

**UNB RESTORATION TEAM  
MINUTES OF MEETING**

Meeting Date: Monday, May 7, 2007  
Meeting Time : 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Location: Interpretive Center

Attendees:	Matt Yurko (California Coastal Commission)	Dennis Baker (NBNF)
	John Kappeler (City of Newport Beach)	Tom Fox (NBNF)
	Bob Stein (City of Newport Beach) Part-time	Irwin Haydock (NBNF)
	Jennifer Naegele (County HBP)	Jack Keating (NBNF)
	Susan Brodeur (County RDMD)	Roger Mallett (NBNF)
	Jeff Stoddard (Department of Fish and Game)	Don Millar (NBNF)

1. The 4/20/07 draft of the minutes of the 2/5/07 Restoration Team meeting were approved.
2. Bob Stein provided a status report on the Harbor Area Management Plan (HAMP) and the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) for the Newport Bay Watershed to which the HAMP will be linked. A consulting contract award to Weston Solutions for the HAMP is expected to be approved by the City Council on 5/8/07. Although the plan will address primarily Lower Bay issues, issues common to both Upper and Lower Bay will be integrated as appropriate. There are two phases to the IRWMP. IRWD is working on the first phase due July 2007 that needs to be in place to get Prop 50 money. Priority is being given to projects benefiting Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS), which for Newport Bay Watershed means the designated coastal area roughly from Big Corona to Crystal Cove. The City is working on the second phase IRWMP due September 2007 which will provide eligibility for Prop 84 funding. Bob encouraged the Team to think about sediment reduction or other projects that might be eligible. There will be a stakeholder meeting on 5/16/07 to discuss projects. Bob also reported that he is in conversation with Scott Akenhead of S4S to establish a web portal for online collaboration and comment (essentially a set of chat rooms for the IRWMP and its projects). He is also in conversation with an outfit in San Diego to address data management for the project in conjunction with the S4S work. Bob will be reviewing this with Richard Boon of the County Watershed and Coastal Resources Division.

**Action Item:** Advise Bob of any projects that might be eligible for funding.

3. Roger gave a brief report on the Comprehensive Resource Management Plan (CRMP) for all of Upper Newport Bay to be funded 80% by the City on behalf of itself and DFG, and 20% by HBP. This project has not kicked off yet. It is awaiting completion of the Land Management Plan (LMP) being prepared for the UNB Ecological Reserve, and finalization of the HBP Strategic Plan. Jeff indicated that he is in the process of remobilizing the consultant tasked with preparation of the LMP.
4. UCI RESERVE TOUR. Matt reported that this tour is still being planned. He is still waiting to hear back from Peter Bowler to make the arrangements.

**Action Item:** Matt will continue working to make the tour happen.

5. ROOTS PROJECTS. Matt read the draft of a letter that he will be sending to Trish Smith of The Nature Conservancy thanking TNC for the spraying of non-natives here at UNB. Matt also thanked Portia Arutunian, Bill Reider and Ernie Seidel for the assistance HBP provided in preparing the Coastal Commission permit application for the interpretive signage at the Bayview site. Approval is expected this month. Matt reported that over 200 volunteers have participated in the last three ROOTS events combined. They come from different corners of Orange County. These events have focused on the Bayview Site. Roughly 700 plants were planted there in February and they have needed more maintenance than expected because of the near frost and low rain that followed. Invasives have been removed from Newport Valley. The plants propagated in the Nursery on Shellmaker Island for Bolsa Chica were planted there on Earth Day.
6. HBP PROJECTS. Jennifer reported that the stone benches for the Butterfly Habitat project have been installed and flagstones are here and ready to be put in. The non-functional irrigation has been removed and a different type of system is being considered. Bill Reiter, Jennifer and Jack will be meeting with the Board Foundation representative to discuss further funding. Second Sundays are going great. According to data Bill has assembled more than 1,200 volunteers have participated in these and other volunteer projects at the Nature Preserve since last July.
7. WEST BAY RESTORATION ENHANCEMENT PROJECT: Ernie Siedel reported on the status of the "6-Acre" project. There is some overlap with the FEMA trail repair project, and Ernie is hoping to move regrading from the West Bay Project to the FEMA Project. A follow-up meeting to finalize this is anticipated. In the meantime Ernie will modify the West Bay Project bid documents to show this as an additive bid item.

**Action Item:** Ernie will investigate and provide the Restoration Team with an approximate date the bid package will go to the Board of Supervisors.

8. SINK HOLES: Ernie reported that he is working with FEMA on the repair of a large sinkhole on county property on the east side of the Bay. The hole was created by the collapse of an abandoned storm drain line. Plans have been prepared to repair the underground line, refill the hole with soil and reestablish the gabion to act as wall and spillway. The swale at the top of the slope will also be reestablished. John reported that there is no evidence of a broken water or sewer line and the water that was in the hole is most likely irrigation runoff. The Big Canyon sinkhole was also discussed. A permanent fix will be part of the Big Canyon Project. There is no easy temporary fix, so no action will be taken in this regard.

**Action Item:** Encourage Bluffs Home Owners Association to install satellite-controlled irrigation to reduce water use and runoff.

