Santa Monica Review Team Preliminary Findings
April 24, 2019

I. **Addressing challenges in the 2014 PE Letter**
   a. Financial Management
      i. SMBNEP has turned this into a strength during this review period by diversifying its network of partners and sources of funding, including State Bond programs, grants, fundraising, corporate/private donations, etc. These efforts translated to an average of 29:1 in leveraged resources.
   b. Outreach and Public Involvement
      i. Resignation of SMBRC ED in 2016 was an effort to clarify NEP's role and responsibility in relation to its partners. Explanations of each partner entities are captured in multiple documents. This is still being addressed as part of the ongoing CCMP revision process.
      ii. WAC continues to be the vehicle for public participation to submit input on CCMP and workplan items. The public is also able to provide general comments at GB and EC meetings. Their role is also being considered as part of the CCMP revision process.
      iii. Increased outreach and communication to the entire MC by providing access to agenda, minutes, reports, and other documents for all meetings conducted by the NEP governance bodies and their host entity (TBF).

II. **Perceived Strengths**
   a. Competent and well-managed staff to help implement CCMP.
   b. Staff engages stakeholders through outreach and volunteer events and ~~manages to~~ keeps information publicly available via website and various social media platforms.
   c. Governing Board is a diverse representation of the study area ~~and amplifies the work throughout~~.
   d. Diverse partnerships allowing for stronger financial stability and long-term sustainability.
   e. Research projects have strong scientific basis. Data and results are disseminated via conferences and publications.
   f. Demonstrated leader on multiple fronts, providing meaningful results to support CCMP goals such as trash reduction; stormwater projects; public trainings; and utilizing volunteer groups for habitat restoration (kelp forest, beach, dune, etc.)

Commented [YE1]: Could improve amplification

III. **Perceived Challenges**
   a. SMBNEP as an independent, autonomous entity rather than composed of 3 distinct entities (SMBRC, SMBRA, TBF)
      i. *Has there been consideration to incorporate existing SMBRC governance structure (GB, EC, TAC, WAC)--or something analogous-- under its host entity, TBF?*
      ii. *Is there interest to consolidate NEP-business into one dedicated website with a unified logo along with its own set of operating procedures, by-laws, staff breakdown and position descriptions?*
   b. WAC meetings can be improved to better serve its intended function
      i. *Will hiring a meeting facilitator help to make meetings less contentious and more productive?*
      ii. *Will adopting 'rules of engagement' promote more effective dialogue and allow for reaching consensus and outcomes?*
      ~~ii.~~ iii. *Would having topic specific advisory groups improve public participation?*
      ~~iii.~~ iv. *In terms of encouraging greater public participation and access, has webcasting been considered?*
   c. *Any current/future plans for developing an economic/environmental valuation of NEP resources?*

i. This could be a valuable way make the case for additional partners and funding to continue making worthwhile investments, particularly in light of climate change.
ii. Another way to reinforce that the NEP is a collective voice of the larger community it serves, made up of many entities large and small.

d. *Is there a succession plan (e.g., Continuity of Operations Plan) in place in the event that fires, floods, earthquakes, other disasters prevent the NEP from operating fully?*

Commented [YE2]: Why are these perceived challenges? Can these be labeled as questions or suggestions?

IV. Additional documentation, questions

a. Requests below are associated with the Performance school Measures document
   i. On page 2 under Financial Management, the NEP talks about a Finance Plan currently undergoing a revision.
      1. ***Is a copy of an existing one included in the attachments? If not, please provide a pdf or a link.***
   ii. On page 26 under Assessment and Monitoring, the 2 items are missing from your responses related to a Monitoring Plan (see page 18 of PE Guidance).
      1. ***Is a copy of an existing Monitoring Plan included in the attachments? If not, please provide a pdf or a link.***
   iii. Page 28 under Reporting discusses different conditions associated with habitats and other priorities associated with the State of the Bay Report.
      1. *Is there consideration to incorporate a web-based GIS data display (i.e. watershed atlas) for more timely reporting of conditions?*

b. Requests below are associated with the Narrative report
   i. On page 6 of the Narrative Report, approximately 71% of Section 320 funds ($2,102,591 out of $2,965,200) was devoted for program staff salary.
      1. ***How many staff does this support? Please provide this breakdown either annually or over the course of the 5-year period.***
   ii. *Was monitoring after the Arroyo Sequit Fish Passage project determined that this was a successful effort?*

Commented [YE3]: there are currently about 13 or 14 TBF staff. A portion of their time is paid w/ 320 $. This fluctuates year-year depending on the projects and staffing levels. What specifically do you want to see? Or what is required? This info is in each workplan. I suggest we look there instead of having them develop more documents

V. Site visit

a. Which projects should the Review Team consider visiting?
   i. Potential stops include those associated with restoration (Ballona, beach/dunes, kelp), water quality/nutrients (rain gardens, rain harvesting), or affected by fires to see how they've recovered (or not).
   ii. Preferable to incorporate visits with opportunity for discussion with MC along the way, if possible.

b. How long the visit should be?
   i. Tentatively plan around Tuesday to Thursday timeframe. Need to finalize dates.
   ii. East 'coast' travelers will need to travel no later than Monday and Friday.