

Subtidal and Intertidal Habitat Goals for Humboldt Bay and the Eel River Estuary

Advisory Team Meeting Notes

Dec. 13, 2007, 1 to 4 pm, Eureka Sea Grant Office

I. Welcome and Introductions

Participants: Diane Ashton (NOAA Fisheries), Steve Cannata (DFG), Annie Eicher (California Sea Grant Extension), Joel Gerwein (Coastal Conservancy), Christina Hoffman (NOAA Coastal Services Center), Andrea Pickart (USFWS), Bill Pinnix (USFWS), Becky Pollock (NOAA Coastal Services Center), Kirsten Ramey (DFG), Susan Schlosser (California Sea Grant Extension), Margaret Spring (The Nature Conservancy)

II. Project Overview – Susan Schlosser, Sea Grant Extension

See also the project workplan posted on the new Humboldt Habitat Goals website:

<http://groups.ucanr.org/HumboldtHabitatGoals/>

Summary:

A. Project objectives:

1. Identify, document, and describe subtidal and intertidal habitats and biotic assemblages of Humboldt Bay and the Eel River Estuary.
2. Develop goals for habitat management based on best available scientific information.
3. Identify and prioritize research needs.
4. Recommend measures for habitat protection, restoration and enhancement.

B. Study Area (water surface at high tide): Humboldt Bay (24 sq mi) and the Eel River Estuary (4 sq mi) from coastline to inland extent of tidal influence (Eel River—upstream to Fernbridge).

C. Mapping: to be performed by NOAA Coastal Services Center and Photo Science; aerial imagery and mapping scheduled for spring-fall 2008. (*link to Photo Science website:* <http://www.photoscience.com/> for information on the company); ground-truthing to be performed by Sea Grant staff in collaboration with Photo Science staff.

D. Project will support the Humboldt Bay Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) Program with habitat information.

E. The Conservation Action Planning (CAP) process is a tool that is available for us to use to evaluate habitat condition and stressors.

F. Project Staff Responsibilities

1. Coordinate Advisory Committee (AC) meetings, presentations, and field trips.
2. Maintain communication with EBM group, agencies not represented on AC, and stakeholders.
3. Maintain project website.
4. Prepare Subtidal and Intertidal Habitat Goals report.

G. Advisory Committee Responsibilities

1. Attend monthly meetings Dec 2007—Nov 2008.
2. Define subtidal/intertidal and biodiversity targets for study area using the CAP process.
3. Identify research needs, restoration opportunities, develop goals and recommendations for habitat management.
4. Review Subtidal and Intertidal Habitat Goals report.

III. Conservation Action Planning Process (CAP) – Margaret Spring, The Nature Conservancy

See also pdf of “Conservation Action Planning: Overview of Basic Practices” on Humboldt Habitat Goals website. Summary:

A. The Nature Conservancy (TNC 2006) developed CAP as a site-based application tool for managers to achieve effective conservation results. Steps:

