

Appendix B. Key Project Milestones for the Tidal Wetland Project (2003-2006)

2003

Funding, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Coastal Impact Assistance Program grant to the California Department of Fish and Game and University of California-Santa Cruz, October 2003

Amount Awarded: \$300,000

Grant Duration: October 2003 - February 2007

Grant Activities: Project activities focused on the hiring of a Tidal Wetland Project Coordinator, creation of management and technical project teams to guide restoration planning efforts, development of research summaries to assist wetland planning efforts, identification of and meeting with key stakeholders, and setting of restoration goals.

2004

Personnel, Hiring of Tidal Wetland Project Coordinator, April 2004

Teams, Creation of Strategic Planning Team and Science Panel, July 2004

Meeting, Strategic Planning Team, September 17, 2004

Purpose: Understand Elkhorn Slough habitat changes and discuss restoration planning.

Outcomes: Amended and adopted the structure of the decision-making team, planning process, and began discussing the overall project vision.

Meeting, Community, October 13, 2004 (morning)

Purpose: Launch the Elkhorn Slough Tidal Wetland Planning Process through a series of presentations.

Outcome: Awareness of Elkhorn Slough estuarine habitat loss and degradation over time and the new planning process that will help address the major impacts.

Meeting, Science Panel, October 13, 2004 (afternoon)

Purpose: Provide a critical review of the potential causes behind estuarine habitat and hydrological trends in Elkhorn Slough.

Outcomes: Creation of several Working Groups (Hydrodynamics, Historical Ecology, Ecological Characterization and Changes, Human Use and Socioeconomic Patterns, Conceptual Model, Groundwater, and Public Information) and tasks (i.e. summary documents) that each group could accomplish.

Meeting, Science Panel (Hydrodynamic Working Group), November 12, 2004

Purpose: Discuss how hydrodynamic models could help predict hydrological changes of potential restoration alternatives based on existing data.

Outcomes: Recommendations about strategies to incorporate bathymetric, sediment, and watershed data into a hydrodynamic model.

Meeting, Strategic Planning Team, November 18, 2004

Purpose: Revise the planning framework and select guiding principles to prioritize habitat goals.

Outcomes: Agreement on a consensus decision-making strategy, planning process framework, and public involvement.

Meeting, Science Panel (Historical Ecology Working Group), November 22, 2004

Purpose: Come to a shared understanding of past historical changes (interpretation of sediment cores and historical maps) in order to create a 1-5 page summary.

Outcomes: Evaluation of concepts for the historical ecology document.

Meeting, Science Panel (Ecological Characterization and Changes), November 22, 2004

Purpose: Create, revise, and review a document that characterizes key estuarine habitats and species (including threatened and endangered) and biological trends in Elkhorn Slough.

Outcomes: Revised estuarine habitat document.

2005

Meeting, Science Panel, January 6, 2005

Purpose: Come to an understanding of the key physical processes causing current changes to estuarine habitats (with an emphasis on habitat erosion in the main channel of Elkhorn Slough).

Outcomes: Agreement on key mechanisms of habitat erosion, decision about external review needs and strategies, list of recent causes of estuarine habitat change, and discussion about the range of options to predict outcomes of no-action scenarios.

Meeting, Strategic Planning Team, January 26, 2005

Purpose: Reach agreement on guiding principles and strategic planning tenets and discuss the next stages of the planning process.

Outcomes: Understanding of Science Panel draft summaries, agreement on guiding principles and planning tenets, and creation of draft habitat goals and large-scale alternatives.

Meeting, Joint Science Panel and Strategic Planning Team (Field Trip), March 4, 2005

Purpose: Discuss the major changes to biological communities and alterations at each site and potential opportunities to restore or enhance both natural processes and habitat functions.

Outcomes: Shared understanding of past changes and recent estuarine habitat trends and ideas about possible conservation and restoration actions.

Meeting, Community (Friends of Moss Landing Public Seminar), March 9, 2005

Purpose: Provide information about historic changes and research of Elkhorn Slough tidal wetlands through a series of presentations.

Outcome: Enhanced public awareness about Elkhorn Slough estuarine habitat loss and degradation over time and how past changes and current research are vital in guiding conservation and restoration efforts.

Meeting, Joint Science Panel and Strategic Planning Team, April 13, 2005

Purpose: Characterize the likely future trends for habitats (unrestricted tidal flow) in the Elkhorn Slough watershed for a no action management alternative and discuss potential large-scale alternatives to reverse undesirable trends.

Outcomes: Consensus statements predicting likely future trends for channel, mudflat, and salt marsh/tidal creek habitats, discussion that justifies the need to reverse the current trends, and a list of potential large-scale alternatives to reverse undesirable trends.

Meeting, Strategic Planning Team, May 5, 2005

Purpose: Come to consensus on a vision statement and create a draft list of broad goals for estuarine habitats in the Elkhorn Slough watershed.

Outcomes: Consensus agreement on a vision statement, draft list of project goals, and statement that the 50-year habitat trends are not acceptable and therefore a no-action alternative is not an acceptable course of action.

Major Decision, Strategic Planning Team Consensus Statement that the 50-year habitat trends are not acceptable and therefore a no-action alternative is not an acceptable course of action for Elkhorn Slough, May 5, 2005

Major Decision, Joint Science Panel and Strategic Planning Team Consensus Statement on 50-year Estuarine Habitat Predictions, May 16, 2005

Meeting, Joint Science Panel and Strategic Planning Team, June 8, 2005

Purpose: Discuss the feasibility of potential large-scale restoration alternatives to reverse undesirable estuarine habitat trends.

