Bay Restoration Plan Workshops – Summary Notes

Consolidated Notes from Phase 1

Governing Board, Watershed Advisory Council, and public participants

Two workshops are summarized together in the following notes. The consolidation of this set of workshops is collectively called "Phase 1" of the BRP revision process and was focused on input on suggestions for priorities of the new Bay Restoration Plan (BRP) with some supplemental ideas for program or project level priorities as well. On 19 October 2017, a workshop was held with Governing Board (GB) members during the scheduled GB meeting. Additionally, online comments were received up to several days after the GB meeting. On 8 November 2017, a Watershed Advisory Council (WAC) meeting and workshop was held that also incorporated members of the public. Members of the public participated in the workshop sub-groups in a similar manner as WAC members and several additional members of the public also filled out the open online survey. Comments from any and all participants as well as online survey responses are all treated the same in the following notes.

One overarching suggestion common to all of the workshops and online surveys was that all three Priority Areas should remain important to the SMBNEP. There was discussion that there is overlap between the three Priority Areas and that they are not necessarily independent (i.e. Water Quality is part of both Natural Resources and Human Health) and that many objectives fit within all three Priority Areas and should not necessarily be categorized into one or the other. The current BRP structure may not be adequate to address that linkage. There were suggestions about not separating the three Priority Areas, with an alternate suggestion of identifying the link of each particular goal to each or all three priorities throughout the document. Alternatively, the tradeoffs between the Priority Areas (e.g. benefits to humans may come at the cost of those to wildlife) were also discussed. Another common theme emerging during the discussions was determining if it would be possible to prioritize or highlight some goals or objectives over others to have a list of priority actions, rather than a lengthy list of objectives or milestones. There was general consensus from each workshop that the BRP should be consolidated and simplified to be more easily understood and implemented.

Climate change was an important and prevalent theme emerging from all group discussions and across all priority areas. There was discussion on how to incorporate it into the BRP, either as its own priority area or within / throughout the entire document. It was identified as a priority under which all topics should be linked, especially by incorporating the results of the Climate Change Vulnerability Analysis (CCVA). Additionally, several suggestions were made to have the new BRP address the data gaps in climate change stressors, applying the understanding gained from climate change analyses to management actions, and to increase resilience to climate change as a required component of all applicable actions throughout the BRP.

Additional general discussion occurred about the process of the BRP revision itself, and requests for clarity on the overall process of the BRP revision. Lastly, there were general suggestions regarding expanding funding sources including additional bonds, new leveraging or partnership opportunities, and public education opportunities related to funding. The following summaries are broken down by Priority Area, but are not necessarily only specific to that priority (some are cross-cutting between several priority areas). Specific suggestions are included as bullet points.

Priority Area: Water Quality

Each of the workshops reinforced general agreement that water quality should remain an important priority area for the SMBNEP. In general, most agreed that the correct aspects of water quality are currently being prioritized, with some exceptions and therefore the need for modifications of objectives. Some new suggestions were tied to emerging contaminants, and the list of contaminants put together by each workshop was similar. Suggestions also focused on helping our region become more water independent, whether through stormwater treatment and reuse, water conservation, water recycling, or other methods of increasing local water supply. Lastly, a focus on water quality and availability in the context of climate change was identified as important, and there were suggestions to evaluate the potential to "retire" objectives that may be completed (e.g. those tied to specific point-source discharges).

