

North Bay Watershed Association

Board of Directors Meeting - Summary

October 7, 2022 | 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
MEETING AND TOUR HELD AT THE
Novato Sanitary District
500 Davidson St, Novato, CA 94945

Zoom available for those wishing to attend virtually
www.nbwatershed.org

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

Michael Boorstein – Central Marin Sanitation Agency	Pamela Meigs – Ross Valley Sanitary District
Cory Bytof – City of San Rafael	Elizabeth Patterson – Solano County Water Agency
Damon Connolly – County of Marin	Jessica Davenport – State Coastal Conservancy
Megan Clark – Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District	Andy Rodgers – NBWA
Curtis Paxton – Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District	Sabrina Marson – NBWA
Jack Gibson – Marin Municipal Water District	Susan Stompe – Marin Conservation League
Larry Russell – Marin Municipal Water District	Erik Brown – Novato Sanitary District
Rick Fraites – North Marin Water District	Ann Thomas – Public
Jack Baker – North Marin Water District	Kate Powers – Public
Jean Mariani – Novato Sanitary District	

Nine NBWA board members attended the meeting comprised of 19-member agency staff, stakeholders, partners, and interested members of the public.

Call to Order – Director Gibson called the meeting to order at 9:38 am in-person and via Zoom.

2. **General Public Comment** – None

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 Mariani moved to approve the agenda and minutes; Director Patterson seconded—Unanimously accepted.

4. **Treasurer's Report**

No comments. Director Mariani moved to approve the September Treasurer Reports. Director Patterson seconded—Unanimously accepted.

5. **Guest Presentation— Bel Marin Keys Wetland Restoration Project Overview/Update**

Jessica Davenport, State Coastal Conservancy

Jessica provided a high-level update on restoring 1,600 acres of former tidal marshlands near Bel Marin Keys.

The first phase of the Bel Marin Keys Wetland Restoration Project was completed last year. The Conservancy Board authorized 20 million dollars for work with the Corps on Phase 2 of the project. From a congressional point of view, the Bel Marin Keys Expansion received its first million. The Corp will be providing 75% of the project funds.

In 2000 the Conservancy acquired the Bel Marin Keys. In 2005, they approved a conceptual plan to restore it, which includes construction of a new levy, access roads, and an additional section of a bay trail. Phase 1 started in 2019. At the time, the Corps was not ready, so the Conservancy took on this phase and completed it at the end of 2021. The agreement with the Corps is being amended for Phase 2, which will

be 1900 acres and includes restoring the tidal habitat on the bay side. The whole project will cost about \$160 million, which the Conservancy will be covering about \$40 million and will get credit for what they already completed. This is a high priority project for the Conservancy. They have support from many agencies and organizations, as well as local residents and communities.

Questions/Comments

Director Patterson: What approach has been taken in terms of anticipating rising sea level.

Jessica: The levy has this factored in as well as the overall restoration plans. On the Hamilton side, it was created with different elevations and habitat so that as sea level rises some of the currently high marsh will become low marsh, and some of the areas that seasonal wetlands will become tidal.

Director Patterson: What lessons did you learn?

Jessica: We definitely learned that it takes a long time. We're hopeful that because we did spend a long time on Hamilton, thinking through the design and working with the Corps to have the off-loader, we now know how to set up an off-loader and what kind of power supply it needs, that's actually a big expense. We know the basics of how to set that up and who we need to work with and having PG&E support to get everything organized. We have some cost estimates from the past that we can rely on. We may not have enough sediment to bring it up to marsh plane elevation, so we'll want to be very strategic about where that sediment is placed to redirect some of the flow. We might evaluate some alternatives.

[inaudible discussion]

Jessica: The levy was built to FEMA and Army Corps standards and there will be regular maintenance standards that will be monitored.

[inaudible discussion]

Jessica: The Conservancy has been very engaged in providing information to the transportation planners for the Highway 37 planning. Our slogan has been integrate, don't mitigate. We recently released our second position paper this summer that would be a good resource for you as far as what the environmental community is thinking right now. Basically, we are supportive of a causeway more or less along the current alignment that would allow for the full flow of water sediment and wildlife underneath it. That is pretty much what the CalTrans planning and environmental linkages study have concluded as well for the ultimate project. I think the disagreement, right now is about the proposed interim projects, and whether they will help us get to the ultimate, or whether they could potentially prevent us, especially in the middle segment where there's a proposed congestion project that would not elevate the road, it would just add a couple of lanes and it would still be subject to sea level. We're hopeful that we can still come to some kind of way forward.

