

North Bay Watershed Association

Board of Directors Meeting - Summary

February 4, 2022 | 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

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	Cheryl Howlett – Marin Municipal Water District
Leon Garcia – Napa County Flood Control and Water Resources	Andy Rodgers – NBWA
Madolyn Agrimonti – City of Sonoma	Sabrina Marson – NBWA
Cory Bytof – City of San Rafael	Sandi Potter – NBWA
Kevin McDonnell – City of Petaluma	Patti D’ Angelo Juachon, MCF
Pat Eklund – City of Novato	Susan Stompe – Marin Conservation League
Damon Connolly– County of Marin	Jessica Davenport – State Coastal Conservancy
Chris Choo – County of Marin	Logan Pitts – State Senator Bill Dodd’s office
Susan Gorin – County of Sonoma	Caitlin Cornwall – Sonoma Ecology Center
Jack Gibson – Marin Municipal Water District	David Oster
Larry Russell – Marin Municipal Water District	Neil Hancock
Rick Fraites – North Marin Water District	Joe’s phone (Zoom ID)
Tony Williams – North Marin Water District	Ann Thomas
Jean Mariani – Novato Sanitary District	
Pamela Meigs – Ross Valley Sanitation District	
Megan Clark – Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District	
Ryan Gregory – Napa Sanitation District	
Rob Carson – Marin County Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program	
Elizabeth Patterson – Solano County Water Agency	
Brad Sherwood – Sonoma Water	

Seventeen NBWA board members attended the meeting comprised of 33 member agency staff, stakeholders, partners, and interested members of the public.

Call to Order – Director Gibson called the meeting to order at 9:32 am 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 Patterson moved to accept the agenda. Director Fraites seconded. Unanimously accepted.

Director Patterson moved to approve the past meeting summary. Director Russell seconded.

Director Eklund abstained. Unanimously approved.

4. **Treasurer's Report**

Director Agrimonti moved to accept the Treasure’s Report - Director Bytof seconded. Unanimously accepted.

5. **Guest Presentation—State Route 37, Baylands Group Updates**

Jessica Davenport, Deputy Program Manager, Bay Area Program, State Coastal Conservancy

Jessica provided a perspective from the conservation community on SR 37 planning activities, describing the SR 37-Baylands Group’s focus on integrating transportation and restoration planning, protecting and enhancing ecosystem function, and promoting landscape-scale resilience.

State Route 37 Policy Committee consists of Elected Officials from North Bay Counties.
The goal: Reconstruct SR 37 to withstand flooding while improving mobility and safety.

State Route (SR) 37 - Baylands Group: Formed in June 2017 in response to accelerated action by the SR 37 Policy Committee.

The Fear: A Dam Across the North Bay? The conservation community said “No!”

Message: Integrate, Don’t Mitigate. Integrate infrastructure improvements for SR 37 with existing and future habitat planning, conservation and restoration to ensure healthy ecosystem function and resilience to landscape scale change of the San Pablo Bay.

Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Report: Science Update, 2015: “Elevate Highway 37... to allow the full passage of sediment, water and wildlife.”

SR 37-Baylands Group Goals:

- Create and Promote Adoption of Our Guiding Principles
- Influence Transportation and Public Access Planning
- Develop an Ecological Landscape Vision

Guiding Principles were presented in a white paper, which was later used to present to Hwy 37 planning efforts (about five or so in the last 4 years):

- Integrate improvements to SR 37 with habitat goals
- Improve ecological connectivity when reconstructing SR 37
- Develop design solutions appropriate to the landscape of the Baylands, considering historical ecology and sea level rise
- Planning should be corridor-wide, not in segments
- SLR projections should be based on the most recent OPC report
- Near-term solutions must protect wetland resources and leave options open for future restoration
- Minimize financial impacts to low-income commuters
- Include multi-modal transportation options and recreation opportunities

Influencing Transportation Planning - SR 37 Transportation and Sea Level Rise Corridor Improvement Plan.