Outcomes: Refined list of potential large-scale restoration alternatives that would reduce estuarine habitat loss and degradation and preliminary evaluation of how each potential alternative could slow, stop, or reverse each estuarine habitat trend.

Meeting, Strategic Planning Team, July 18, 2005

Purpose: Come to consensus on vision, goals, and guiding principles statements for estuarine habitats in the Elkhorn Slough watershed.

Outcomes: Consensus agreement on vision, goals, and guiding principles statements.

Major Decision, Strategic Planning Team Consensus Statement on Tidal Wetland Project Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Strategic Planning Principles, July 29, 2005

Meeting, Joint Science Panel and Strategic Planning Team, August 9, 2005

Purpose: Predict water quality trends and discuss potential restoration alternatives.

Outcomes: Draft statements predicting likely water quality trends for selected potential management alternatives (including no action) and identification of potential restoration projects that could be initiated soon.

Meeting, Joint Science Panel and Strategic Planning Team, September 28, 2005

Purpose: Discuss and narrow down the list of potential restoration alternatives based on technical evaluations and items needed to further evaluate combinations.

Outcomes: Revised list of combinations of potential restoration alternatives, identification of what is needed to evaluate selected combinations, and prioritization of project funding needs.

2006

Funding, David and Lucile Packard Foundation and Resources Legacy Fund Foundation, January 2006

Amount Awarded: \$1,200,000

Grant Activities: Project activities center on the evaluation of large-scale restoration alternatives using an ecosystem-based management (EBM) approach. The analysis of options to conserve and restore Elkhorn Slough estuarine habitats will include predictions about changes to tidal hydrodynamics, morphology, estuarine habitats and species, water quality, socioeconomic values, and political constraints. The main result of this project will be agreement by Tidal Wetland Project teams about preferred restoration strategies that are science-based, politically and economically feasible, and supported by the community in the long-term.

Grant Duration: January 2006 – January 2009

Meeting, Strategic Planning Team, January 23, 2006

Purpose: Make decisions to guide the next three years of strategic planning for Elkhorn Slough tidal wetland restoration and conservation activities.

Outcomes: Agreement about whether to proceed with Parsons Slough restoration planning, discussion about long-term strategies to evaluate large-scale restoration and conservation alternatives, and draft timeline of project efforts for 2006-2011.

Major Decision, Strategic Planning Team Consensus Statement, January 23, 2006

Consensus decision to obtain funding for Parsons Slough restoration planning. Decision about project priorities (time/funding allocation) for the next few years - creating detailed descriptions and evaluating large-scale conservation and restoration alternatives (45% effort), planning a Parsons Slough restoration project (45% effort), and conducting restoration experiments and research and monitoring (10% effort).

Meeting, Joint Science Panel and Strategic Planning Team, February 22, 2006

Purpose: Understand the characteristics of estuarine habitat areas that receive varying levels of tidal exchange and identify areas of certainty and uncertainty regarding mechanisms of tidal marsh loss.

Outcomes: Enhanced knowledge about the characteristics of estuarine habitats behind water control structures, reviewed summaries of wetland management histories, and revised conceptual model of tidal marsh loss in Elkhorn Slough.

Meeting, Joint Science Panel and Strategic Planning Team, April 4, 2006

Purpose: Expert review of interior marsh loss mechanisms and potential estuarine habitat conservation and restoration alternatives and identification of priority research and monitoring projects that would help with tidal wetland restoration planning and implementation efforts.

Outcomes: Better understanding of tidal marsh dynamics, international marsh restoration efforts, and interior marsh loss mechanisms. Prioritized list of research and monitoring projects to inform tidal wetland planning and/or restoration efforts.

Major Decision, Joint Science Panel and Strategic Planning Team Document, Priority Projects to Inform Restoration Planning and Implementation, April 4, 2006

Meeting, Community (Forum), April 26, 2006

Purpose: Provide information through presentations about the major impacts to Elkhorn Slough estuarine habitats and discuss potential efforts to conserve and restore these habitats.

Outcome: Enhanced public awareness about estuarine habitats, loss and degradation of these habitats, the Elkhorn Slough Tidal Wetland Project, and the role of community input in future efforts.

Meeting, Joint Science Panel and Strategic Planning Team, August 2, 2006

Purpose: Discuss and recommend potential restoration strategies for tidal wetlands behind water control structures.

Outcomes: Shared understanding of the management history and characteristics of tidal wetlands behind water control structures and revised draft restoration strategies for specific tidal wetland areas behind water control structures.

Meeting, Community (Walking Tour), December 2, 2006

Purpose: Observe and learn about marsh loss and bank erosion in Elkhorn Slough.

Outcome: Enhanced public awareness about estuarine habitat loss and degradation and the Elkhorn Slough Tidal Wetland Project which is striving to conserve and restore these habitats.

Funding, Environmental Protection Agency's Wetlands Protection Development Grant and State Coastal Conservancy Grant, November 2006

Amount Awarded: \$250,000

Grant Duration: November 1, 2006 - March 31, 2009

Grant Activities: The main project purpose is the development of a *Parsons Slough Wetland Restoration Plan*. Project activities will include the evaluation of tidal marsh restoration alternatives for Parsons Slough including actions to reduce the tidal prism and/or add sediment to rebuild marsh elevations.

Meeting, Science Panel and Strategic Planning Team, December 8, 2006

Purpose: Understand project progress on the evaluation of potential outcomes of several large-scale restoration alternatives compared with the outcome of a “no action” alternative and meet newly hired consultant team.

Outcome: Knowledge about the evaluations of restoration alternatives that will be accomplished over the next few years that will result in a Science Panel recommendation and Strategic Planning Team decision about whether to move forward with system-wide conservation strategies for Elkhorn Slough.