

ESTABLISHING HUMAN AND ECOLOGICAL GOALS FOR EBM: APPLIED CASE STUDIES ALONG THE WEST COAST

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Humboldt Bay Initiative: Adaptive Management in a Changing World

The Humboldt Bay Initiative (HBI) seeks to bring people together to help envision the desired future state of Humboldt Bay ecosystems and economies, to help understand past, current, and future conditions, and to move forward in the spirit of collaboration towards a sustainable and dynamic future. In order to address priority threats to our ecosystems and economies due to climate change, invasive species, and human activities, the Humboldt Bay Initiative developed a set of goals through a formal adaptive management and strategic planning process. HBI goals provide an explicit and shared understanding of our project and help keep us focused on what we want to achieve. Prior to the workshop, HBI conducted a stakeholder analysis. As a result, the Humboldt Bay Initiative participation increased and created a broad, adaptive and inclusive program for implementing EBM. The unique role of HBI is to help facilitate ongoing coordination and collaboration among local communities, elected officials, agencies, and resource managers and to develop, integrate and implement key information.

In January 2009, HBI held a strategic planning workshop, during which EBM Targets were developed. The workshop used the Open Standards for Conservation process developed by the Conservation Measures Partnership (CMP). CMP uses an adaptive management framework and provides a logical process to develop project design, management and monitoring for successful implementation. The strategies include quantified goals, objective, indicators to that are essential to measure our progress. The targets identified during the workshop encompass key habitat types, critical species, ecological functions, ecosystem services and associated human benefits. The Humboldt Bay Initiative Strategic Planning Project Team explored a variety of potential targets, which were narrowed down to 7 ecological system targets which the team felt could collectively describe the health of the project area ecosystems. The following targets were selected to represent the range of ecosystem types found within the project scope: Forests, Freshwater Tributaries, Coastal Plains, Estuaries, Humboldt Bay, Beaches & Dunes, and Nearshore Marine.

Under each of these targets, goals were developed to measure the progress of EBM approaches and overall health of the ecosystem. While still in development, examples of draft goals include:

- Forests: By 2025, riparian buffers filter sediment, and provide big wood and shade to support riparian function and processes.
- Coastal Plains: By 2025, hydrologic connectivity between coastal plain and estuarine habitats is sufficient to allow for sea level rise without harming human communities and activities.
- Humboldt Bay: By 2025, 80% of monitored bay habitats support healthy native biotic communities.

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