9. HORSE ARENA: This City project, which is part of the Santa Ana Heights redevelopment, involves the creation of a new horse arena on County Flood Control property adjacent to Delhi Channel to replace the unofficial arena on the nearby hilltop. The Bay will benefit from habitat restoration where the unofficial arena is. Dennis Baker reported that the Environmental Report is due out this week. A copy is being mailed to the Interpretive Center. Restoration Team members should review the report. There will be a 30-day public comment period during which Naturalists and others can submit written comments to the City. A revised report will be issued

with a further 30-day public comment period, after which the project will be presented to the City Council for approval and a permit application will be sent to the Coastal Commission. An issue has arisen relating to the existence of an old easement in front of the properties looking out over Bay. This potentially affects if/how trails are routed on the hilltop, the preference being to close and revegetate the trails. Each property owner has an easement, but apparently only one wants to continue to use the trail running along the front of the properties.

**Action Item:** Matt should check to see if the plant pallet recommendations he made have been incorporated into the Environmental Report.

**Action Item:** Ernie will provide Dennis with information as to how to access central files at county RDMD so that Dennis can check on the details of the easements.

10. **BIG CANYON RESTORATION:** Following its presentation at the monthly Naturalist meeting held on February 1, 2007 WRC has revised the Public Access Plan for the project. This is now available for review on the WRC website. A notice with the link and user name and password was sent out by Joe Naturalist at the end of April. The next step is to create the Environmental Report (assumed to be a Mitigated Negative Declaration). A public meeting will then be held to receive comments. Thereafter a permit application will be sent to the Coastal Commission. The current contract ends this year. Part of WRC's scope is identification of funding for the construction phase (estimated at \$5.8 million). The Wildlife Conservation Board had agreed about three years ago to make this a funding priority. It is hoped that this is still the case.

**Action Item:** John will find out when the public meeting is likely to be, and when the permit application is likely to be made.

11. **SOUTH SHELLMAKER DEMONSTRATION PROJECT:** Matt reported that many of the 1,500 plants from the Tree of Life planted last November as part of the South Shellmaker Demonstration Project had not survived the near frost and low rain this winter. For cord grass the survival rate has only been about 45% and for other plants about 75-85%. Replanting has been done. Pickleweed has been springing up by itself. Matt indicated that Rick Ware is estimating 3-5 years to get full plant coverage.
12. **BACK BAY SCIENCE CENTER LANDSCAPING:** The cost of the plants has apparently been paid by the city. ROOTS will do the plantings.
13. **UNB TRAIL PLANNING:** Jeff and Jennifer have been working together to decide which of the smaller rogue trails around the Bay can be closed off immediately and which will require more thought to provide suitable alternate routes for the public to follow and thus prevent the closures from being circumvented. An issue is that in some cases the Coastal Commission may require rogue trails to be kept. Jeff and Jennifer have focused first on the trails in front of the Cox property at Bayview. They passed around a marked up aerial photo showing what they intend to do. Once trail revisions in this area have been accomplished they will address another location.

**Action Item:** Jeff Dickman (County) will assist Jeff and Jennifer as needed in laying out trail standards.

14. ACOE ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROJECT: Susan reported that the contractor has performed soil borings and determined that the spoils at 23<sup>rd</sup> Street are beach-compatible. The contractor will draw up a cost estimate on this basis to create additional mudflat at 23<sup>rd</sup> Street instead of at the NAC. The additional cost will have to be paid locally and not by the ACOE. Dennis mentioned that he has been talking to the Regional Water Quality Board about putting in a Natural Treatment System for the Santa Isabella storm drain there, which might allow grant money to be available. The Restoration Team endorses this. The contractor is currently working in the Bullnose area and in the marginal pickleweed area beneath Bayview. Supervisor Moorlach will be sending a letter to the congressional delegation urging continued federal funding for the project.

**Action Item:** Susan will make the contractor aware that it needs to check with the HBP staff at the Interpretive Center before entering any sensitive areas to do soil borings, etc. in order to ensure that work is as habitat-sensitive as possible, potential habitat and trails issues are addressed, Preserve staff are able to answer public questions and potential use conflicts are avoided. Susan will also obtain a copy of the Moorlach letter for Jack so that NBNF can perform advocacy.

15. VISTA POINT PROJECT: Jack reported that the Vista Point permit application to the Coastal Commission is approved with 12 conditions. Five of these need to be resolved before any work can start. Information needs to be gathered on these items by mid-June. Ralph Clock is assembling contractors to perform the work pro bono as much as possible. Jack hopes that construction will be complete to allow a ceremony to be held on the date of the first Friends Tour in October.

**Action Item:** Jack will arrange meeting with DFG as soon as possible to address permit conditions.

16. NEW BUSINESS: Jennifer reported that the pampas grass on the county property at Eastbluff did get treated in March and that it looks like the city has treated the adjoining areas.
17. NEW BUSINESS: Jack congratulated Jennifer, Don, Matt and Tom on their recent OC wild awards.
18. NEXT MEETING: The next meeting was set for Monday, August 6, 2007 from 3-5 pm at the Interpretive Center.

Minutes prepared by Roger Mallett  
May 10, 2007