- Plan was prepared for Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Caltrans and county transportation agencies, completed in Feb. 2018
- Includes SR 37-Baylands Group’s Guiding Principles

Evolution of the SR 37 Project/Program Purpose

FINAL PEL PURPOSE STATEMENT

- Preserving a critical regional transportation corridor that is resilient to extreme events while integrating ecological resiliency which facilitates adaptation to sea level rise
- Providing reliable travel time and increasing average vehicle occupancy
- Providing safe mobility for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Maintaining and enhancing public access, including to recreational areas
- Providing equitable transit and multimodal transportation solutions that improve access for, and provides meaningful benefits to all users of SR 37, with special consideration of underserved communities

[Presenter slides included: MTC-Led Design Alternatives Assessments (DAAs): Consideration of Alternative Alignments; Consideration of Alternative Types of Structures: Embankment; Consideration of Alternative Types of Structures: Causeway; Combinations of Causeway and Embankment on Various Alignments; table of 'Identifying Environmentally Preferred Alternative'; information regarding Caltrans-Led Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study: To Be Completed Mid-Late 2022, and Caltrans PEL Proposed Alternative Alignments]

PEL is looking at the “big picture”: Examines broad area or corridor; establishes long-term transportation vision; sets the stage for focused, future projects. The PEL will not impact the congestion relief project in the middle section from moving forward—They just released a draft EIR for comments—but it can impact the 101 to 121 segment, which recently had a Notice of Preparation of an EIR. Caltrans PEL proposed Alternative Alignments slide image of raising the highway on an embankment was recently presented at the public meeting, but it has since been stepped back from. They are considering a causeway.

Developing an Ecological Landscape Vision

- Conceptual maps created for Baylands Group White Paper in 2017
- Sonoma Creek Baylands Strategy, completed in May 2020
- Petaluma River Baylands Strategy now underway
- Regional Conservation Investment Strategy process (Feb. 2022-Fall 2023)

Sonoma Creek Baylands Strategy: [image on slide] the SF Bay Restoration Authority authorized funding for acquisition and stewardship for Camp 4, which will be a partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). NRCS is going to buy a wetland reserve easement on the property. Camp 3 has a willing seller. Camp 2 is owned by the Dept of Fish and Wildlife. This strategy also discussed how the road and the railroad affect the potential for restoration and how in turn the restoration would affect the infrastructure. It increases the cost of restoration by two or three times to build levees.

- Habitat Restoration
- Climate Resilience
- Public Access Guidelines
- Recommendations for SR 37 and SMART Rail Line

North Baylands Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS): These have been done in various parts of the state. There is a framework created by the Dept of Fish and Wildlife. Focuses on species and natural communities.

Goals

- Develop a landscape-scale conservation vision, based on focal species and natural communities.
- Identify key conservation areas and strategies, consistent with California Department of Fish and Wildlife RCIS guidelines.
- Facilitate the implementation of conservation actions as compensatory and advanced mitigation for Resilient State Route 37 Corridor Program.

Upcoming Opportunities

- **Segment B Congestion Relief Project:** Comments on Draft EIR/EIS, released in Jan. 2022, are due Feb. 28, 2022.
- **Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study:** Next Stakeholder Meeting Feb. 25, 2022. Next Public Meeting in Summer or Fall 2022 to release report.
- **Advance Mitigation Opportunities:** Caltrans' Regional Advance Mitigation Needs Assessment draft to be released by Feb. 16, 2022, public meeting on Feb. 23, 2022. Projects may be able to receive Advance Mitigation Program funds, starting mid-2022.

- **Regional Conservation Investment Strategy:** Led by Metropolitan Transportation Commission in partnership with SF Estuary Partnership, with environmental technical and policy support from Baylands Group members. Will include Stakeholder Meetings and Community Workshops, Feb. 2022 – June 2023.

Questions/Comments

Director Garcia: The American Canyon Community parks foundation is working with the city to acquire the old corporate yard building that's on the wetlands and turn it into an Eco center. There is a lot of interest from their community in American Canyon on the restoration.

Director Fraites: He was appointed to the PEL a month ago—A1b alternative makes the most sense. They should be careful about including SMART into this project. There is a huge cost and SMART should stand on their own if they want to upgrade their system. He is not in favor of more studies.

Director Patterson: [historical note to add] When she was on the STA Board, the initial meeting of the policy group and involved in developing the guiding principles, which she's not sure were formally adopted. Investment in rail is high, but it doesn't compare to the investment of trying to deal with increase in traffic cost. Can you go into more detail on concerns for investing in rail and what some alternatives are?