[inaudible discussion]

Jessica: Representative Huffman has been really active in looking at what's going on, and questioning the interim, especially the one that won't address sea level rise the segment need portion between 121 and Mare Island. I haven't heard a specific proposal for specific Federal funds to come, but we're hopeful it seems like a great opportunity for funding transportation, infrastructure and climate adaptation.

[inaudible discussion]

Director Gibson: How do you get a sense of the scale? Do you have any comparable projects? You mentioned Sonoma Creek, for example.

Jessica: Hamilton, in a way, is comparable because it's right next door, and it will be the same kind of partnership between the Conservancy and the Corps, everything's changing so fast as far as our understanding of sea level rise. There's a lot of small projects out there that are like 35 acres, so I would say, this [1900 acres] is definitely on the large side.

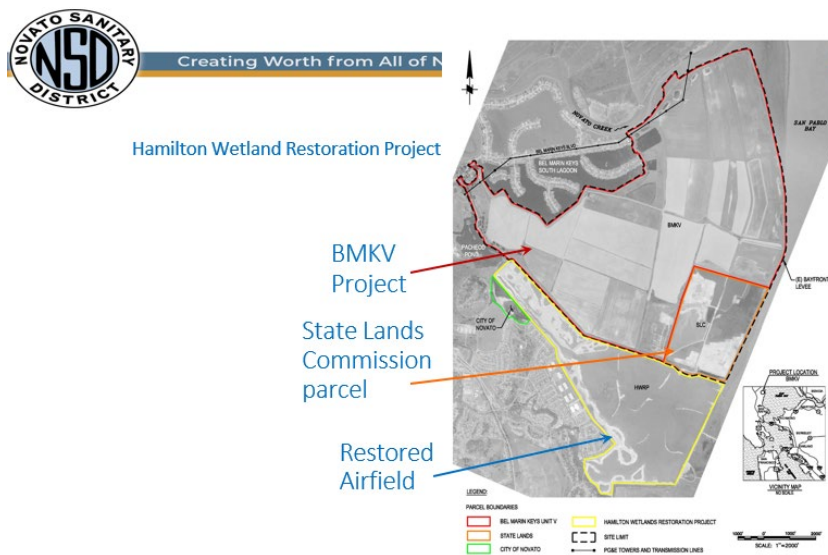
[inaudible discussion]

Director Connelly: I'm on the Highway 37 steering committee. We have to continue to push for the ultimate project. I think there's a lot of in alignment with the environmental and transportation communities around this project. It's going to be as much an environmental and restoration project as a transportation project, while seeking to provide relief to the tens of thousands of commuters who are stuck in that traffic. I can tell you at the Marin County level, we are bringing a letter forward this Tuesday reflecting that anything done should not be counter to or at odds with achieving the ultimate and that the ultimate itself should be expedited to the greatest extent possible. We should tap into Federal and State and regional resources that are available, and that in the meantime we should take steps that are more consistent with achieving those goals. The sentiments expressed this morning, I think, are consistent with a lot of what's being discussed right now.

[inaudible discussion]

Guest Presentation— Overview Novato Sanitary District & BMK V Wetland Restoration Project
Sandeep Karkal, P.E., M. ASCE · General Manager-Chief Engineer

General Manager Karkal provided an overview of the District's involvement and interest in the BMK V restoration project. The outfall pipeline borders the project levee and handles treated flow from around 60,000 residents in the area. The District is considering truncating the outfall so that discharge waters are eventually able to provide additional benefits to the planned restored areas before flows reach the bay.



NSD Support to Project

- Close coordination with SCC staff and consultants during design and construction.
- Agreement to provide the project with treated effluent water for dust control and irrigation to establish vegetation.
- Over 40 million gallons of treated effluent supplied over course of the project.
- Negotiated with Regional Water Board to modify NSD discharge permit to allow discharge to the newly created wetland to propagate and enhance desired brackish marsh.

Recent Developments and Next Steps

- State recently allotted >\$20M for the final stage of the project.
- NSD will continue to coordinate closely with SCC as design and construction move forward.
- Final project will relocate NSD discharge point, transitioning from shallow water in San Pablo Bay to direct discharge to the new brackish wetland.

Questions/Comments

Director Clark [comment]: If you can truncate and discharge into the brackish water, that's great because of all the nutrients.

Speaker: That's a really interesting comment.

[inaudible discussion]

6. Executive Director Report

Andy Rodgers, Executive Director

Updates since July meeting (ED report was postponed at the September meeting due to field trip)

- Attended IRWM coordinating committee meetings July 25, Aug 22, Sept 26 – NBWA region well represented on PSC
- Attended CASQA legislative subcommittee meeting on July 26, Aug 23, Sept 27
- Met with NBWRA on August 19 & Sept 27 to progress NBWA alignment initiative
- Attended North Bay RCIS stakeholder workshop on Sept 8
- Evaluated grant funding opportunities for regional programs

Administrative Activities

- Met with SFEI to finalize website refresh scope of work on Sept 8
- Programmed FY 2022-23 work plan
- Coordinated with Board Chair, Deputy Director, Finance Manager
- AR – Membership dues
- AP – Subconsultants
- Updated website and meeting packet information

Communications

- Held first in-person meeting & field trip @ CMSA since covid Sept 2!
- Prepared and distributed NBWA quarterly newsletter
- Met with Napa County FCWCD Sept 27 to initiate meeting & field trip planning
- Regional partners
- Subject matter experts and speakers

Committees

- Attended Land Use and Water Infrastructure initiative subcommittee meeting September 1
- Met with Chair, Deputy Director, and staff to progress NBWA initiatives

NBWA FY 2022/23 Work Plan

- Executive Director services
 - Continue transition to in-person/hybrid (including tours) meetings
 - Member communications and advocacy
 - Convene Executive/Admin Steering Committee – December 2022/January 2023
 - Prioritize and provide direction on implementing initiatives
- Implement focused regional initiatives
 - Water services infrastructure and land use/housing – Focused workshop #2, winter 2023

- Align missions and programs with NBWRA – Chairs meeting December 1, NBWA Board meeting Feb 3
- Annual General Managers meeting – March 2023
- Phase I (exploratory) DroughtSMART & FireSMART branding pilot – Winter 2023
- Proposal to support convening a series of ACWA-endorsed regional industry workshops
- Participate in regional forums
 - IRWM, RCIS, SFBRA, others
- Convene Joint Technical Committee
 - Programmatic planning and funding
- Communications
 - Quarterly newsletter
 - Update NBWA website

Regional Updates

- DWR SGM Implementation, Round 2 Solicitation Open
 - Application Period: October 4-November 30, 2022, 5 pm
 - Funding Available: \$200M from the General Fund and Proposition 68
 - Purpose: To promote healthy and sustainable groundwater basins
- EPA's San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund (SFBWQIF) FY 2022 RFA and the BIL-SFBWQIF FY22 RFA
 - Deadline: September 20, 2022 at 9pm
 - Funding Available: \$24M (SFBWQIF) & \$5M (BIL-SFBWQIF)
 - Purpose: Protect and restore San Francisco Bay watersheds and wetlands and expand the SFBWQIF's focus on building climate resilience in underserved communities.
- San Francisco Bay IRWM Prop 1 Round 2 Implementation Funding Applications
 - Deadline: October 10, 2022 at 12pm
 - Funding Available: \$25M for implementation projects plus \$6.5M available for DACs
 - Purpose: Encourage integrated regional strategies for water resource management including climate change adaptation, incentives for collaboration, setting water resource and infrastructure management priorities, and improving regional water self-reliance
- State Route 37 Policy Committee
 - Met on September 1, 2022

Confirming 2022/23 calendar dates – First Friday of every month - Except of course for holidays.

FY 2022-23 Board Meetings

- November 4 – In person/hybrid
- December 2 – Field trip
- January 6 – potential skip month
- February 3 - In person/hybrid
- March 3 – In person/hybrid
- April 7 – Field trip
- May 5 - In person/hybrid
- June 2 – Field trip?

Board Meeting Topics Outlook

Topics in development: Regional Resiliency (Nov 4), SFBay Basin Plan Amendment (Nov 4 or Feb 3), Napa County Field Trip (Dec 2), Environmental Education & Grant Funding (March 3), Solano County Field Trip (April 7), Urban Scale Carbon Sequestration Initiatives (April 7) Regulatory Compliance Partnerships, Baylands Strategies, DroughtSMART/FireSMART, OneWater OneBay Strategic Initiatives, DWR & SWRCB Drought Assistance Programs and Resources, Collaboration-Based Funding Opportunities, Water Management & Conveyance Innovations, Capital and Natural Assets Management, Small Grants and Scholarship Program, New Members!

Questions/Comments

Andy: We do have some municipalities that aren't formal members at this point. We have ways to bring them on board for NBWA and this Board is my connection and can help make those memberships happen. [Andy will reach out to the Board for assistance and asked that anyone with ideas to reach out to him as well.]

Director Gibson: [he has a question for the Board] What are the thoughts of working with the North Bay Reuse Authority—it's obviously very preliminary so I don't think anybody's got any concrete views about it. The North Bay Watershed Association (NBWA) came out of the need for more interaction and information sharing in the region. It was all based on the fact that watersheds don't know political jurisdictions and needs all kinds of agencies. The North Bay Water Reuse Association (NBWRA) is a fundraising organization. The commonality is regionalism and working together, and it's out of that commonality that the notion of originally first merging the two, which came about probably premature, has now gotten to a more sensible first step of working together. What it does potentially for us is, on the outside, helping other agencies get funding. This would help expand NBWA in the project business. What are the boards thoughts?

Director Meigs: What are the politics, if any? What do they do and how do they do it? If it's making things better, better governance, is what I'm looking for without being politically driven.

Director Clark: [responding to Director Mariani not understanding why there were two (NBWA and NBWRA)] It had to do with politics, because some of the larger agencies, Napa, which has gotten a tremendous amount of money out of that and the structure of this agency where each agency, whether it's La Galinas, you know 11,000 households, pays the same as Napa. The other thing, they were spending a lot of money to set up Federal funding, you know, to go to Washington, and make a big name for themselves.

Director Patterson: I can certainly see many advantages, particularly at the State and Federal levels, but then I see the disadvantage for Solano County, they're a new member and still getting a new General Manager. [inaudible] I got some push back from the board around tap water and bottled water. For me, I see this as a challenge. The agency is only now appreciating the relationship with NBWA, but not all the board members feel that way. For Solano, it's a bit premature.

Director Gibson: Many members had similar feelings in the beginning. NBWA started out as information sharing, but across the board, as time went on, the value has been appreciated more and there is a positive acceptance of the process. NBWRA has had trouble with members seeing value if they have a project or a potential project. What I'm hearing from the group is to find some coordination where we can work together, not necessarily merging, although that that may ultimately follow.

Director Patterson: She proposes that there be a standing item on the agenda for NBWRA updates.

Andy: That's exactly right, and I think that that's after we have our chairs get together, and I've been meeting with staff on a somewhat regular basis, and we come up with somewhat of a we need some visuals we need some very simple synthesized 'here's how things are,' 'Here's what the watershed association's focus is' so there's a general understanding, not just for the people that like you are really involved with all of them, but to be able to explain to somebody who has no idea.

Director Patterson: I think that Benicia would be really interested in cause we're about 85% dependent on the North Bay aqueduct, which is at 15% delivery contract.

Director Meigs: She would like to know when the meetings for NBWRA are so she can learn more.

7. Board Information Exchange and Drought Updates

Members highlighted issues and shared items of interest.

Director Clark: The main thing is that they have a new General Manager, Curtis Paxton. We're still working on a strategic plan.

Director Patterson: As mentioned before our Executive Director, Roland Stanford is retiring. This weekend is Bass weekend in Rio Vista, I encourage you to participate if you're interested in fish. Part of the preparations for the festival as there doing additional grapples certification work to enhance funding levels [inaudible].

Director Gibson: There are two major things worth mentioning. 1) continuing watershed management plan wrestling with all of multiple uses and overuse that our watershed gets and how to best manage it going on, and we'll continue to go on. I have no idea what the end result will be of that. There's a lot of stakeholders, and perceived stakeholders, that are involved in taking part in that. The other thing is what we're doing for "new water" after a couple of years of drought. The sentiment of the Board is that it's time for new water. Greater security in the water supply doesn't mean we're given up on conservation, quite the opposite. We're very proud of what's been done, but as one of our conservation expert consultants had said, in Marin, we have rung the sponge out in terms of conservation. They are looking beyond that and going in depth on every alternative that can be thought of. Some are clearly non-starters, I mean we're not going to do a pipeline across the gate bridge. I think what we'll probably end up with is a portfolio of multiple things to be doing and those will obviously include what we can then enhance recycling water that we can do, It'll include infrastructure improvements that could be done and all manageable, recognizing we have a short-term problem and a long-term problem, and we'll need different solutions approaching these. Desalinization is not going off the table it's still a viable alternative. We're also looking at ways to enhance the relationship with Sonoma Water and particularly capitalizing on the winter water concept. [inaudible]. We're looking at things like possible joint storage efforts, and so on, all exciting and good stuff.

Director Boorstein: They have permission from PG&E to use their biogas engine, which means if we have another power shut off for whatever reason, we can now island the agency which means we don't have to use diesel generators. We switch over and use biogas during a power outage. The digester number 2 got all cleaned up and the cover is going on next week.

8. Announcements and Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 am

Next Meeting: November 4, 2022, Zoom

SUBMITTED BY: Andy Rodgers, Executive Director, NBWA