

THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA WETLANDS RESTORATION PROGRAM
AND
THE SAN FRANCISCO ESTUARY INSTITUTE

PROCEEDINGS FROM THE WETLAND TRACKER WORKSHOP

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2003

Attendees:

Bob Batha (San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission)
Jeff Blanchfield (San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission)
Andree Breaux (San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board)
John Brosnan (Wetlands Restoration Program)
Frank Delfino (Citizens' Committee to Complete the Refuge)
Janice Delfino (Citizens' Committee to Complete the Refuge)
Giselle Downard (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)
Arthur Feinstein (Golden Gate Audubon Society)
Eric Grijalva (Invasive Spartina Project)
Totton Heffelfinger (Sierra Club)
Amy Hutzal (State Coastal Conservancy)
Maggi Kelly (UC Berkeley)
Molly Martindale (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)
Mike May (San Francisco Estuary Institute)
Lance Mobley (Zentner and Zentner)
Rick Morat (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)
Stuart Siegel (Wetlands and Water Resources)
Elizabeth Stampe (Greenbelt Alliance)
Caitlin Sweeney (San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission)
Carol Thornton (San Francisco Estuary Project)
Karin Tuxen (UC Berkeley)
Luisa Valiela (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)
Katy Zaremba (Invasive Spartina Project)

Molly Martindale (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) initiated a roundtable of introductions. John Brosnan (San Francisco Bay Area Wetlands Restoration Program) noted this was the first workshop held by the Wetlands Restoration Program and thanked the participants and the presenters. Mike May (San Francisco Estuary Institute) lead the presentation of the Wetland Tracker (<http://www.wetlandtracker.org/>). Mike noted the purpose of the workshop was to familiarize interested individuals with the attributes of the Wetland Tracker system. The system provides a comprehensive, regional listing of wetlands projects that involve restoration, mitigation, enhancement and creation. Mike noted there are over 100 projects completed and another 50 are in planning; all of these approximately 150 projects can be viewed at the Wetland Tracker. Some projects are listed within the

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system, but are not mapped. Mike noted that when a wetlands mitigation project is presented, the system does not yet convey information about the project for which it is compensatory.

The system is compatible with all popular web browsers. Mike demonstrated how to retrieve project data and how to upload additional data to the site. Future goals for the system include measuring real progress against the *Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals Report* and providing more detailed project information – as required by U.S. EPA – to assist the San Francisco Estuary Project with reporting acreages acquired, restored or enhanced. At present, there is no single source of information that can produce the number of wetland habitat acres acquired, restored or enhanced by county, by year, or by type, etc. In the future, it is hoped the system will track riparian projects and vernal pool projects. **Molly suggested incorporating regulatory agency permit numbers into the system, for ease in tracking projects; Molly also suggested using Joint Venture and Coastal Conservancy project tracking numbers.** Mike noted he is working with Andree Breaux (San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board) and Molly Martindale on developing a standard data transmittal form that would accompany permit applications yet be sent to the Tracker for data entry. **Rick Morat suggested enabling the system to produce data segmented into congressional districts and totals spent in each district.**

Stuart Siegel noted the system currently includes any project that falls within the historic baylands margin; Suisun marsh is coming online, soon. Mike noted the Tracker does not display information regarding project impacts, or, “why” a mitigation project is required. Jeff Blanchfield noted there are myriad reasons agencies require project mitigation and that **listing those might be helpful.** **Amy Hutzel suggested including contact information for the land-owning entity,** although Stuart noted landowners may not be the most knowledgeable about the site.

Mike reviewed the Wetland Tracker’s project status fields, applied and removed different data layers to the map, and demonstrated how to upload files to the site. Following a short break, Mike reviewed the survey form, which had been distributed to participants. The form asked attendees to rank what they felt was important and relatively more critical to include in the system. Bob Batha said BCDC is just beginning to develop a permit tracking system and wanted to know about how information could be shared between it and the Wetland Tracker. Andree noted it would be a great opportunity if BCDC could make this link; Molly advised to avoid prematurely entering data from permit applications and enter information into the system only after the finalized permit has been approved. **Caitlin Sweeney suggested including with each project a list of agencies involved and permits under consideration or approved.** Jeff Blanchfield highlighted the high cost of establishing and maintaining these systems and noted the Wetland Tracker needs a comprehensive, sound foundation to achieve its full potential. **Totton Heffelfinger expressed his view that the tracking of permit**

condition compliance should be considered of the highest priority. Rick Morat purported the Tracker should focus on three key audiences: the media, appropriators (funding) and elected officials. Therefore, **the Tracker should be able to summarize data by congressional districts and tie into watershed data.** Carol Thornton stated the Oakland Museum has excellent watershed map data; **from the San Francisco Estuary Project's perspective, the Tracker should include the ability to reference a project's latitude and longitude coordinates (for Government Performance and Results Act reports), project start and end dates, and how we consider and count "lost" acreages.** Molly suggested it is a high priority to track a project's outcomes. Arthur Feinstein agreed it was critical to track wetlands losses.

Stuart said the intention was the Tracker would evolve to a database that can be queried. Caitlin liked the ability to query the Tracker and **emphasized ensuring tracking of projects under five acres, and including the ability to view projects by county and as either restoration and/or mitigation. Molly suggested being able to separate proposed and complete projects.** Stuart noted the provision of design reports and monitoring reports was critical with projects on the Tracker. Caitlin asked if the system might apply a Bay Trail layer.

Mike then presented the South Bay Salt Ponds Restoration project's website (www.southbayrestoration.org). He demonstrated how to search for entries, how to submit new documents to the site and view the full list of entries.

Rick Morat hoped the Tracker would become a resource that could generate short, concise reports highlighting acreages gained or lost or a given amount of time; he felt these could be valuable for a host of reasons. Carol Thornton looked forward to the Tracker contributing to more successful wetlands projects.