Jessica: They have heard from the Transportation Authority who focus on roads, and they have had a hard time coordinating with rail. They have different planning processes and financing systems. The approach the MTC team took was to create alternatives the have the option to include rail. The plans were compatible with putting in rail. But its up to those who plan and finance the rail. There could be cost savings in combining the two. From a conservation standpoint there is a rail line that cuts through the Sonoma Creek Baylands.

Director Agrimonti: Where is Solano County; do you have insight?

Jessica: They are one of the four county transportation authorities that are member of the policy committee; they are actively involved.

Director Gorin: [comment] Supervisors from all four bay area counties came together to discuss issues in common and HWY 37 issues was top: traffic and environmental. Caltrans did a feasibility study and without HWY 37 the rest of the bay area transportation network would be constrained, constricted, and challenged.

It is the state's interest to extend the SMART train eastward--It's a question of how we get there. The tracks are sinking into the wetlands. She is in discussion with getting freight on the train rather than trucks. It has to be taken into consideration in the planning.

Director Gregory: One of their members expressed interest in A1b, can you show the slide again and discuss?

Jessica: A1b is staying on current alignment but elevating on the causeway. Not every inch is on a causeway, only the parts that need to be over water or marshes.

Director Gibson: Is there a timeline on getting through this?

Jessica: No. there is a projection, but its not entirely on schedule. The costs are estimated \$300-500million. There is great opportunity with funding out there for infrastructure right now—it seems there is movement to get going.

Director Patterson: [comment] The leadership didn't come from the state, but the counties. This is a visionary opportunity of what needs to be done throughout the state with climate chaos.

Stompe: Do you feel the obligation to examine other alternatives is keeping them from looking at the causeway in the Marin segment? Do you see hope in pursuing A1b?

Jessica: Yes, there are several members who share your views. With Caltrans stepping in and taking their roll (they own the highway) and doing the PEL and building on the tech work that's already been done, they should be ready by the end of this year summer/fall. I don't see how they can't move forward with something more visionary, corridor-wide, though he PEL.

Director Garcia: I think what has helped the conversation between environmental community and the transportation community has been 'integrate not mitigate'.

Director Meigs: In one of your slides, you state eco enhancements. Do you have in that report what they are, who's on top of that, and who is promoting it?

Jessica: She can't remember specific enhancements. A lot of the north bay wetland managers got together to create a list and have shared it with the consultants developing various plans. There are also a lot of resources within SFEI's EcoAtlas. She can share a link to more information if there's interest. Sonoma Creek Baylands Strategy is a great example of being specific landscape scale restoration.

Andy mentioned the upcoming NBWA conference will have a segment that will include Bayland strategy updates.

6. Guest Presentation— Updates from the Third Senate District
Logan Pitts, Senior Field Representative, State Senator Bill Dodd

He has been working on HWY 37 since 2015. It started as a traffic issue. As other issues like flooding and sea level rise came up, they formed the HWY 37 Policy Committee with the 4 counties it crosses. Senator Dodd is committed this year to introducing tolling legislation. They would make this the next toll bridge in the area-- it would be more of a causeway but there's no final design. The tolling allows it to get bonds and have a large pot of money that can be borrowed against. It also unlocks a lot of state and federal funding. In short, there's no way to get around a toll. It can be a model for the nation and the world. It can be a causeway that makes transportation better and link in public transportation. There are many environmental benefits to raising the roadway and restoring some of the destructive practices that have been going on for a while. With sea level rise this is going to be happening all around the bay and here in the north bay we can get in front of the line. Caltrans is on board to make this happen.

Another project that's been happening with the Sonoma Developmental Center has a big water component. It has two reservoirs has Sonoma Creek and other tributaries running through. The County is in the process of planning, but the state is going to own the property and be the seller to the private party to whoever develops it—the state will retain the water rights. Normally state properties are put on the

open real estate market. They wrote a special legislation to allow the county to have complete control over the planning process. It has to meet state guidelines.

Other water issues the Senator is involved in is AB 1755 The Open and Transparent Water Data Act, which creates an open-source data base that all different state agencies have to dump their information into that used to be several different data bases, different software that couldn't communicate. The Senator has been chipping away at confusing water regulations, keeping in mind history and stakeholders. They have a new bill [SB 832](#) which would allow for remote measurements by the State Water Resources Control Board, which isn't allowed right now, but you can't regulate what you can't measure. The Senator believes this information should be more transparent and be accessible to the public.

