance for low income or vulnerable communities. How are the actions that are being proposed or enforced, how to they help carbon sequestration?

Brown: They have grants to help with low income and other vulnerable communities. The healthy forest initiatives help with carbon sequestration. They are also looking at carbon char and other actions with partners interested in climate change.

6. Executive Director Report and Agenda Items for Future Meetings

Andy reported on activities that have taken place since the last meeting:

Updates since last meeting

- Met with Marin Wildfire Protection Authority on June 18
- Preparing summer 2021 quarterly newsletter
- Met with members and corresponded with potential regional collaboration partners
- Corresponded with SOE conference planning committee

Administrative Activities

- Finalized FY 21/22 workplan
- FY 20/21 year-end
- AP – Subconsultants
- Updated website and meeting packet information
- Updating subcontracts
 - SFEI
 - Napa RCD
 - Marin County
 - Data Instincts

Communications

- Updating member contact lists - Need new staff / contacts
- Drought conditions and response info gathering
- Board members and member agency staff
- Regional partners
- Subject matter experts and speakers
- Call for newsletter topics and highlights

Andy will send out communication to the board asking for help update staff contacts, which may be outdated.

Committees

- Developing JTC plan and focus for 2021
- JTC meetings resume August 2021
- Preparing Development Committee agenda
- Evaluating convening a GM summit
- 20222 Conference committee staff meeting July 12 to plan kickoff
- Board Topic outlook

Confirming 2021 calendar dates

- August – No Meeting (Skip Month)
- *September 10
- October 1 (in-person)
- November 5
- December 3

Topics in development:

State Water Board Drought Assistance Programs and Resources, SR37 Initiatives, One Water Initiative Highlights, What's Next in Environmental Education, Urban Scale Carbon Sequestration Initiatives, Funding Opportunities, Regulatory Compliance Collaborations, Water Management & Conveyance Innovations, Capital, and Natural Assets Management

Andy and Chris discussed the Proposed Regional One Water Drought Strategy Funding Initiative and the NBWA Joint Technical Committee Meeting #1 Approaches with the goal of:

- Receiving Board ideas, suggestions and input;
- Assisting NBWA staff to develop a broadly inclusive invite list;
- Identifying potential strategic partnerships and associations

Patterson: Drought is typically reactive, if we can include drought planning into hazard mitigation planning, it may open door for FEMA funds.

She thought the state was going to take action on allowing recycled water that is tertiary level to go into regular pipes, so investing in purple pipes for the future doesn't seem like a good approach. Does anyone have insight on this?

Russell: The regulations aren't due until December 2023.

7. **Board Information Exchange and Drought Updates**

All Members

Gibson: The other area of notable activity, other than drought, is wildfire prevention.

Fraites: They are running many programs to help minimize water use, what they are running into is that many people have been consistent with reducing water since the last drought and cutting more is challenging. They are on automatic readers.

Aurora: (Marin environmental educator): She is looking at the systemic desiccation of the landscape due to the fire regimes. She recommends an approach that brings systemic hydration (would like to pursue the topic of systemic hydration of the landscape and the restoration of creeks, streams, and wetlands as the way to preserve water levels in our systems; wells, cisterns, and reservoirs). She thinks this group can provide support on that effort.

Garcia: They are on automatic readers and just implemented a program for bill payers to log online and track their water use.

Meigs: They just went over their business plan for the next year and getting more involved in preparing Larkspur landing to sell. Their manager got an award and was on the cover of the sewer magazine. Recycled water: what other agencies are giving/trucking/selling recycled water use to the public?

Mariani: North Marin? COVID may have impacted services.

Gibson: We have some recycled water for shovel ready projects.

Garcia: American Canyon has recycled water available for residents who bring their own containers.

Patterson: It may be useful to see what southern CA program are available that can inspire northern projects. If there is a presenter that can share information to the group regarding rainwater capture. Solano County Water has a challenge getting people to see they have a roll in water conservation.

Bytof: Has any agency had a program that trains youth to show people how to read meters?

Gibson: They are in the process of creating a video that will show people how to read their meters and calculate numbers into gallons.

8. **Announcements and Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 11:15 am

Next Meeting: September 10, 2021, Zoom

SUBMITTED BY: Andy Rodgers, Executive Director, NBWA