New Suggestions or Modifications to Existing Objectives

- Support collaborative projects (e.g. under Goal #1, but could also apply to other priorities)
    - Example: LVMWD's JPA project to eliminate discharges to Malibu Creek and augment drinking water, which has public support, is multi-benefit, and needs funding.
    - Potentially split Goal #1 into regulatory vs watershed-planning/implementation
    - Include more multi-benefit projects
    - Include more of what the agencies are already doing – e.g. LA San.
- Conduct more harmful algal blooms (HAB) and red tide studies, and evaluation of mitigation and prevention measures
- Bioaccumulation of toxics in seafood
- Microbial water quality assessments
- Water accessibility
- Stormwater (treatment, reuse, and infiltration)
    - Another specific example brought up repeatedly – use of fire retardants / chemicals and impacts / analyses of impacts on downstream water bodies
- Follow up on existing TMDLs to incorporate new science to refine policy
    - Ex: UCLA study that suggests that invasive species could have significantly more negative impacts on benthic macroinvertebrate communities than nutrients
    - What are the policy feedback loops?
    - Identify potential milestones such as new science, new evaluations, revised policies, etc.
    - Focus analyses on invasive species, not just nutrients
- Connection of water quality to public health impacts – studies and prevention of impacts
- Suggestion that the principle focus of WQ should not be human health and hygiene but ecological health. WQ should be quality water for the ecosystem and not just people
    - WQ must not be defined for human use only. TMDL's that harm humans benefit some wildlife.
- Pair water quality objectives practically with water uses / standards

    - E.g. if water quality objective is to a Rec 1 standard when Rec 1 is not allowed in that water body, and vice versa.
- More grant opportunities for MS4 permitees.
- More studies to advance WQ and effective monitoring
- More beach projects like SaMo – consider adding more projects that have coastal / climate resiliency as focus – e.g. SLR transition zones, mitigation projects; include climate change
- Keep Goal #3 (emerging contaminants) – new additions, e.g.
    - Chemicals and pesticides without current regulations
    - New chemicals/pesticides
    - Fipronil
    - Flame retardants
    - Pharmaceutical contaminants / medicines
    - Microfibers and microplastics
    - Draft litter prevention – CA Litter Prevention Strategy
    - Source control (design studies around source)
- Water conservation / recycling / reuse – water independence
    - Greywater
        - Education opportunities – e.g. toxic soaps
    - Rejuvenation of hydrologic cycle or naturalized hydrologic cycle
    - More efforts for increasing permeability of urban areas – groundwater replenishment; recharge
- Coastal wetland restoration can improve water quality
- Daylighting creeks
- Trash and plastics – Ballona Creek and Marina as sources
- More analysis on transitional habitats as buffer for SLR
- Identify/acknowledge different inputs to the Bay – e.g. Ballona basin, mountain watersheds
- Consider how to triage importance of WQ issues
- Debate on both sides of copper TMDL project
- Base regulations on sound science
- Carbon neutrality
- Increase public education objectives on things like trash
- Link BRP goals with LA City Sustainability goals (e.g. water)
- Additional WQ outreach and education objectives (e.g. Marina dredging and Ballona Creek sediment contamination)
- How to improve compliance and enforcement with environmental regulations

Priority Area: Natural Resources

All workshops reinforced general agreement that natural resources and habitat restoration / protection should remain important priority areas for the SMBNEP. In general, there was also strong agreement that the current list of seven habitats from the State of the Bay Report should all remain as priority areas within the revised BRP. Some individuals felt the current list was comprehensive, while others

suggested the possible additions of several new habitats. Many groups suggested the importance of invasive species control remaining as a priority, with several specific examples, while several other individuals identified it as less of a priority or not one at all. Many suggested continuing to base invasive species removal on sound science.

Again, climate change remained a prevalent theme throughout the groups, with a discussion of how to prioritize projects that increase climate resilience for both habitat protection / restoration and as an adaptive management opportunity to protect infrastructure or other human uses. Other topical discussions centered around fire management (more research and evaluation of different fire management strategies) and some of the resulting impacts. A balance of human use goals with wildlife / habitat goals was also discussed.

