HUMBOLDT BAY EELGRASS MANAGEMENT PLAN
COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS KICKOFF MEETING
MEETING MINUTES
Harbor District Conference Room - 601 Startare Drive, Eureka
November 28, 2016 10:00 – 2:00

ATTENDEES
Whelan Gilkerson (Merkel & Associates)
Keith Merkel (Merkel & Associates)
Kathy Rogers (Merkel & Associates)
Vanessa Blodgett (PlanWest/Harbor District)
George Williamson (PlanWest/Harbor District)
Lucas Sawyer (Hog Island Oyster Company)
Matt Goldworthy (NOAA/NMFS)
Aldaron Laird (Trinity Associates)
Miles Slattery (City of Eureka)
Brendan Thompson (N Coast Regional Water Quality)
Kasey Sirkin (ACOE)
Rebecca Garwood (CDFW)
Melissa Kraemer (California Coastal Commission)
Stephen Kullmann (Wiyot Tribe)
Greg O’Connell (SHN)
Bianca Hayashi (County of Humboldt Public Works)
Joe Tyburczy (California Sea Grant Extension)
Lauren Garske (California Coastal Commission) – on phone
Joel Gerwein (California Coastal Commission) – on phone
Randy Lovell (CDFW State Aquaculture Coordination) – on phone

INTRODUCTION AND OUTLINE –Vanessa Blodgett (Plan West/Harbor District)

2nd of 5 partner meetings
Will be working through the components
Encourage lots of discussion
Meeting #3 will be held January or February
Next meeting will include a boat tour to look at various mitigation opportunities and possible conservation areas

Humboldt Bay EMP Path Forward
- Work Plan (meetings, bay tours, plan drafting, Final workshop)
- Framework for Plan adoption

HB EMP Conformance Needs Relative to CEMP or Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP)
- What do we draw from this CEMP?
- Where do we depart from it while maintaining consistency?

CEMP widely accepted at this point
No need to reinvent the wheel
Depart at special case issues
CMP good way to address local paradigms

Drawing Guidance from the CEMP
- Planning & Design – Impact Avoidance/Minimization
- Impact Assessment & Monitoring
- Data Analysis & Reporting
- Final Mitigation Success Criteria

Eelgrass Spatial Metrics and Mapping
- High accuracy surveying/mapping critical to assessing and communicating eelgrass-project interactions
- CEMP standards for mapping accuracy 95%
- Important to establish a consistent standard for determining eelgrass vegetated cover, areal extent, and spatial distribution metrics

CEMP Calls for project surveys
Work with the Harbor District to create a project checklist
CEMP has planning tools for minimization of impacts
Start with knowing what your resources are
Need mechanical processes
How and when to map resources what to do with it
Problem with definition of what a survey is
Should be structured. Communication at land use level
Utility in having workshops, forums to educate people upfront with the checklist
Need a kick off when plan comes out
Maybe a You Tube training? District website
Need user friendly historical information - May help with survey planning
Need to be careful with data.
State standard for surveys?
CEMP outlines tools available and approaches. Attaches level of standard of quality of survey. Provided latitude for agencies to adopt standards
CEMP element of CEMP
Locally need to be sure all agencies will accept standard adopted
Document must be acceptable
Each plan is unique. Quality is important
We will flesh out guidance language
Over/Under mitigation is common
CEMP – applicant is responsible for success. Provides tools

Departing from the norm
- Mitigation Strategies
- Mitigation Transplant Ratios
- Mitigation Credit, Capture, Tracking & Accounting

How to develop strategic partnerships to help with mitigation
Starting market for selling mitigation credits
Try to minimize law-land communication with Plan
May be limiting factors to growth potential
Like to push for preliminary survey requirement
Facilitates understanding between agencies
Survey does become part of the permit package
Is there an expiration date for preliminary survey?

Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Strategy & Considerations
- Methods for avoidance and minimization of impacts
- Opportunistic mitigation and site development
- Onsite Vs offsite mitigation criteria
- Other considerations
  - Physical Policy
  - Evaluation and tracking

Methods for Avoidance and Minimization of Impacts
- Project Siting
  Do I need to put the project in eelgrass?

- Project Design
  Often simple design changes can avoid impacts or at least lessen them and thus reduce mitigation need. Humboldt Bay example – aquatic center. Realigned the gangway early in the design phase to minimize the interaction with the fringing eelgrass.

