



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: First District
Department No.: 011
For Agenda Of: July 3, 2007
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Time: 30 minutes
Continued Item: Yes
If Yes, date from: May 15
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Board Member Supervisor Carbajal
Contact Info: Jeremy Tittle: Executive Assistant, 568-2186

SUBJECT: Wetlands Recovery Project Information Item

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Other Concurrence: Select_Other

As to form: No

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

Set a hearing on 7/3/07 for the Board of Supervisors to receive and file an informational report on the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project. Estimated time is 30 minutes.

Summary Text:

In 1993, then Governor Pete Wilson issued Executive Order W-59-93 that established the State of California Comprehensive Wetlands Policy. This policy rested on three primary objectives:

- 1) To ensure no overall net loss and long-term net gain in the quantity, quality, and permanence of wetlands acreage and values in California.
- 2) To reduce procedural complexity in the administration of State and Federal wetlands conservation programs.
- 3) To encourage partnerships to make restoration, landowner incentive programs and cooperative planning efforts the primary focus of wetlands conservation.

The Governor's policy called for the establishment of regional partnerships to focus on wetlands in the Central Valley, the San Francisco Bay Area and in Southern California. The Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project (WRP) was born of Governor Wilson's Comprehensive Wetlands Policy.

The WRP is a broad-based partnership, chaired by the California Resources Agency and supported by the State Coastal Conservancy, that has public agencies, non-profits, scientists, and local communities working cooperatively to acquire and restore wetlands, rivers, and streams in coastal southern California.

The WRP's geographic scope is the California Bight, from Point Conception in Santa Barbara County to the international border with Mexico, which includes California's five south coast counties. The coastal wetlands of the Bight are of vital ecological, hydrological, and economic significance and have been nominated as "Wetlands of International Importance" under the Ramsar Convention. Noted biologist E.O. Wilson has declared the region to be one of the world's 18 "hotspots" due to threatened biodiversity- the only one on the continent. It is estimated that 75 to 90 percent of Bight wetlands have been lost.

Despite their recognized importance, historic efforts to acquire, restore and protect southern California's coastal wetlands were uncoordinated, piecemeal, and disappointing. Early restoration efforts focused on individual wetlands, involving people in the surrounding communities with specific interests in particular wetlands. There was no comprehensive, region-wide focus recognizing the important interrelationships among all southern California wetlands.

The Wetlands Recovery Project established a process to bring interested parties together to develop a coordinated, systematic, regional and ecosystem-based approach to wetland protection. In 1997, with the execution of a memorandum of understanding, 19 federal and state agencies developed an organizational framework and committed to designing and implementing a Regional Strategy for acquisition and restoration plan in order to increase the quantity and quality of the region's wetlands.

The organizational framework (Attachment – Organizational Chart) consists of: The **Governing Board**, chaired by the Secretary of the State Resources Agency and comprised of top officials from the 19 state and federal partner agencies as well as chairs of the Science Advisory Panel and Public Advisory Committee, is the overarching policy making body for the WRP. The **Managers Group**, high level staff representing Board members, identifies for the Board a set of projects and activities to implement the Regional Strategy, facilitates interagency coordination, and generates policy proposals for the Board's consideration. The **Science Advisory Panel (SAP)** is comprised of leading researchers and practitioners in fields related to wetlands science and works to identify key scientific questions for research funding, develops position papers for the Board's consideration, and helps to ensure that the WRP's actions are informed by sound science. The **Public Advisory Committee**, consisting of local elected officials, community environmental leaders, business people, and educators, engenders support for wetlands recovery throughout the region and represents community interests in the WRP Partnership. The final arm of the WRP is the innovative structure of five **County Task Forces** which endows the WRP with its distinctive vitality. Each is co-chaired by a County Supervisor and community member, both of whom sit on the Public Advisory Committee. The Task Forces provide a county-wide forum for public, private, and non-profit wetlands and watershed stakeholders.

The long-term vision of the WRP is to reestablish a mosaic of functioning wetland and riparian systems that supports a diversity of fish and wildlife species. Projects completed from the WRP's inception in 1997 through March 2007 have resulted in the acquisition of almost 6,585 acres and the restoration or enhancement of 800 acres. More than \$500 million have been dedicated to WRP projects, including \$330 million in state funds, \$30 million in federal funds, and \$147 million in local and private funds.

The WRP promotes acquisition, restoration, and enhancement projects in coastal wetlands and coastal watersheds in Southern California. The WRP helps identify funding and provides technical support for all phases of project development and implementation including planning, environmental review, permitting, and construction. The WRP focuses its efforts on projects that help implement the Regional Strategy for Wetland Recovery. High priorities for the WRP include:



- Acquisition and restoration of
 - tidal wetlands and contiguous transitional and upland habitat
 - floodplain habitat

- riparian areas significantly contributing to watershed function
- Restoration of ecological functions in coastal watersheds (e.g., reconnection of stream corridor to floodplain, stream stabilization, invasive species management, etc.).