1. Identify people involved in designing and implementing project.
 2. Define project scope and select focal conservation targets (may be habitat types, ecological communities, or individual species chosen to represent and encompass biodiversity in a study area). Recommended: about 8 targets.
 3. Assess viability of focal conservation targets based on key ecological attributes and associated indicators.
 4. Identify critical threats (impaired aspects of targets). Rate both the level of stress and the sources of stress.
 5. Complete a “situation analysis” to identify factors (both positive and negative) that affect targets and identify key stakeholders linked to the factors.
 6. Set objectives and develop strategies (including specific strategic actions) for achieving them.
 7. Establish methods for measuring the success of actions.
 8. Develop work plans based on available resources and critical needs. Identify action steps and who will be responsible for them.
 9. Implement work plan.
 10. Monitor, analyze, and use results to adapt action plan. Document results and share with stakeholders.
- B. TNC prepared a “Northern California Marine Ecoregional Assessment” (02/27/2006) in which they evaluated the conservation management status of marine and estuarine habitats and identified habitats that are under-represented in protected areas.
- C. TNC Engagement on the North Coast: 2004 Planning Workshops in Humboldt/Del Norte Counties with partners: TNC, Save the Redwoods League and the North Coast Land Trust.
1. Efrogmson workshops; not a full “CAP.”
 2. 50+ Targets (vs. 8), including ecological & socioeconomic targets (new).
 3. Thematic (not GIS-linked) approach (new), not focused on site-based implementation
 4. Limited treatment of subtidal/coastal habitats.
 5. “Working Toward a Humboldt - Del Norte Conservation Vision: Identifying Regional Conservation Priorities.” TNC et al 2005 (*See pdf on Humboldt Habitat Goals website*).
 6. Related document “Linking Land and Sea: a Northern California Coastal Conservation Needs Assessment.” Redwood Community Action Agency. 2006 (*See pdf on Humboldt Habitat Goals website*).
- D. TNC has trainers/coaches that may be available to help us use the CAP process for our project (Margaret will check and get back to us with this information).
- E. Websites for More Information:
1. General Overview: <http://www.nature.org/aboutus/howwework/cbd/>
 2. Guidance, Methods, Tools, Case Studies: <http://www.conservationgateway.org>
 3. Shared Information for Practitioners: <http://www.conserveonline.org>
- IV. San Francisco Bay Habitat Goals Project** – Christina Hoffman, NOAA Coastal Services Center
See also the Fall 2007 newsletter on Humboldt Habitat Goals website. Summary:
- A. Interagency partnership: San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), California Coastal Conservancy, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and San Francisco Estuary Project (SFEP).
 - B. Collaborative effort to establish a comprehensive long-term management vision for subtidal habitats of San Francisco Bay.
 - C. Vision Statement: Over a 50-year horizon, achieve a net improvement of San Francisco Bay subtidal ecosystem function through restoration, science, and management, including:
 1. Optimize mix of subtidal habitats.
 2. Increase native species richness and abundance.

3. Increase understanding of physical and biological processes.
- D. Adapted the CAP Process
1. Focused on habitat types (rather than biodiversity) and on impacts/levels of stress (rather than activities causing the stress).
 2. Developed goals for minimizing stress and are in process of preparing document containing recommendations for habitat protection and restoration (target: Dec 2008).

V. Group Discussion

- A. Group consensus that we would like to include intertidal as well as subtidal habitats in our project to achieve a product that will be more encompassing but is still within a feasible scope of work. Other descriptive terms considered: benthic habitats or estuarine habitats. Decided that “subtidal and intertidal habitats” best defines what we are targeting.
- B. We need to decide whether we will use the Coastal and Marine Ecological Classification Standard (CMECS) classification system developed by NOAA to classify our habitats or some alternative classification scheme (Coastal Service Center staff—who may join us for our February meeting—can help in this decision).
- C. Group consensus that it would be worthwhile to develop a pdf library of documents pertaining to subtidal and intertidal habitats of Humboldt Bay and the Eel River Estuary.

VI. Handouts

- A. Report on the Subtidal Habitats and Associated Biological Taxa in San Francisco Bay. NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service. August 2007.
- B. “Goal Development Process.” NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service.
- C. Fall 2007 newsletter, San Francisco Bay Subtidal Habitat Goals Project (*See pdf on Humboldt Habitat Goals website*).

VII. Work Assignments

- A. Assignments for Sea Grant Staff
1. Set up website and collaborative tools.
 2. Write up 12/13/07 meeting notes and circulate to AC for review.
 3. Write a draft Mission Statement and circulate to AC for review.
 4. Compile annotated bibliography on Humboldt Bay and Eel River Estuary subtidal and intertidal habitats (using EndNote).
 5. Prepare agenda for 01/24/08 meeting.
- B. Assignments for Advisory Committee
1. Review SF Bay Subtidal Habitats report.
 2. Get acquainted with project website: <http://groups.ucanr.org/HumboldtHabitatGoals/> and collaborative tools system
 3. Review these meeting notes and contact Annie with comments or corrections. After approval of the minutes at our 01/24/08 meeting, the notes will be posted to the website.
 4. Review and comment on draft mission statement.

VII. Meeting Schedule. All meetings to be held at the Eureka Sea Grant office

∞ Thursday, January 24, 2008, 1:30-4:30 p.m.

∞ Thursday, February 14, 2008, 1:30-4:30 p.m.

∞ Thursday, March 13, 2008, 1:30-4:30 p.m.

∞ Thereafter: generally the second Thursday of every month, 1:30-4:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted