Agenda: Planning Group Meeting #2

Friday, Sept. 14, 9:30-12:00

Location: Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Cayenne Room, 1441 Schilling Place, Salinas

Meeting Purpose

Discuss and provide recommendations on management objectives and actions for the Stream Maintenance Program (SMP) and lagoon management

Materials List

- Revised Goals and Objectives
- Opportunities & Constraints
- Memo: Salinas River SMP Background and Context for Potential Long-Term Management Plan (LTMP) Integration
- Memo: Lagoon Management Background and Context for Potential LTMP Integration
- Revised Planning Group Charter

9:30	**Welcome & Introductions**
9:35	**Agenda Review and Meeting Outline** Facilitator Gina Bartlett, Consensus Building Institute
9:45	**Opportunities and Constraints** Kathryn Gaffney, ICF What opportunity does the LTMP provide? What would you like to see this LTMP address? – What are limitations or constraints that this planning process must manage or confront?
10:05	**SMP Overview and Potential LTMP Management Objectives and Action** Shaunna Murray, MCWRA – Discuss and recommend potential management objectives and actions
10:50	**Lagoon Management Background and Proposed LTMP Management Objectives and Actions** Kathryn Gaffney, ICF - Discuss and recommend potential management objectives and actions - Lagoon Management Working Group will meet again to refine objectives and actions

11:35	Revised Planning Group Charter
11:45	Public Comment
11:55	Next Steps and Meeting

Upcoming Meeting Plan

Oct. 2 (1-4)	Groundwater Working Group	Groundwater Sustainability Plan Intersection with LTMP
Nov. 9 (9:30-12)	Planning Group	Groundwater Sustainability Plan Intersection with LTMP Continue on Management Objectives and Actions Discuss Management Conflicts
TBD	Lagoon Management Working Group	Discuss Planning Group Feedback (from 9/14) on Management Objectives and Actions
(tentative) Jan. 11 (9:30-12)	Planning Group	Discuss Refined Management Objectives and Actions Discuss Implementation Strategy
Feb 2019		**Submit Long-Term Management Plan**

Salinas River Long-Term Management Plan (LTMP)
DRAFT Purpose and Goals (v.2)

Drafted by ICF with review from Monterey County Water Resources Agency and the Salinas River LMTP Planning Group on August 2, 2018
Last updated: September 6, 2018

The purpose of the Salinas River LTMP is to describe a multi-benefit management program that addresses needs related to MCWRA facilities and operations, as well as related issues such as flood risk reduction, water supply, water quality, natural resource conservation, threatened and endangered species management, and federal and state Endangered Species Act compliance. The primary goals of the LTMP include the following:

- Identify long-term solutions for management of the Salinas River that include flood reduction, water resource management, stream maintenance, and habitat management for threatened and endangered species;
- Investigate the Salinas River Lagoon for the potential of reducing flooding and improving habitat conditions;
- Identify potential improvements to steelhead migration issues in the Salinas River utilizing management efforts and anticipated future projects;
- Develop the framework for implementing the LTMP that meets a variety of multi-benefit management goals, including implementation of the forthcoming Groundwater Sustainability Plan for the Salinas River Basin.
- Build upon and incorporate public/private partnerships, compatible with existing land, water rights and uses.
- Document the historical conditions in the Salinas River watershed, specifically in Monterey County.
- Describe the existing conditions in the Salinas River watershed—including the physical, biological, and chemical changes in the system over time—and to the extent possible, the sources driving those changes.
- Inform development of a future MCWRA habitat conservation plan (HCP) and other planning documents.

Salinas Long-Term Management Plan (LTMP)
DRAFT Opportunities and Constraints

Drafted by ICF with Review from Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Last updated: July 24, 2018

Constraints:

- **Grant funding timeline.** The grant supporting development of the LTMP has a deadline of December 31, 2018.
- **Future funding.** Future funding for revisions to the LTMP has not yet been identified.
- **Law and regulations.** Various regulatory permits will be required to implement LTMP management actions that would affect specific resources including waters of the U.S., waters of the state and associated riparian habitat, state and federal listed species, coastal resources.
    - Federal Clean Water Act, Sections 404 (dredge and fill), 402 (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System), and 401 (water quality certification)
    - Federal Rivers and Harbors Act, Section 10 (navigable waters)
    - Federal Endangered Species Act
    - Migratory Bird Treaty Act
    - National Environmental Policy Act
    - National Historic Preservation Act
    - California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act
    - California Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement
    - California Endangered Species Act
    - California Environmental Quality Act
    - California Coastal Act
- **Landownership.** Almost all land along the river is private, which is challenging for management implementation.
- **Existing commitments.** Exiting commitments (e.g., water rights, permits, agreements) may create constraints around how resources are managed.
- **Others?**

Opportunities:

- **Support.** Past listening exercises by the Monterey County Water Resources Agency (Agency) and the current Issues Assessment by Consensus Building Institute show that most stakeholders believe a comprehensive management solution for the Salinas River is needed. No major issues against the LTMP were identified at the first public meeting on June 20, 2018.
- **Active Participation.** Approximately 40 people attended the June 20, 2018 public meeting.
- **Available Data.** There is a strong body of past and ongoing research, permits, and management plans from which to draw guidance and recommendations.
- **Need.** The Agency needs a habitat conservation plan (HCP) to comply with the federal Endangered Species Act and the Agency has time to develop a thoughtful conservation strategy for species that meets regulatory needs while also working for landowners/growers.
- **Funding.** A comprehensive approach to management planning will make the LTMP competitive for federal and state grants to support implementation.
- **Momentum.** Development of the LTMP is the next step in a process to establish a comprehensive solution to management challenges on the Salinas River and lagoon.
- **Others?**

DRAFT Memorandum

To:	Salinas River Long-Term Management Plan Planning Group
From:	Consultant Team Monterey County Water Resources Agency
CC:	Resource Conservation District of Monterey County Salinas River Stream Maintenance Program River Management Unit Association
Date:	September 7, 2018
Re:	**Salinas River Stream Maintenance Program Background and Context for Potential Salinas River Long-Term Management Plan Integration**

Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA) is leading development of a long-term management plan (LTMP) for the Salinas River. The LTMP will include a comprehensive set of management objectives and actions for the Salinas River system, including the management of vegetation and channel stability. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide background on the Salinas River Stream Maintenance Program (SMP), summarize on-going implementation issues, and to propose a series of objectives and actions that will inform future iterations of the SMP in the context of a system-wide management approach.

The summary information in this memorandum is compiled based SMP documentation, MCWRA input, and review by the Salinas River Management Unit Association and the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County (RCDMC). The potential management objectives and actions were drafted based on the summary information and based on a Working Group meeting held on August 22, 2018. The two key purposes of the Working Group were to:

- Consider if the Salinas River LTMP should be designed to support the Salinas River SMP going forward; and
- If so, what elements of the SMP should feed into the LTMP, including if there are there specific management objectives or actions that should be considered in the LTMP.

The Working Group meeting was held on August 22, 2018, and was attended by the following.

- Shaunna Murray, MCWRA
- Elizabeth Krafft, MCWRA

- Paul Robins, Resource Conservation District of Monterey County
- Emily Zefferman, Resource Conservation District of Monterey County
- Abby Taylor Silva, Grower Shipper Association of Monterey County
- River Management Unit Association Members[1]
    - Donna Meyers
    - Christopher Bunn
    - David Costa
    - Joanne Nissen
- Kathryn Gaffney, ICF
- Paul Frank, FlowWest

Background

In 2010, the Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA) developed the Salinas River Stream Maintenance Program (SMP) in collaboration with the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County (RCDMC), the Salinas River Channel Coalition, the Grower-Shipper Association of Central California, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation Collaborative, and other local entities and contractors. The SMP is intended to help protect landowners and farms along the Salinas River against flooding during and after moderate storm events while enhancing the habitat value of the Salinas River.

The SMP, an adaptation from the prior Salinas River Channel Maintenance Program which ran from 1996-2008, facilitates vegetation and sediment management activities conducted voluntarily by individual property owners, growers, and municipalities. Participants in the SMP are members of a nonprofit organization, the Salinas River Stream Maintenance Program River Management Unit Association. The River Management Unit Association administers program participation with private property owners including maintenance enrollment with the Association and the MCWRA and RCDMC. The River Management Association also assists landowners in assessing channel conditions throughout the year and helps landowners and operators understand permitted work areas and maintenance activities of the SMP.

Stream maintenance is focused along the main stem—although primarily outside the low-flow channel—of the Salinas River (river miles 2 to 94) and three select tributaries: Gonzales Slough, Bryant Canyon Channel, and San Lorenzo Creek (known as the Program Area). The Program Area is further broken down into seven River Management Units (RMUs) which were developed based on similar characteristics that are critical to the management of the resources. Designated Maintenance Areas within each RMU have been identified and permitted based on available data such as topography, flood flows and vegetation communities, and are the location where the work is concentrated.

[1] Melissa Duflock and Allan Clark of the RMU Association were invited but did not attend.

The MCWRA, RCDMC, and River Management Unit Association collectively help administer the SMP. The RCDMC also holds the Routine Maintenance Agreement permit from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) (under the Lake or Streambed Alteration Program and valid for a 10-year period) and oversees the required biological monitoring for the program. The MCWRA holds a Regional General Permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), which is valid for 5 years and will expire on November 15, 2021. In addition, the MCWRA has a Section 7 Biological Opinion from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), a Letter of Concurrence from the National Marine Fisheries Service, and a Water Quality Certification from the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, all valid for 10 years expiring at the end of 2025. A review of the effectiveness of the program will occur in 2021, to determine if any of these authorizations need to be modified.

Below is a summary of the SMP goals, objectives, measures, and lessons learned to date as well as information on future needs and how implementation of a habitat conservation plan may help alleviate current constraints within the Program Area.

SMP Objectives

The SMP Objectives (2014), are:

- Improve flood protection and channel capacity on the Salinas River mainstem and select tributaries (San Lorenzo Creek, Bryant Canyon Channel, and Gonzales Slough) under MCWRA authority to minimize the potential for flood damages to adjacent lands and infrastructure.
- Implement stream maintenance activities on the Salinas River mainstem and select tributaries in a timely, cost-effective and environmentally-sensitive manner.
- Develop an adaptable and sustainable program that can respond to changing environmental, maintenance, and regulatory conditions.
- Incorporate resource protection and mitigation measures.
- Reduce flood frequency to maintain agricultural viability and protect prime agricultural land that is important to the economy and food supply of Monterey County and the nation.

The objective of the SMP is not to restore the Salinas River to its historical condition, but to enhance key ecological and functional attributes through stream maintenance for flood risk reduction. Proposed maintenance activities recognize that the hydrology of the system has been impacted by dams, levees, and other encroachments, and that the ecology of the system has been modified from a large river and floodplain system supporting a mosaic of habitat types to a river confined by levees and farmlands and restricted to a small fraction of its historical floodplain.

SMP Implementation and Considerations for LTMP Integration

It is a goal of the LMTP to identify long-term solutions for management of the Salinas River that include flood reduction, water resource management, stream maintenance, and habitat management

for threatened and endangered species. As such, the LTMP will identify stream maintenance objectives and actions. With the intent that these objectives and actions be informed by experiences gained in developing and implementing the SMP, it is important to consider the effectiveness of SMP implementation to date, lessons learned, and if there are maintenance needs that are not currently supported by the SMP. The following sections provide a summary of this information.

Long-Term Effectiveness Assessment Reporting

A condition of the current SMP permits is to evaluate the effectiveness of the SMP in meeting its objectives related to vegetation and channel management goals. While the first Long-Term Effectiveness Assessment Report is not due until Spring 2021 (prior to permit re-authorization), MCWRA, RCDMC, and the River Management Unit Association have begun efforts to conduct the effectiveness assessment. The assessment will includes the following categories.

- **Effectiveness:** pre- and post-maintenance topographic surveys of 10% of all secondary channels in all river management units, and shall use the survey data to determine how the Maintenance Areas are functioning and assess the sediment transport characteristics of the Maintenance Areas.
- **Design Verification:** analyze all flow events equal to or exceeding 25,450 cfs (5-year event), at Spreckels, to answer questions regarding Maintenance Area function, activation, and channel complexity.
- **Flood Reduction:** analyze all flow events equal to or exceeding 42,800 cfs, at Spreckels, to determine whether the Project achieves the anticipated flood reduction benefits.
- **Biological Functions:** collect and analyze information indicative of the Project's overall effect on beneficial uses and habitat function. Such as native plant recruitment, increased diversity of riparian habitat conditions, and wildlife movement.
- **Watershed Assessment:** collect and analyze information to assess the Project and its effects within the larger context of the Salinas River watershed in Monterey County, with the long-term goal of identifying implementation actions that optimize watershed health and function while also achieving MCWRA river management objectives.

Lessons Learned During Implementation

Through implementation, MCWRA, RCDMC, and the River Management Unit Association have identified a number of lessons learned. These are summarized below.

- Conducting stream maintenance activities as a program permittee comes with certain liabilities that should be considered.
- Landowner and participant coordination through the RMU Association was a great mechanism and should be carried forward in future revisions to the SMP.
- Channel conditions should be reviewed in the field with landowners and operators prior to each maintenance season,

- Project champions are a must to both see projects through to completion and to provide reminders of program successes.
- Because vegetation and sediment management activities within Maintenance Areas may cross multiple property lines or have implications for how flows affect adjacent parcels, coordination with neighbors is important.
- While it is good to have a longer-term permit (10 years vs. 5 year) that can be amended (multiple revisions already received, Amendments 1-3), the CDFW Routine Maintenance Agreement (RMA) is difficult to work under due to extensive pre- and post-project monitoring requirements that are costly and challenging for landowners to implement.
- Program implementation costs are very high for landowners and operators; primarily related to permit conditions and requirements, which can affect participation levels.

Program Implementation Challenges

The SMP includes activities that project proponents have generally not been able to implement due to various logistic and feasibility issues, including high costs for monitoring. These activities, together with the reasons for infeasibility (sub-bullets), are summarized below.

- Sediment management
    - expensive monitoring requirements/surveys before, during, and after work
    - limited stockpile locations due to the greater channel designation and restriction to remove sediment from neighboring parcels
- Relocating Maintenance Areas / adaptive management
    - CDFW permit restricts changes based on changing geomorphic conditions
    - Technical & Design Committee review/approval and regulatory re-authorizations if substantial change could be a long and expensive process
    - Timelines for approvals and communications with agencies limit changes on an annual basis
- Arundo removal beyond mitigation requirements
    - RWQCB monitoring requirements are onerous and may continue on for many years after the maintenance activities end
    - RCDMC's Salinas Watershed Invasive Non-Native Plant Control and Restoration Program is more user friendly and an option for most of the participants
    - Annual Work Plan approvals can be unpredictable and expensive
- Grading for new access to Maintenance Areas
    - archaeological surveys are required
    - CDFW prohibits any grading related to access into the river channel
    - RWQCB requires the abandonment of the access and restoration at end of permit
- Crossing low-flow channel

    - Conservation releases/Flow Prescription for SVWP mean that the majority of the work seasons will have significant river flows at the sites and access near the low-flow channel is limited
    - no temporary stream crossings allowed under permits making some sites in accessible for many years
- Off-site mitigation banking
    - There are no existing banks or fee programs set up in the area that could be utilized for the impacts of the SMP
- Necessary abandonment of Maintenance Areas or mitigation without reaching performance criteria
- Required wildlife buffers for state species of concern reduce the ability to access or maintain certain areas

Activities Considered but Not Addressed in the Current SMP

During development of the SMP, certain activities or issues were considered but not addressed in the SMP due to various reasons. These activities and issues, summarized below, provide insight into Salinas River management needs and can inform the LMTP objectives and actions.

Other Maintenance Activities

- Off-channel detention/Overbank Flow Areas to achieve greater level of flood protection
- New Maintenance Areas (beyond the 129 identified areas)
- Streambank restoration/stabilization
- Work in low-flow channel (constricted channel areas) except for two Maintenance Areas
- Expanding the program area upstream of San Ardo and downstream of Highway 1, and into other tributaries (e.g., Arroyo Seco, Nacimiento, and San Antonio Rivers)
- Establishment of new infiltration areas for groundwater recharge
- Trash removal with heavy equipment

Implementation Needs and Approach

- Evapotranspiration studies to update water balance of river
- Better quality and updated vegetation maps to determine habitat value vs. so much field work for biologists
- Updated assessment of the ecological conditions of the system
- Establishment of a maintenance district that landowners could be assessed based on benefit

General Considerations

- How to deal with Corps jurisdiction at the renewal time (2021)?
    - Enbridge Decision will narrow Corps nexus for Section 7 consultations, potentially kicking out coverage for upland species and affects tied only to vegetation management
- Flood reduction benefits area very localized due to a patchwork of participating sites; how do we achieve a system benefit?

Potential Management Objectives and Actions for the LTMP to Address Stream Maintenance Needs

The following potential objectives and actions were drafted as an outcome of a Working Group meeting for the Salinas River SMP.

Objectives are targets that will be sought to achieve a given goal. Objectives are typically quantitative or at least measurable. Objectives describe a specific desired outcome.

Actions are specific activities that will be carried out to meet the associated objectives. Actions describe how objectives can be achieved.

Objective SMP-1. Establish an equitable funding mechanism for implementing stream maintenance activities that allocates cost of maintenance and associated mitigation across all beneficiaries.

> **Action SMP-1.** Collaborate with the Salinas Valley Basin Sustainable Groundwater Agency (GSA) in development of the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) to ensure stream maintenance needs are incorporated in the GSP Measurable Objectives.

Objective SMP-2. Establish a geographic framework for the LTMP within which all river management planning and implementation will be considered, including—but not limited to—groundwater management, stream maintenance, conservation actions.

> **Action SMP-2.** Expand the current SMP RMU designations to include the Lagoon, Arroyo Seco, and reaches of the Salinas River south (upstream) of the existing RMUs, including San Antonio and Nacimiento Rivers.

Objective SMP-3. Develop a practical and implementable (i.e., able to be permitted by the regulatory agencies) vegetation management program for the entire Salinas River main stem and select tributaries within the LTMP management area.

> **Action SMP-3.** Work with the regulatory agencies to confirm information required to develop a vegetation management program that meets regulatory requirements. Once confirmed, identify funding opportunities to develop identified information.

> **Action SMP-4.** Conduct a site visit with members of each regulatory agency, discussing the key vegetation management needs, identifying differences between each RMU, and how the conditions of the river have changed since reservoir construction.

Action SMP-5. Collaborate with organizations and agencies conducting vegetation management throughout the Salinas River watershed (including in San Luis Obispo County) on a cohesive approach to vegetation management, focused on invasive plant management.

Action SMP-6. Compile and organize information on vegetation management into a program document. Include an analysis of how the vegetation management program will affect regulated natural resources and water quality.

Action SMP-7. Develop a mitigation strategy that minimizes the short-term adverse impacts of a management action and takes into account the long-term benefits of those actions on regulated resources, ecological processes, and flood risk reduction.

Action SMP-8. Conduct research to inform what is the "natural" state of the Salinas River, particularly after removal of extensive stands of invasive vegetation, including how sandbars shift during high flows. Use the results of the research to inform adaptive management under the vegetation management program.

Action SMP-9. Conduct outreach to landowners along the Salinas River mainstem and select tributaries to educate them on the benefits of the vegetation management program and increase participation.

Objective SMP-4. Develop a floodwater management program focused on reducing erosion and flooding.

Action SMP-10. Investigate the potential for flow attenuation by retaining floodflows upstream of the Lagoon during storm events greater than a 5-year return interval. Investigation should consider establishment or enhancement of on- or off-channel groundwater percolation zones for percolation of floodwater into the groundwater basin. For off-channel sites, investigation should also consider the potential adverse effects of retaining surface flows, such as introduction of weed seed to new sites, degradation or loss of topsoil, restrictions on producing food crops following flooding, and changing the chemistry of flooded soils.

Action SMP-11. Include guidance on managing debris, both natural (e.g., fallen trees) and man-made (e.g., shopping carts, telephone poles, tires), to enhance in-channel habitat conditions and improve flow capacity.

Action SMP-12. Develop a suite of voluntary bioengineered bank stabilization designs and accompanying guidance on the appropriate use of each design that considers site conditions and constraints. Guidance will include information if hydraulic analysis is necessary for each design. Designs will be applicable to a range of conditions encountered within the management area.

DRAFT Memorandum

To:	Salinas River Long-Term Management Plan Planning Group
From:	Consultant Team
CC:	Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Date:	September 7, 2018
Re:	**Salinas River Lagoon Management Background and Potential Objectives, Management Issues, and Actions for Long-Term Management Plan Integration**

Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA) is leading development of a long-term management plan (LTMP) for the Salinas River, including the lagoon that forms when a seasonal sandbar blocks the river from entering Monterey Bay. The LTMP will include management objectives and actions for the Salinas River system, including the management of flows, water quality, and the sandbar at the mouth of the lagoon. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide background on the history of lagoon management and planning, summarize on-going management issues, and to propose a series of objectives and actions that, if implemented, have potential to reduce flooding and improve habitat conditions.

The summary information in this memorandum is primarily drawn from the Salinas River Lagoon Management and Enhancement Plan (Salinas River Lagoon MEP) and monitoring reports authored by the MCWRA, FISHBIO, and Hagar Environmental Sciences. The potential management objectives and actions are drafted based on on-going or incomplete recommended measures in the Salinas River Lagoon MEP and from a Working Group meeting held on August 3, 2018. The purpose of the Working Group meeting was to discuss ongoing management challenges and opportunities related to the Salinas River lagoon, and recommended management actions to inform LTMP development. The Working Group meeting was attended by the following individuals.

- Brian O'Neill, California Coastal Commission
- Sarah Paulson, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Tom Gandesbery, California State Coastal Conservancy
- Amy Palkovic, California State Parks
- Ross Clark, Central Coast Wetlands Group

- Kim Sanders, Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
- David Shaman, Coastal Biologist
- Dale Huss, Grower
- Henry (Hank) Balone, Landowner
- Mike Scattini, Landowner
- Brent Buche, Monterey County Water Resources Agency
- Elizabeth Krafft, Monterey County Water Resources Agency
- Shaunna Murray, Monterey County Water Resources Agency
- Tom Bugary, Monterey Dunes Colony
- Bill Stevens, National Marine Fisheries Service
- Paul Robins, Resource Conservation District of Monterey County
- Steve Shimek, The Otter Project
- Tim Frahm, Trout Unlimited
- Jake Martin, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Diane Kodama, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Salinas River National Wildlife Refuge)
- Consultants:
    - Gina Bartlett, Consensus Building Institute (Facilitator)
    - Stephanie Horii, Consensus Building Institute
    - Dana Lee, FISHBIO
    - Tyler Pilger, FISHBIO
    - Paul Frank, FlowWest
    - Gordon Thrupp, Geosyntec
    - David Zippin, ICF
    - Danielle Tannourji, ICF
    - Kathryn Gaffney, ICF
    - Les Chau, Wood, Inc.

Background

The Salinas River Lagoon Task Force was formed in the late 1980s to address flooding, water quality, and ecological concerns in the estuary, lagoon, and surrounding uplands. The Lagoon Task Force was composed of federal, state, and local agencies along with local agricultural

representatives, landowners, non-profit organizations as well as other local and regional organizations.

The Lagoon Task Force worked with a consulting team between 1990 and 1996 to prepare and review the Salinas River Lagoon MEP. The Salinas River Lagoon MEP—which put forth 27 recommended measures to be implemented primarily by the MCWRA and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)—was adopted by MCWRA in 1996 (Monterey County Water Resources Agency 1997). As described in the Salinas River Lagoon MEP, the Salinas River Lagoon project area included the lowermost end of the Salinas River system, starting just upstream of State Highway 1 (approximately 2 miles upstream from the mouth) and continuing downstream to the sandbar that separates the river from the Monterey Bay.

Now, in 2018, the Salinas River Lagoon MEP-recommended measures provide a starting point for evaluating the status and success of lagoon management over the last 20 years and proposing management objectives and actions for inclusion in the Salinas River LTMP. The recommended measures also provide insight into the assumptions about lagoon function.

Table 1 includes all 27 recommended measures in the Salinas River Lagoon MEP and provides the status of implementation.

Table 1. Recommended Measures from Salinas River Lagoon Management and Enhancement Plan

Recommended Measures		Implementing Entity	Status
1	Accommodate higher winter lagoon water elevations, between 4 and 5 feet	MCWRA, Landowners, CCC	Ongoing
2	Install and operate the new OSR slidegate system in accordance with breaching plan	MCWRA	Complete
3	Install a water level monitoring gage	MCWRA	Complete
4	Minimize short duration breaches by using OSR Channel when dredged	MCWRA	In Progress
5	Encourage riparian enhancement measures by Highway 1 bridge	CCC, RCD, Lagoon Task Force	Unknown
6	Encourage program to enhance riparian habitat within the project area	CCC, Lagoon Task Force, Landowners	Unknown
7	Implement enhancement and management measures within fore dunes and dune scrub	CCC, CDPR, USFWS	Ongoing
8	Maintain permitted facilities where necessary on north bank of slopes	MCWRA	Unknown
9	Monitor the Monterey slender-flowered gilia population on public property	CDPR	Unknown
10	Implement habitat enhancement on a portion of the USFWS refuge	USFWS	Ongoing
11	Reduce hunting activity within sensitive areas on USFWS property	USFWS	Complete
12	Maintain the quality of Smith's Blue Butterfly habitat on public property	USFWS	Ongoing

Recommended Measures		Implementing Entity	Status
13	Control public recreational use to avoid impacting wildlife	USFWS	Ongoing
14	Manage the pond on the USFWS refuge to maintain wildlife values	USFWS	Ongoing
15	Encourage management of boating activities to protect sensitive species	USFWS	Ongoing
16	Control red fox populations	USFWS, CDPR	Ongoing
17	Protect snowy plover habitat on public property in the study area	USFWS	Ongoing
18	Install bird nest boxes and bat roost boxes on public properties	USFWS	Measure Replaced
19	Establish baseline salinity levels in the OSR to operate double weir and enhance freshwater fisheries habitat in the lagoon	MCWRA	Unknown
20	Evaluate the potential to reintroduce native freshwater species, enhance Sacramento blackfish/perch community.	CDFW, USFWS	Unknown
21	Evaluate the potential to reintroduce tidewater goby into the lagoon	CDFW, USFWS	Complete
22	Establish a sediment and water quality monitoring program	MCWRA, RWQCB, Lagoon Task Force, AMBAG	Water Quality Monitoring Ongoing; Sediment Monitoring Unknown
23	Encourage participation in the Water Quality Protection Plan by the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary	MCWRA, RWQCB, Lagoon Task Force, MBNMS	Unknown
24	Develop a public use and access plan on public properties	Lagoon Task Force	Unknown
25	Recognize the ability of property owners to make necessary and permitted improvements	CDFW	Unknown
26	Operation of culvert shall not increase flooding or excess salinity along the OSR	MCWRA	Unknown
27	Form Interagency/Property Owners' Management Committee	MCWRA, CCC, CDPR, Lagoon Task Force, Landowners, USFWS	Unknown

Source: Salinas River Lagoon Management and Enhancement Plan 1997.
AMBAG: Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments
CCC: California Coastal Conservancy
CDPR: California Department of Parks and Recreation
CDFW: California Department of Fish and Wildlife
MCWRA: Monterey County Water Resources Agency
MBNMS: Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
RCD: Resource Conservation District
RWQCB: Regional Water Quality Control Board
USFWS: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
WQPP: Water Quality Protection Program

Special-Status Species

Federally listed species known to occur in the lagoon include:

- South-Central California Coast steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) (threatened);
- Tidewater goby (*Eucyclogobius newberryi*) (endangered); and
- Western snowy plover (*Charadrius nivosus nivosus*) (threatened).

Since lagoon monitoring began in 2002, steelhead presence has been recorded in the lagoon in only two years: 2011 and 2012 (Hagar Environmental Sciences 2012, 2013). In 2011, one fish was captured in each of May, July, and October, for a total of three fish; the October fish was an adult. In 2012, one juvenile was captured during April surveying. Tidewater goby was discovered during October 2013 fish surveys (Hagar Environmental Sciences 2015).

The most recent fish surveys were conducted on April 2014. Although fish seining was hampered by dense rooted aquatic vegetation and floating algal mats, tidewater goby were captured and found to be abundant. No steelhead were captured. July 2014 fish surveys were attempted but abandoned due to excessive algal growth. Given the lagoon did not open until January of 2017, fish surveys were also abandoned in 2015 and 2016 for the same reasons as noted above.

Monitoring of adult steelhead migration and juvenile migration and rearing in the upper reaches of the Salinas and lower reaches of the Nacimiento and Arroyo Seco have been implemented since 2009 with reporting through the 2014 monitoring season. Results from that monitoring indicate steelhead are successfully breeding and rearing in the watershed, though in low numbers.

Western snowy plovers nest along the beaches of Monterey Bay, including the beach at the mouth of the Salinas River. In 2017, nests were found directly to the north and south of the mouth of the Salinas River (Neuman et al. 2017). California red-legged frogs are not known to be present in the lagoon although there are some occurrences of larvae and juveniles in the portions of the Salinas just upstream from the lagoon (California Department of Fish and Wildlife 2018).

Regulatory History

In 2002, the MCWRA applied to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) for a permit under Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 (dredge and fill of waters of the U.S.) to construct projects proposed under the Salinas Valley Water Project, including construction of the Salinas River Diversion Facility. When a project requires a permit under the CWA, the Corps (as a federal agency) is required by Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to consult (seek a take permit and confirm no jeopardy to a listed species) with the appropriate Service (NMFS or USFWS, depending on the listed species in question). Consultation with NMFS resulted in MCWRA preparing the Salinas Valley Water Project Flow Prescription for Steelhead Trout (Flow Prescription) in 2005. The Flow Prescription defines flow requirements and operational targets for managing steelhead trout in the Salinas River. The Flow Prescription was incorporated into the NMFS Biological Opinion for the SVWP, ultimately issued in 2007. The Biological Opinion also requires monitoring of lagoon and riverine water quality, flow, and steelhead habitat, distribution, and population.