New Suggestions or Modifications to Existing Objectives

- Add uplands and mountains (e.g. Santa Monica Mountains) as an additional habitat type
    - Alternately "headwaters and uplands" or "watershed" as a habitat type
    - Consider also transition areas
    - Grasslands and woodlands are not considered enough (e.g. uplands) as a habitat type
    - Upland chaparral, coastal sage scrub
    - Coastal live oak forests
    - Naturalized upland habitats
- Consider urban areas ("urban systems" or "urban watersheds" / urban parks / channelized streams / green streets as habitats. Add urban communities or urban areas as an additional habitat type
    - Prioritize interface between urbanized areas and coastal residential areas – coastal / urban interface
    - "domestic landscapes"
    - "coastal parks"
- Include stormwater outfalls as potential habitat areas – suggestion that they could be seasonal/temporary wetlands that are important areas for birds/wildlife but they are bulldozed all the time and covered up.
    - Specific example: Rustic Creek (Chatauqua outfall)
- Consider changing / advising policies tied to beach management
- Bluffs are an important habitat that tended to be undervalued in last BRP or the milestones weren't achieved at least – add more re: bluff restorations as priority, including bluff ecology
- Consider geology of coastline and hydrology of coastal slopes into entire BRP and planning
- Marina Del Rey as a habitat area
- Identify more areas for protection
- Emphasize natural resources more towards wildlife
- Special status species are important – should have more milestones/tasks tied to more of them
    - Ex: call out for Western Snowy Plover as important (habitat, benefits, nesting)
    - Include other specific species (no others named by group)
- Roll over milestone 5.2a – prioritize acquisition of natural resources for preservation
    - Add additional potential milestone to synthesize/compile data

    - Ex: Del Rey Point development adjacent to Ballona Creek – currently a natural area
    - Include an evaluation criteria to rank priority
        - Rank the acquisition based on ecological value and then go seek funding
    - Land Acquisition: partner to get a land acquisition inventory (e.g. SCCRWP and others), to keep in mind and prioritize based on valuation criteria, potential buyers, etc.
- Consider milestones related to advocacy
- Formalize more programs for kids/students tied to education and raising awareness of natural resources – go to schools, help schools travel to nature
    - Outreach and education for children very important, especially disadvantaged communities
- Incorporate climate change
    - More beach projects like SaMo – consider adding more projects that have coastal / climate resiliency as focus – e.g. SLR transition zones, mitigation projects
    - Additional focus on climate adaptation in understanding protection and restoration of habitats
- More public outreach and education are needed about what defines a healthy ecosystem
- Don't include objectives tied to bulldozing
- To address flood control and global warming, a large hatchery should be constructed
- Build more nearshore structures (e.g., artificial reefs)
    - Conduct research opportunities
- Conduct urban ecology
- Install osprey nesting poles (e.g. Upper Newport Bay)
- Record all the pipes draining gray water along the coast and other illegal drains (e.g. Malibu and septic system drains).
- Improve monitoring through better education and internet sources.
- Use keystone or indicator species (e.g., osprey, harbor seal, dolphins, etc.) as way to assess success. If present, then things are improving.
    - In line with USFWS, the State of California should change regulation and allow sea otters south of Pt Conception.
    - Increase coordination w/USFWS and others on sea otters and other sensitive sps
- Remove Rindge Dam and improve steelhead habitat and monitoring
- Habitats should be the main concern (of the BRP?)
- Provide raw data online
    - Education is very important – Educational objectives tied to not spreading invasives and increasing awareness
    - Always use science-based decision making for invasives – sometimes herbicides needed
    - Conduct research on invasives to determine which are priorities and which may have become useful
    - Consider return on investment of invasives vs natives; focus on protection of natives instead?
- Suggestion that SM Bay is not an Estuary and is thus inappropriately named. Same with the term "restoration"
- Research fire regimes and management

    - Consider fire in combination w/climate change and resulting impacts (e.g. erosion, flooding, drought)
    - Scientific evaluation of Phos-Chek versus land management strategies – impacts
- Incorporate research project by Pepperdine and MRT quantifying invasive species impacts on Malibu Creek Watershed – use to target objectives for invasive species control of spread
    - Suggest cooperative multi-agency effort
- Discharges to streams
    - Especially concerned with HAB's and cyanobacteria
    - Make sure treatments of WQ issues are not harmful to aquatic community (e.g. copper sulfate)
    - Fertilizers and residential pesticide use
- Consider adding atmospheric rivers and air quality concerns – dry deposition may be important – suggest partnering with air quality control boards
- Consider how to triage / prioritize importance of habitats
- Explicit recognition of protecting natural resources for the benefit of wildlife
- Consider global drivers as priority areas for research such as oceanographic monitoring
- Add AES wetlands in Redondo Beach
- Promote additional land acquisition
- Biodiversity index tied to goals

Priority Area: Benefits and Values to Humans

All workshops reinforced general agreement that benefits and values to humans should remain an important priority area for the SMBNEP, with the exception of one member of the public. Water conservation, capture, reuse were all important components that frequently came up in discussions. Additionally, there was some discussion of the tradeoffs between benefits to people and benefits to habitats/wildlife and that there should be a balance. Many agreed that multi-benefit projects should continue to be prioritized, especially in the context of the BRP "Priority Areas".

New Suggestions or Modifications to Existing Objectives

- Incorporate SLR issues and managed retreat into planning
- Use natural processes for flood protection
- Use anthropogenic options for flood protection (e.g. Ballona Creek levees)
- Tie climate change and flood protection more strongly together
- Encourage, develop, and promote ecotourism
- Conduct more public outreach – it's important
- Connect people more to where water starts and ends (e.g. Ballona Creek start @ Ferndale Park)
- Add as #1 Action: Find projects that do all of the following
    1) Protection of public health,
    2) Maintain/increase natural flood protection though ecologically functioning floodplains and wetlands,
    3) Increase public access to beaches and open space,
    4) Conserve water and increase local water supply
- Need to combine multi benefits and not address each priority separately
- Additional priorities:
    - Climate resiliency
    - Response to sea level rise
    - Landscape resilience
    - Environmental justice
- Consider economic evaluations as part of implementation feasibility
- Reduce trash and debris
    - Reduction of microplastics to beaches and coastal waters
- Include climate adaptation and community protection through living shorelines and habitat protection and enhancement; more climate resiliency projects
    - Consider more projects like SaMo beach restoration – combination of public awareness, resiliency, habitat benefits
    - Similar suggestion: conduct more projects combining efforts for natural resource protection and benefits to people (e.g. bringing people to coast, example again: SaMo beach restoration project)
- Keep existing list of objectives
- Include a new sustainable recreational fishery in the Santa Monica Bay
- Recycle/reuse of wastewater to increase supply; decrease discharge through outfalls; wastewater treatment plants still important

    - Increase recycling in residential areas
- Reuse/capture of stormwater should stay as a high priority (increase local water supply)
- Consider regulatory incentive programs – tap into
- Improve public communication, education, and outreach
    - Incorporate or link across multiple actions throughout the BRP
- Goal #12 important – consider adding streams and other aquatic/riparian habitats
- Goal #13 is still very important – group consensus, but keep it in mind of protection of sensitive habitats – make sure there is a balance between habitat/people
    - Include public education objectives
- Public restroom facilities (recent Hep A outbreak) – sanitation is important / human health concerns tied to water quality beneficial uses
- Consider sand as public health concern
- Consider more infrastructure vulnerability / protection for flooding issues
- Climate change resiliency – protection of coastal infrastructure via living shorelines

Comments on Process

- Consider consolidating some of the numerous milestones, objectives, and even lumping similar goals to reduce the amount of text and number of goals/objectives/milestones
- Identification of the lead, support, etc., entity is important in the BRP. How will that be determined?
- Suggest laying out the process in a slide or graphic so that everyone has the whole picture of the BRP revision moving forward
    - Show how decisions are made on each objective/milestone
    - Need to lay out specifically what each of the next two WAC meetings will focus on
- When can we comment on the structure of the management conference?
- What are the limits of each SMBNEP partner – e.g. can each contribute to advocacy?
- Would like opportunity to comment on BRP revision process
- Review the "action" words in each of the objectives/milestones
- Liked the group setting
- Suggest laying out the process in a slide or graphic so that everyone has the whole picture of the BRP revision moving forward

New Partnership Suggestions

- NOAA
- New bond measures
- Bight program / SCCWRP
- Santa Monica Stormwater Coalition