Another bill, [SB 852](#) sets up a new type of Special District—A Climate Resilient Financing District. There's a new type of special district that's been around for six or seven years called an Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District. This would allow for the possibility of raise revenue that can address sea level rise, wildfire, flooding, etc. They are in early stages.

Until the end of February new ideas can be introduced for this year, which goes through the next process of its final vote, which takes place around August up until Labor Day. State budget is going on now too. Has to be passed by June. The Senator is not part of the Budget Committee but is consulted and will receive it when it reaches the Senate Floor. If there are budget items, requests, or thoughts, now is the time to reach out to his office or Mark McGuire who is on the Budget Committee.

Logan also went into redistricting and shared his screen to show assemble districts. There isn't a lot of change for Napa and Marin, a little in Sonoma and Santa Rosa, along with other updates and changes.

Questions/Comments

Director Gregory: Can a toll be applied to anything other than a bridge?

Logan: He isn't sure, but he doesn't think it has to be a bridge. He will get back to him.

Director Fraites: Would the toll kick in at 121 or 101?

Logan: He doesn't know at this time. What's happening on the western end is different from the eastern end. He doesn't know if a causeway will work on the eastern end. There's a lot more property owners on the western end and they all have levees that help with flooding. That's part of the effort.

Director Larry: He doesn't think there's any restrictions on tolling. HWY 37 is flat and it's a toll road.

Director Bytof: Can the districts cross county borders and who is working on it in Sonoma?

Logan: It's brand new so he doesn't know a lot yet and is still learning. He will get back to him.

Director Patterson: On the tolling legislation, there is discussion on ability to pay. Is there an element in the legislation for that?

Logan: Yes, they are going to look at that. The economic circumstance was one of the reasons the Senator pulled the bill two years ago. They are looking at FasTrak discounts, micro mobility options.

Director Gorin: The Regional Climate Protection Authority for Sonoma County is exploring financing measure, potentially in 2024, raising revenues to enhance collaboration ability to work on climate change initiatives. Are they not authorized to a sales tax for that?

Logan: Yes, you heard that right, but I don't know where that gap is. It's a valid question and he will learn more and get back to her.

Any additional questions can be emailed to Logan.pitts@sen.ca.gov
Search for bill by author here <https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billSearchClient.xhtml>

7. **Executive Director Report**

Andy Rodgers, Executive Director

Andy will provide an update on active projects, recent meetings, communications, committees, activities, and developing initiatives since the December 3 Board meeting. Andy will outline ideas for next and future Board meeting topics and solicit feedback.

Updates since last meeting

- Met with Sonoma State University Rising WATERS on December 10
- Met with NBWRA Executive Director on January 28
- Attended Petaluma Watershed Collaborative meeting on January 13 and Zone 2A Flood Control meeting on January 14

Administrative Activities

- Coordinated with Board Chair, Deputy Director, Finance Manager
- Progressed agreement for Drought/FireSMART campaign
- AR – Membership dues
- AP – Subconsultants
- Updated website and meeting packet information

Communications

- Preparing Quarterly newsletter Winter 21/22
- Met with member agencies on December 14, 17 and January 7, 21
- Updating member contact lists
- Board members and member agency staff
- Regional partners
- Subject matter experts and speakers

Committees

- Met with Administrative Steering Committee on December 10
- Met with Deputy Director and NBWA staff to develop priority initiatives
- Met with 2022 Conference committee on January 11
- JTC will implement new initiatives

Quarterly Newsletter – Winter 2022

Help us expand distribution

- Partner agency contacts
- Funding agency staff
- Other department staff
- Information officers/communications

Forward us newsworthy items for next issue.