USFWS (2007) issued a Biological Opinion for Salinas Valley Water Project activities, and breaching of the Salinas River Lagoon to prevent flooding. The USFWS BO addressed the effects of the SVWP on the federally threatened California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*) and western snowy plover (*Charadrius nivosus nivosus*), and the federally endangered brown pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*), which was subsequently delisted 2009. No effects or "take" of these species were anticipated from the Nacimiento spillway modifications; however, the USFWS found that construction of the SRDF and changes in flow regimes could result in effects to California red-legged frog. USFWS also found that changes in flow regimes and concomitant changes in breaching at the Salinas River Lagoon could affect western snowy plover and brown pelicans.

In 2009, NMFS issued a draft Biological Opinion to the Corps for sandbar management. However, after issuance of the Biological Opinions, the Corps determined that it does not have jurisdiction over management of the sandbar because sandbar management actions do not affect Waters of the U.S. Thus, NMFS did not issue a final Biological Opinion or Incidental Take Statement for effects that sandbar breeching and associated lagoon changes might have on steelhead.

In a letter to NMFS, dated August 5, 2016, the Corps reinitiated ESA consultation with NMFS for the SVWP permit. MCWRA staff has been meeting regularly with NMFS since September 2016 to determine the content updates to be included in the new BO that is anticipated to be issued in the next year or so. The new BO will likely be only a 3-year permit, leaving both the operations of the San Antonio and Nacimiento reservoirs and SVWP facilities without take coverage for steelhead under the ESA.

Through the reinitiation of consultation, the Corps has indicated that there is no federal nexus for sandbar management activities. As such, MCWRA anticipates that sandbar management will require coverage under a future habitat conservation plan (HCP), with permits issued by both NMFS and USFWS, in order to be in compliance with the ESA.

Monitoring

MCWRA monitors the below variables to inform lagoon management and to meet permit requirements.

- Steelhead and goby presence in the lagoon (spring, summer, and fall surveys)
- Adult migration, juvenile outmigration and juvenile rearing (annual surveys in the upper watershed)
- Streamflow throughout the watershed
- Lagoon and upper watershed water quality
- Water levels and quality at the Salinas River Diversion Facility
- Lagoon surface water elevation
- Reservoir releases

Current Management Issues

MCWRA has been managing the lagoon consistent with the Salinas River Lagoon MEP, the 2007 USFWS Biological Opinion, and the draft 2009 NMFS Biological Opinion. However, key management issues persist. The primary challenge is minimizing the risk of flooding while maintaining or enhancing habitat for native species. Flooding of adjacent agricultural fields incurs a significant financial loss to farmers; however, the management of surface water elevation can limit the quantity and quality of habitat for steelhead, tidewater goby, and western snowy plover. The below sections detail current constraints and considerations for lagoon management.

Lagoon Elevation, Sandbar Management, and Flooding

When the sandbar is in place, lagoon elevation is managed between 3.0 and 3.5 feet above sea level; flooding of adjacent lands begins when elevation reaches approximately 5.5 feet. Lagoon elevation is primarily controlled by the OSR slidegate and Potrero tidegates. An adjacent waterway, the Tembladero Slough, drains a significant watershed and outlets into the OSR upstream of the Potrero tidegates. This can limit outflow from the lagoon, causing elevations to raise with limited inflow from the Salinas River. Currently, when water elevation reaches 5 feet and inflows to the lagoon are predicted to increase (as a result of a storm event), preparations are made for an emergency breach of the lagoon. During preparations for sandbar breaching, lagoon elevation can reach 7 or 8 feet.

Flooding primarily affects agricultural lands to the north of the lagoon. When agricultural lands are flooded, it destroys or degrades crops such that they cannot be sold, washes away topsoil, and can change the chemical composition of the soil. Food safety regulations also prohibit replanting for a period of 60 days or more for certain crop types. During large storm events, flooding can also inundate homes and threaten infrastructure including roads and bridges.

Breaching of the sandbar is performed during a storm event as high flows increase the scour potential at the mouth; if the flows are not high enough to scour the sand out of the river mouth, the sandbar has increased potential to form again soon after the breach. The timing of sandbar breach is also an important consideration for steelhead as their life history requires ocean connectivity. If the sandbar is not breached until later in the winter or spring season, this can delay adult steelhead migration which begins at the end of December and continues on through April. Similarly, if the sandbar closes early in the spring, the number of out migrating juveniles that reach the ocean will be limited. In dry years, river flow events may not be large enough to trigger sandbar breaching (natural or artificial), leaving the sandbar in place for a year or more. This most recently occurred when the sandbar was closed between January 2013 to January 2017.

The timing and location of an artificial sandbar breach must also consider the western snowy plover nesting season. Plovers nest on the beach near the mouth of the Salinas River between March 1 and September 30. If artificial sandbar breaching occurs during this time, the presence of people and construction equipment may cause plovers to either not nest or abandon their nests, or it may result in destruction of nests if they are washed away as the breach occurs.

Tidewater gobies benefit from a relatively stable surface water elevation provided when the sandbar is in place and have a tolerance for a wide range of salinities and oxygen concentrations.

However, if there is a need for sandbar management during the late spring or early summer, or the lagoon stays open for most or all of the summer, this could disrupt the goby breeding season which begins in late spring and continues through to early fall. Because goby live an average of one year, the loss of one breeding season could limit overall survival potential in the Salinas lagoon. In addition, tidewater goby overwintering survival is highly dependent on a large population going into the fall and winter; because large flood events often sweep most individuals out to the ocean, a large population increases the potential for some individuals to survive winter events. It is these survivors that will comprise the initial breeding population the following summer.

Infrastructure

Water management infrastructure around the lagoon affects how the lagoon is managed. The OSR slidegate separates the Salinas River lagoon from the OSR, and the OSR drains to Moss Landing Harbor through the Potrero Road tidegates. The OSR slidegate is used to maintain surface water elevations in the lagoon. The slidegate is opened when the sandbar closes. The slidegate allows water from the Salinas River to "spill out" when it reaches approximately 3 feet. The slidegate is not ideal for surface water management because it allows the fresh, oxygenated surface water to exit the lagoon. Allowing freshwater to exit the lagoon slows or stops the conversion of the lagoon from a salinity stratified system with poor bottom water quality to a more uniformly freshwater system; allowing the freshwater to remain within the lagoon could slowly convert the lagoon to a freshwater system and thus maximize habitat quantity and quality for rearing steelhead. Tidewater gobies have a wide range of salinity tolerance and are generally able to reproduce so long as the lagoon is formed and relatively stable in elevation.

The Potrero Road tidegates are a series of flap gates that are located at the northern end of the OSR. Water exits the channel and enters the harbor through these gates. The purpose of these gates is to reduce the amount of salt water that can enter the OSR and degrade the quality of surrounding agricultural lands through water quality and inundation of land from high tides. The Potrero Road tidegates limit the volume of water that can exit the lagoon because the function of the gates is subject to tidal levels: at high tides, the surface water elevation is raised and the pressure from the water flow caused by the rising tide keeps the flapgates closed. Thus, the function of the OSR as a mechanism for controlling surface water elevations is limited during high tides.

The size of the OSR channel, along with the diameter of the culverts at the OSR slidegate and the Potrero Road tidegates, limits the volume of water that can be transported out of the lagoon. This limits the ability of MCWRA to manage surface water elevations during large storm events; water cannot be carried out of the lagoon fast enough to keep up with inflow and the water elevation starts to rise. To compound this management issue, Temblardo Slough also contributes water to the OSR. During dry weather, most of this discharge is in the form of agricultural runoff returns. However, during storm events, the flows from Tembladero Slough increase dramatically. It has even been observed that with zero flow from the Salinas River, flows from the Tembladero Slough are capable of causing flooding.

The Salinas River Diversion Facility became operational in 2010. As a permit condition for facility operation, the NMFS Biological Opinion flow prescription requires the MCWRA release 15 cubic feet

per second to the lagoon through June 30, then 2 cubic feet per second when three primary conditions are met:

- the Salinas River Diversion Facility is operational (i.e., the rubber dam is inflated),
- the sandbar is closed, and
- a certain reservoir storage capacity is met (220,000 acre feet).

The Salinas River Diversion Facility is more likely to be operational and the storage conditions are more likely to be met in normal or wet years, or one year after a normal or wet year. The result is that in dry years, when the river is more likely to be naturally dry, there is no mechanism to provide for artificial, reservoir releases to the lagoon. That is, the flow prescription required as a result of Salinas River Diversion Facility operation has no provision for freshwater input into the lagoon during a dry summer when it is likely most critical for species.

Water Quality

Water quality conditions vary with water year and the status of the sandbar; when the sandbar is open and when freshwater inflows are high, water quality is good. When the sandbar is closed and freshwater inflows are low or absent, water quality can be poor.

Water quality degradation occurs, primarily as the result of water column stratification, particularly in the summer. The water column stratifies with the more dense saline water on the bottom becoming isolated from the fresh surface water layer. As a result of no mixing between layers in the water column, bottom water becomes hypoxic (< 2 mg/l) or anoxic (0 mg/l) and surface waters experience diurnal (daily) fluctuations in dissolved oxygen concentrations. These diurnal fluctuations are a result of oxygen levels becoming “super saturated” (> 15 mg/l) during the day as a result plant respiration and then dropping at night when microbial and animal respiration continue without the oxygen input from plants.

Warm temperatures and stagnant water fosters “blooms” of rooted and floating vegetation which is exacerbated by nutrient inputs from agricultural and urban sources. Chemical toxins such as Diazinon and Chlropyrifos remain in the system, rather than being flushed out to the ocean and diluted. Prior to 2010, freshwater inflows from the upper watershed were typically low or non-existent in the summer and fall. Since 2010 and the operation of the Salinas River Diversion Facility, freshwater inflows to the lagoon are a requirement of the SVWP permits.

It has been noted in other Central California coastal systems (e.g., Pescadero) that inflow quantity can influence water quality. With freshwater inflows, the denser saltwater is slowly “pushed” out of the lagoon, primarily as a result of subsurface flow through the sandbar. When the lagoon “converts” to a freshwater system, and the stratification is removed, water quality can improve. When water quality improves, the extent of habitat and steelhead prey abundance increases.

Potential Management Objectives and Actions for the LTMP to Address Lagoon Management Needs

The following potential management objectives and actions were drafted based on the Salinas River Lagoon MEP and the outcomes of the Working Group meeting for the Salinas River Lagoon.

Objectives are targets that will be sought to achieve a given goal. Objectives are typically quantitative or at least measurable. Objectives describe a specific desired outcome.

Actions are specific activities that will be carried out to meet the associated objectives. Actions describe how objectives can be achieved. A single action can support multiple objectives.

Objective LAG-1. Develop a feasible and implementable (i.e., can be permitted by regulatory agencies) floodwater management program that reduces flooding while allowing MCWRA to meet all of its jurisdictional and regulatory obligations. Include an assessment of inflows to the OSR from both the lagoon and Tembladero Slough, areas most vulnerable to flooding when the OSR is at capacity, and inter-annual variability in lagoon conditions.

Action LAG-1. Recognize the ability of property owners to make necessary and permitted improvements. (Source: Salinas River Lagoon MEP, Measure 25.)

Action LAG-2. Accommodate higher winter lagoon water elevations, between 4 and 5 feet. (Source: Salinas River Lagoon MEP, Measure 1.)

Action LAG-3. Evaluate the condition of current infrastructure, including if it is in good operating condition and if the infrastructure is providing the service for which is was designed. Consider infrastructure adjustments that could help better manage water levels and salinity in the lagoon and OSR. (Source: Partially adapted from Salinas River Lagoon MEP, Measure 26.)