- Integration of restoration within the project

Preliminary Survey
What is there and context of it
Connect financial gain of following the plan expedite process, permitting. Frustrations, etc.
EMP process need something that brings it back to why is this important?
A tool the HD can put forward right up front to project proponents
We need to educate
Education is important
Is there the potential for project to happen that don’t involve HD?
Anything above MHW need HD
HD = SLC for Humboldt Bay
Only 1 website should disseminate info
Core focus area? What is this? Suggested more comprehensive area at last meeting?
Plan Area does include all of Bay
Focus Area – special needs starting CMP
Restoration opportunities exist
What does focus area really mean?
Developing CMP could be done in phases
Be careful about how spread thin we got in first place
Arcata and Eureka could spend time laying out their projects
Plan needs to have ability to pull other things in
It is a living document can expand out
Guidelines will be applicable to all
In a perfect world, develop 1 RGP for waterfront activities. Evaluate consistency with RGP moving forward on each project, can renew RGP down the road
RGP only covers projects of a particular nature?
RGP creates class of projects
RGP NW unique to region
ESA/401 not always straight forward
RGP cover all mitigation?
140 acres in Focus Planning area. Maybe max of 10 acres of actual potential eelgrass impact.
Final agreement to convert 10 acres put into RGP
ESA issues. Need to be really careful
Tribal issues
Post efficient RGPS have focused on maintenance and re-tasked existing structure
Arcata may not have eelgrass issues now, but they will
Creative strategies for avoidance
Awareness of resource, design
Do I need to put project in eelgrass? Aquatic center is an example. Gangway aligned to minimize eelgrass impacts
How big of an issue and secondary impacts does construction

LUNCH BREAK 12:10 – 12:45

WAG – Power Point methods for avoidance and minimization of impacts

Opportunistic Mitigation and Site Development
- Synergistic restoration of former tidelands
- Substrate Remediation
- Removal of derelict infrastructure

HB opportunities somewhat different
Tideland get eelgrass directly and indirectly by increasing tidal Prism.
How to capture excess?
Senate bill may yield climate adaptation. Bill with no $ but it does put more points on the restoration side opportunities

Onsite vs Offsite Mitigation Criteria
- Area of eelgrass impact relative to site’s capacity to develop additional habitt
- Ownership/Jurisdiction/Zoning Considerations

Scale dependent – pile renewal, etc
King Salmon dredging issue – 1st priority project
Option 1 – dredge access channel not finger channels. How soon will I be back? How much risk do you have of going too low? What is depth of eelgrass in KS
What is likely to be successful?
How cost effective?
Are we getting good ecological bang for the buck?
1-acre eelgrass impact
Can you get eelgrass to grown back at same density? Why not focus on mudflats first?

**Mitigation Strategy and Considerations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Continuous Eelgrass (acres)</th>
<th>Patch Eelgrass (acres)</th>
<th>Percent of HB continuous eelgrass (acres)</th>
<th>Percent of HB patchy eelgrass (acres)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humboldt Bay</td>
<td>3644</td>
<td>2-43</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>EMP Focus Area</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>37</td>
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<td>2%</td>
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<td>Priority Projects in EMP Focus Area</td>
<td>&lt;= 10</td>
<td>&lt;= 5</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
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</tbody>
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**Substrate Remediation to Restore Historic Eelgrass Habitat**

North Bay – Legacy bottom hardening site
- Outside current mariculture operations
- Approximately 1/3 to ½ acre of eelgrass restoration capacity-patchy eelgrass surrounds site
- Landowner receptive to conservation easement
- Other similar opportunities exist-Challenges include: ownership and existing management

Got data good idea 1=1
*Pilot study, go clean it up, plant portion, etc.*

**Eelgrass Mitigation /Conservation Spatial & Temporal factors**
- Magnitude of Potential Impacts to Eelgrass within EMP Focus Area relative to System level Eelgrass Populations – important to consider
- Sea Level Rise/Climate Change – how to address it within the Plan – look to agencies for guidance

*Look go agencies for guidance re SLR*

**Humboldt Bay System Level Eelgrass Resources**
- 2009 NOAA Humboldt Bay & Eel River Benthic Habitat Project
- Continuous Eelgrass – 3,644 acres
- Patchy Eelgrass – 2,043 acres
- 5,687 Total acres

**EMP Focus Area**
- Samoa, Fairhaven and Eureka’s working waterfront
- Entrance Bay/North Bay Channel
- King Salmon and Fields Landing

*Eureka waterfront data void – will be filled*
Magnitude of Potential Impacts to Eelgrass within EMP Focus Area Relative to System level Eelgrass Population

Scale of issue
Identify any restoration projects and incorporate into CMP but use it as an anchor and continue building as opportunities & projects present

Sea Level Rise/Climate Change – how to address it within the Plan
- Managing Plan Focus Area vs System
- Policy-limitations including depth, coastal squeeze
- Active vs passive approach

Regulatory mechanisms – need offline conversation with agency staff
Next steps?
EPA road map
Regulatory tools
Project tracking
Capturing credit
Need for HD to
Don’t reinvent the wheel
Get component re mechanics of survey requirements out
Meeting/call with agencies
Need to focus on identifying mitigation opportunities and eelgrass restoration opportunities
Pieces of the puzzle – when is it appropriate to change 1 habitat to eelgrass
Dilapidated docks converted, removed (low hanging fruit)
Is the potential opportunity to restore eelgrass, take what you’ve got, use part of it before
CEMP does contemplate different w/temp & permanent
Possible eelgrass management fee?