WRP regional partners have made significant progress implementing the WRP Work Plan projects. Here are some of the recent major accomplishments:

- **Caulerpa Eradication:** The Southern California Caulerpa Action Team has declared *Caulerpa* eradicated from Aqua Hediondo Lagoon.
- **Upper Newport Bay:** The groundbreaking for the ecosystem enhancement and dredging project at Upper Newport Bay was held in fall of 2005. The enhancement project is expected to be completed in 2007.
- **Bolsa Chica Restoration:** Restoration of the Bolsa Chica wetlands began in October 2004 and is under construction. Adjacent upland habitat was recently acquired with funds from Wildlife Conservation Board.
- **Los Cerritos Wetlands:** The Cities of Seal Beach and Long Beach, the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and the Coastal Conservancy have formed a Joint Powers Authority to acquire wetland properties and manage the restoration.
- **Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project:** Restoration planning is underway, a subcommittee of the WRP Science Advisory Panel was created to advise the project on scientific issues, including developing a monitoring program.
- **Solstice Creek Fish Passage Project:** The National Park Service removed seven fish passage barriers during the fall and winter of 2005. Caltrans and the City of Malibu plan to remove the two remaining barriers over the next two years.
- **Ormond Beach Wetlands Acquisition and Restoration** – The Coastal Conservancy, the Wildlife Conservation Board, and the Nature Conservancy acquired the 276-acre MWD property.
- **Carpinteria Salt Marsh, Basin I Implementation:** The Land Trust of Santa Barbara County completed restoration of tidal channels and the tidal inlet in September 2005.
- **Steelhead Stream Restoration** – Several steelhead recovery restoration projects moved forward this year, in addition to Solstice Creek (above), projects were funded on Trabuco, Las Flores, Carpinteria, Arroyo Burro and Arroyo Hondo Creeks.

A total of forty three Work Plan projects have been completed since the inception of the WRP in 1997. These projects have resulted in the protection of approximately 6,585 acres and the enhancement of more than 800 acres throughout the region. Six of these projects are in Santa Barbara County, as the table below illustrates.

Project	Type of Project	Amount
Carpinteria Salt Marsh, Basin 1 Enhancement Plan	Planning	\$100,000
Santa Barbara Urban Streams & Wetlands Restoration Project	Restoration	\$322,000
Summerland/Greenwell Preserve Restoration	Restoration	\$181,827
Goleta Slough Tidal Restoration Study	Study	\$308,000
Devereux Slough/Ellwood Mesa Regional Plan	Planning	\$844,450
Arroyo Hondo Ranch Acquisition	Acquisition	\$6,176,000
Total Amount Brought into County		\$7,932,277

In addition, through the Wetlands Recovery Project's Small Grant Program, an additional \$309,885 in restoration funding has been brought into the County for small community-based projects since 2001. The table below illustrates these projects.

Small Grants Program: Santa Barbara Projects

Project Name	Amount Awarded
Refugio Creek Arundo Removal Project	\$9,500
Carpinteria Creek Steelhead Barrier Project	\$17,825
Goleta Slough Borgaro Parcel Transaction	\$10,000
Native Plant Nursery	\$30,000
Devereux Slough North Shore Margin Restoration	\$28,820
Goleta Slough High Marsh Restoration Project	\$12,000
Creek Watchers-Latino Outreach	\$29,990
Arroyo Burro Watershed Enhancement Project	\$10,000
Creek Watchers Stream Team	\$15,000
Coal Oil Point Reserve West Slough Margin Restoration	\$24,000
Goleta Slough Watershed Stream Walking Program	\$12,200
Camino Lindo Vernal Pool Restoration	\$21,950
Mission Creek Fish Passage Improvement Project	\$25,700
Arroyo Hondo Preserve W. Riparian Corridor Control & Restoration	\$8,000
Storke Ranch Vernal Pool Restoration	\$24,900
West Storke Wetland Enhancement	\$30,000
TOTAL	\$309,885

Finally, the WRP with its stakeholders has identified \$10 million in additional wetland restoration needs in Santa Barbara County, as the following table illustrates.

Current Projects

Project	Type of Project	Amount	Status
Carpinteria Creek Restoration Project	Restoration	\$412,000	Funded
Carpinteria Creek Arundo Removal	Restoration	\$197,430	Funded
Carpinteria Salt Marsh, Basin 1 Implementation	Restoration	\$1,994,500	Funded
Arroyo Burro Estuary & Mesa Creek Restoration	Restoration	\$1,089,000	Funded
Arroyo Burro Restoration at Los Positas	Planning	\$270,000	Needs Funding
Arroyo Burro Arundo Removal	Restoration	\$99,930	Funded
Mission Creek Museum Area Restoration Plan	Planning	\$148,000	Funded
UCSB Campus Lagoon Enhancements	Restoration	\$132,285	Funded
Western Goleta Slough Wetland Restoration	Restoration	\$1,799,250	Partial Funding
Goleta Slough Tidal Restoration Demonstration	Restoration	\$750,000	Funded
Maria Ygnacio Fish Passage Project	Planning	\$80,000	Needs Funding
Devereux Slough Restoration	Restoration	\$1,766,800	Needs Funding
Montecito Fish Passage	Planning	\$475,000	Needs Funding
Lower Refugio Creek Restoration	Restoration	\$222,980	Needs Funding
Arroyo Hondo Creek Steelhead Habitat Enhancement	Restoration	\$1,081,140	Funded
Total Amount Brought into District		\$10,518,315	

As it enters its second decade, the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project looks forward to continuing its work with local stakeholders to protect and restore the significant wetland resources in Santa Barbara County.

Attachments:

WRP Organizational Chart

Authored by:

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