2022 NBWA Conference

January 11 Committee Meeting – Progress Summary

- Conference Date Confirmed!: April 8, 2022 9:00-3:00
- Status: Save-the-Date distributed
- Title: Climate Change(d) – Weathering Extremes Together
- Format: Virtual core, with limited in-person outdoor experiences (tentative)
- Cost: Free
- Sponsorships: Soft solicitation outreach
- Program:
 - OneWater OneBay
 - WatershedSMART
 - Sea Level Rise Fresh Water Drop
 - North Bay Workforce Development

2022 NBWA Conference Committee

Jack Gibson, Jean Mariani, Megan Clark, Brad Sherwood, Andrea Rodriguez, Tony Hale, Frances Knapczyk, Andy Rodgers, Sabrina Marson

One Water One Bay Priorities 2022

- Elevate awareness of NBWA programs and expand applied collaborations
- Identify/develop program/project(s) in collaboration with NBWRA
- Identify/develop and co-fund feasibility study projects
- Convene forum for strategic planning with land use/housing and water services
- DroughtSMART and FireSMART Campaign

One Water Approach for North Bay

- Develop grant opportunity tools and advance strategic positioning
- Distinguish and align NBWA/NBWRA missions and initiatives
- Coordinate/convene water and climate adaptation projects
- Status
 - Grant summary tool available
 - Initiated alignment initiatives with NBWRA
 - Continue to collaborate on future fund development and projects
 - Inventory and categorize projects and identify opportunities to develop or enhance existing efforts in the areas of:
 - Flood/stormwater and water supply
 - Indirect and Direct Potable Reuse (IPR/DPR)
 - Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR)

Convene Land Use Agencies and Water/Wastewater Service Agencies

NBWA is working with local government to convene a workshop on land use/housing nexus for infrastructure improvements and water/wastewater delivery.

Purpose

The workshop will present current housing development incentives and regional housing targets. Planning staff and utility staff will discuss challenges and approaches to meeting these goals and exploring regional infrastructure partnerships.

Status

- ✓ Coordinate with participating NBWA member agency staff
- ✓ Research current housing mandates and growth projections
- ✓ Workshop will be held remotely in Late May or Early June

One Water Strategic Initiative: Water and Fire

NBWA/MWPA is developing an outreach campaign for Water and Fire to provide public education materials for drought and fire smart practices.

Status

- ✓ Contracting with Combustion Creative
- ✓ Developing campaign name and logo
- ✓ Developing digital library

Stanford's Woods Institute for the Environment, Urban Water Policy

- ✓ Tracking NBWA/MWPA collaboration in evaluation of nexus of wildfire-water-drought

New Member Outreach, Enhance Stakeholder Engagement, and Highlight Community Education

- Develop and expand NBWA outreach to new members, special districts, and coastal entities that may benefit from regional collaboration
- Re-establish and enhance long-standing community partnerships
- Leverage Conference for new member outreach and community education.
- Enhance website and educational materials

Status

- ✓ Ongoing outreach at executive and member leadership levels
- ✓ Developing new member outreach plan
- ✓ Active member development following April Conference

2022 Board Meetings

- March 4
- April 1 (April 8 conference)
- May 6
- June 3

Board Meeting Topics Outlook

Topics in development:

- Baylands Strategies, DroughtSMART = FireSMART, Progress One Water Strategic Initiatives, Urban Scale Carbon Sequestration Initiatives, DWR & State Water Board Drought Assistance Programs and Resources, Collaboration-Based Funding Opportunities, Regulatory Compliance Partnerships, Water Management & Conveyance Innovations, Capital and Natural Assets Management, What's Next in Environmental Education

8. Board Information Exchange and Drought Updates

Director Gibson (MMWD): Two exciting things- both have regional sharing orientation. One of their smaller reservoirs on Corte Madera Creek, they're working on a plan to pump water out of their smaller reservoirs to their larger ones as needed. North Marin Water and Sonoma Water are contracted for water, but they never reach their max. They are working on enhancement to improve how much they can take under their contract.

Director Eklund: The Commission approved the Bay Adapt document. They will be presenting to the Marin County officials in February. It's open to the public, if anyone is interested.

Director Meigs: Update on the Larkspur Landing property. They have gone through all the approvals, and They are asking the community to complete a survey if they live in the Ross Valley district; it's up on their website.

Director Fraites: Three months ago, the North Bay Water District paid for a study for water supply alternatives. The various alternatives are expensive.

Director Mariani: Novato Sanitary District has been supplying wastewater samples to UC Berkely for their study on COVID frequency in communities. The Health Dept will use that information to determination of how much COVID is actually circulating in the community; they feel its more accurate because a lot of the testing has to be self-reported.

9. Announcements and Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 11:15 am

Next Meeting: March 4, 2022, Zoom

SUBMITTED BY: Andy Rodgers, Executive Director, NBWA