

**MEETING SUMMARY OF THE
ESTUARY HABITAT RESTORATION COUNCIL
NOAA Headquarters
1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD
May 26, 2010**

The meeting convened at 1:00p.m., with the following members and representatives present:

- **Ms. Patricia A. Montanio**, Director, Office of Habitat Conservation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Chair;
- **Mr. Dallas Miner**, National Team Leader, Coastal Program, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS);
- **Mr. Paul Cough**, Director, Oceans and Coastal Protection Division, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); and
- **Mr. Arnab Raychaudhuri**, Special Assistant, Office of Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works).

I. Council Vice-Chair Discussion

At the October, 2009 Council Meeting, the Council directed the Work Group to outline the pros and cons of establishing a Vice Chair, and suggest edits to the Council procedures, accordingly. Jenni Wallace (NOAA), an ERA Work Group member, walked the Council through a discussion paper that highlighted pros and cons of a Vice Chair, items to consider in making a determination, as well as proposed language edits to the Council procedures if a Vice Chair was determined to be warranted. Pros for adding a Vice Chair included allowing agencies to plan (staffing, resources, etc.) for taking over the Chairmanship in three years and encouraging rotation of the Chairmanship among agencies. Cons for adding a Vice Chair included that it may be complicating the process more than is necessary and the benefits of a Vice Chair to routine activities/council meetings was not readily apparent. The consensus recommendation of the ERA Work Group was that a Vice Chair is not warranted.

DECISION: The Council adopted the Work Group’s recommendation; the discussion can be revisited in the future if necessary.

II. Review of New Habitat Restoration Project Proposals

Rick Kuyper (FWS), a Work Group member, gave an overview of the estuary habitat restoration project solicitation process and the requirements of proposal applications. Thirty two proposals were received, requesting \$17,585,497.00; these were from 13 different states, as well as D.C. and Puerto Rico. In FY2010 NOAA has \$1.5M for project funding, and the Corps has \$1.0M.

Mr. Kuyper then gave a brief overview of the six projects the Work Group recommended for funding, as well as four high ranking “back-ups.”

Projects Recommended for Funding:

1. Port Susan Bay Estuary Restoration, Washington will reintroduce the full tidal prism and inundation regime to 150 acres of diked farmland in the Stillaguamish River estuary in Puget Sound at an ERA cost of \$1,000,000.
Funding Agency Recommendation: NOAA
2. Damde Meadows Tidal Restoration – Phase II, Massachusetts will restore full tidal hydrology to Damde Meadows, a 15-acre salt marsh located in the heart of the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area at an ERA cost of \$190,000.
Funding Agency Recommendation: NOAA
3. McDaniel Slough Tidal Restoration, California will restore and enhance 22 acres of tidal and 23.5 acres of freshwater wetlands at an ERA cost of \$275,000.
Funding Agency Recommendation: NOAA
4. Restoring Coastal Estuarine Habitat in Three North Carolina Estuaries will restore 9.3 acres of oyster habitat and 1.24 acres of saltmarsh habitat at an ERA cost of \$479,887.
Funding Agency Recommendation: Corps
5. Jupiter Ridge Shoreline Restoration Project, Florida will protect shoreline vegetation and seagrass from erosive wave activity through the construction of 23 limestone oyster reef/breakwaters at an ERA cost of \$500,000.
Funding Agency Recommendation: Corps
6. Molokai Fish Pond & Fringing Reef Restoration, Hawaii will remove invasive mangroves and invasive marine algae from inside two 15th century fish ponds at an ERA cost of \$100,000.
Funding Agency Recommendation: NOAA

Back-up Projects:

1. The North Marsh Project: Improving Tidal Exchange to an Estuarine Wetland, California
2. Restoring Tidal Flow to Sunken Meadow Creek, New York
3. Habitat Restoration in Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii
4. Thatcher Bay Nearshore Habitat Restoration, Washington

DECISION: The Council approved all six projects recommended by the Work Group in rank order and pre-approved the four back-up projects.

III. Stakeholder Input Meeting Update

At the October, 2009 Council meeting the Council directed the Work Group to develop a workplan and implement a public listening session/workshop to aid in revising the ERA Strategy. Jenni Wallace led a discussion of the Work Group's proposed plan for seeking public input to the revised strategy.

The process will include a full day open meeting to invite input to the strategy and 2010-2012 action plan (proposed date: June 24, 2010), the Working Group using the input to update the strategy and action plan in a one day facilitated working session, and an updated strategy and plan shared publically prior to the roll-out in November.

DECISION: The Council approved the June 24th Stakeholder Input Meeting.

ACTIONS: The Work Group will develop a method for soliciting ideas/input into revising the Strategy outside of the Stakeholder Input meeting. The Council members will send any additions to the Stakeholder Input meeting input list by COB Tuesday June 1st.

IV. Public Comment

The public was given several opportunities to speak during the meeting as well as at the end of the meeting. Among those present that provided feedback were:

- Jeff Benoit, Restore America's Estuaries
- Chris Lyons, Restore America's Estuaries
- Nina Garfield, NOAA National Estuarine Research Reserve program
- Matthew Menashes, National Estuarine Research Reserve Association
- William Gauntt, WRScompass

V. Agenda Items for Next Council Meeting

Throughout the meeting various topics were mentioned for future Council meetings. These include:

- Status update of ERA funded projects to date
 - Include discussion of how long the projects have been in progress and how much money they have received thus far
 - Include discussion of development of a standard operating procedure/annual project progress review
- Carbon sequestration presentation by Restore America's Estuaries
- Report out of the ERA funded National Estuarine Research Reserve Monitoring effort

The meeting ended at 3:00 p.m.