

August 18, 2015

HUMBOLDT BAY EELGRASS MANAGEMENT PLAN REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District (District) is soliciting proposals for development of a Humboldt Bay Eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) Management Plan (Plan or Management Plan). The District is seeking input from the Wiyot Tribe, Ca. Department of Fish and Wildlife, Ca. Sea Grant, Ca. Coastal Conservancy, Ca. Coastal Commission, National Marine Fisheries Service, US Army Corps of Engineers and public in the development of the Plan. Management Plan development will require facilitation of a collaborative process among agencies and stakeholders to synthesize existing information and identify solutions for eelgrass management in Humboldt Bay. Sound management will allow for long-term conservation of eelgrass while accommodating appropriate bay uses.

Proposals will be screened and selected by a review committee and proposal teams may be asked to attend an in person interview with the review committee. Currently, there is approximately \$89,500 available for plan development. This amount may be increased or decreased.

Background

Eelgrass is one of the most abundant Humboldt Bay habitats, currently covering approximately 3,600 of the bay's 17,760 acres. Eelgrass habitat is important for numerous fish and wildlife species and provides an important habitat component for migratory birds along the Pacific Flyway. Eelgrass distribution, abundance and overall health may be effected by many factors including climate change (e.g., sea level rise, ocean acidification) and human activities within the bay (e.g., mariculture, dredging, dock construction, boating) and watershed (e.g., urbanization and development, agricultural and forestry practices). Most eelgrass conservation actions are conducted as mitigation for human activities that affect eelgrass. However, there is not an existing bay plan to guide future eelgrass conservation actions. A comprehensive management plan could:

- (1) Ensure that the sum of individual eelgrass conservation actions has the greatest benefit to eelgrass and eelgrass functions,
- (2) Facilitate more efficient regulatory processes for projects in the bay; for example, by pre-identifying high priority eelgrass mitigation/conservation options, and
- (3) Provide a long term eelgrass habitat conservation strategy that allows for sea level rise adaptation, dredging and economic development in Humboldt Bay.

Eelgrass Management Plan Objectives

Specific objectives of the Eelgrass Management Plan would include:

- 1) Describe our current understanding of baseline conditions of eelgrass in Humboldt Bay, identify key information gaps in our knowledge, and determine research priorities for eelgrass management in Humboldt Bay.
- 2) Develop a process for managing eelgrass in Humboldt Bay that:

- a. Achieves conservation of eelgrass and the ecosystem and wetland functions that eelgrass provides in Humboldt Bay.
- b. Facilitates predictable and coordinated processing of regulatory approvals by all agencies with regulatory authority over eelgrass in Humboldt Bay.
- c. Provides a bay wide approach for avoiding, minimizing and mitigating impacts of different activities on eelgrass.

Plan Contents

The Eelgrass Management Plan would describe the following:

- 1) Purpose of the Eelgrass Management Plan.
- 2) Related planning and conservation efforts.
- 3) The existing regulatory process related to eelgrass impacts.
- 4) Humboldt Bay's eelgrass within a broader spatial context, including as part of the Pacific Flyway and the relationship with upland activities that affect water quality.
- 5) Eelgrass distribution, abundance and wetland/ecological functions in Humboldt Bay.
- 6) Anthropogenic threats to eelgrass.
- 7) Eelgrass management with consideration towards sea level rise and ocean acidification.
- 8) Eelgrass management goals and objectives.
- 9) A bay wide approach for avoiding, minimizing and mitigating impacts of different activities on eelgrass. The approach may include a short-term and long-term management strategy. The short-term strategy would describe specific components that can move forward soon, including identification of conservation opportunities and coordination of regulatory reviews. The long-term strategy would describe more complex components such as mitigation bank development and/or other forms of advance mitigation.
- 10) Eelgrass research and monitoring priorities informative for eelgrass management.
- 11) Eelgrass conservation opportunities and priorities (e.g., habitat enhancement and creation, water quality protection) and existing conservation efforts.

Responses to RFP

To respond to this RFP, a single PDF format proposal should be emailed to Mr. Adam Wagschal (District) at awagschal@humboldtby.org by 5:00 PM (PT) on September 25, 2015. Each proposal shall be a maximum of 30 pages including any attachments and shall include the following:

- 1. Scope of Services:** Describe your approach for developing an Eelgrass Management Plan that meets the objectives and has the content described above. Note that the plan must be developed with input from multiple local, state, federal and tribal entities as well as stakeholders (e.g., boaters, mariculturists, dock owners and conservation advocacy groups).

- 2. Personnel:** Describe the team's:
 - a. Organizational structure for the project.
 - b. Skills, experience and capacity to conduct the project.
 - c. Experience managing similar projects.
 - d. Qualifications of key staff that will work on the project and the extent that each will participate.
- 3. Schedule:** Provide a proposed schedule for developing the Eelgrass Management Plan.
- 4. References:** List three clients for whom similar services have been performed. Include the name, mailing address, email address and telephone number of their principal representative and a description of the project(s) you managed for the client.
- 5. Fee:** Provide a proposed budget that includes the hourly rate and proposed number of work hours for each position classification that will provide services described in the scope of work and all reimbursable fees and expenses. Include a grand total to complete the project on a not-to-exceed time and materials basis.

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by a review committee. Committee members have not yet been identified. Final selection of the project team will be made by the Harbor District Board of Commissioners, with recommendations from the review committee.

Following is a partial list of the criteria that will be used to select the project team:

- Demonstrated ability and experience of personnel.
- Quality of proposed scope of work for achieving project objectives.
- Proposed fee.

Schedule

Proposals are due September 25, 2015 at 5:00 PM (PT)

The estimated timeline is as follows:

- Review Committee Evaluation of Proposals and Interviews (if Necessary) – early October 2015
- Determine Final Details of Scope of Work and Budget – end of October 2015
- Approval of Project Team – November 2015

Please direct any questions to Adam Wagschal (District) at awagschal@humboldtby.org or 707-443-0801.