Action LAG-4. Explore the viability of new engineered solutions for flood management (e.g., levees). Include an assessment of existing infrastructure that are affected by flooding (e.g., Twin Bridges).

Action LAG-5. Consider the establishment of a lagoon management committee. (Source: Salinas River Lagoon MEP, adapted from Measure 27.)

Action LAG-6. Develop a sandbar management approach that provides clear guidelines and triggers for implementing a breech that is considerate of steelhead and plover.

Action LAG-7. Investigate the potential for establishing flood easements (payment to landowners in exchange for the ability to flood lands under certain conditions) on targeted agricultural lands. Assess the implications of flooding agricultural lands including issues related to food safety requirements. Also evaluate the financial costs and benefits of flooding targeted agricultural lands in the context of the landowner/grower and the larger Salinas Valley basin.

Action LAG-8. Investigate the potential for flow attenuation through reservoir management (including construction and operation of the Interlake Tunnel) and retaining floodflows upstream of the lagoon.

Action LAG-9. Evaluate the effects of downstream flooding related to impermeable surface run-off, including plastic tarps used for agricultural purposes. Consider relative contribution of different runoff sources and the associated effects of higher peak flows and velocities. Identify approaches to ameliorate the effects of increased surface runoff.

Action LAG-10. Conduct a study of lagoon and OSR bathymetry and changes to the bathymetry over the period of the study to better understand how the sediment levels of the lagoon and OSR shift over time and identify if there are opportunities to increase the capacity of the lagoon and OSR.

Objective LAG-2. Maintain flows and habitat conditions in the Salinas River sufficient to maintain connectivity for steelhead between the lagoon and areas in the upper watershed suitable for spawning.

Action LAG-11. Accommodate higher winter lagoon water elevations, between 4 and 5 feet. (Source: Salinas River Lagoon MEP, Measure 1.)

Action LAG-12. Minimize short duration breaches by using OSR Channel when dredged. (Source: Salinas River Lagoon MEP, Measure 4.)

Action LAG-13. Continue the current sediment and water quality monitoring program. (Source: Salinas River Lagoon MEP, adapted from Measure 22.)

Action LAG-14. Develop a reservoir flow release prescription that defines when and under what conditions in-stream flows will be established and maintained for steelhead.

Action LAG-15. Develop a sandbar management approach that provides clear guideline and triggers for implementing a breech that is considerate of listed species habitat needs.

Action LAG-16. Assess existing data to better understand the correlation between upstream flows on the Salinas and in-channel flows capable of supporting steelhead migration.

Action LAG-17. Evaluate alternative steelhead migration corridors, including through the OSR, when the sandbar is closed.

Objective LAG-3. Manage the lagoon to provide suitable habitat for tidewater goby and rearing steelhead.

Action LAG-18. Establish baseline salinity levels in the OSR to operate double weir and enhance freshwater fisheries habitat in the lagoon. (Source: Salinas River Lagoon MEP, Measure 19.)

Action LAG-19. Restore marsh plain and backwater refugia habitat for steelhead and tidewater goby that provide foraging habitat for juvenile steelhead and freshwater refugia habitat for tidewater goby.

Objective LAG-4. Protect and manage snowy plover habitat on public property. (Source: Salinas River Lagoon MEP, Measure 17.)

Action LAG-20. Control red fox populations. (Source: Salinas River Lagoon MEP, Measure 16.)

Action LAG-21. Develop a sandbar management approach that provides clear guideline and triggers for implementing a breech that is considerate of steelhead and plover.

Objective LAG-5. Improve aquatic and upland habitat in and surrounding the lagoon.

Action LAG-22. Enhance riparian habitat around the lagoon, including by the Highway 1 bridge. (Source: Salinas River Lagoon MEP, Measures 5 and 6 combined.)

Action LAG-23. Implement enhancement and management measures within fore dunes and dune scrub to improve ecosystem function, including stabilizing the sand and providing wave attenuation. (Source: Expanded from Salinas River Lagoon MEP, Measure 7.)

Action LAG-24. Monitor the Monterey slender-flowered gilia population on public property (source: Salinas River Lagoon MEP, Measure 9) and identify habitat enhancement needs.

Action LAG-25. Develop a public use and access plan on public properties, including measures to avoid and minimize potential effects on sensitive habitats and wildlife. (Source: Salinas River Lagoon MEP, adapted from Measure 13 and 24.)

Action LAG-26. Evaluate the potential to reintroduce native freshwater species, enhance Sacramento blackfish/perch community. (Source: Salinas River Lagoon MEP, Measure 20.)

Action LAG-27. Conduct a study to better understand the relationship between retention of sand in the reservoirs and replenishment of the sand dunes at the mouth of the Salinas River. Based on the results of the study, consider adaptive management approaches to reduce the adverse effects of reduced sediment in the Salinas River system.

Action LAG-28. Develop an invasive species management plan that addresses, at a minimum, invasive plants and striped bass. May require an initial assessment of the current status of invasive species in and around the lagoon.

Objective LAG-6. Assess current water quality issues in the lagoon and identify approaches to reduce pollutant sources.

Action LAG-29. Encourage participation in the Water Quality Protection Plan by the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary**.** (Source: Salinas River Lagoon MEP, Measure 23.)

Action LAG-30. Review the monitoring program currently being implemented by MCWRA, consider if changes are needed, and continue monitoring water quality in the lagoon.

Action LAG-31. Based on the results of MCWRA water quality monitoring, identify best management practices that could help better manage pollutants in the lagoon.

Objective LAG-7. Manage USFWS National Wildlife Refuge to support sensitive habitats and wildlife.

Action LAG-32. Implement habitat enhancement on a portion of the USFWS refuge. (Source: Salinas River Lagoon MEP, Measure 10)

Action LAG-33. Reduce hunting activity within sensitive areas on USFWS property. (Source: Salinas River Lagoon MEP, Measure 11)

Action LAG-34. Maintain the quality of Smith's Blue Butterfly habitat on public property. (Source: Salinas River Lagoon MEP, Measure 12)

Action LAG-35. Control public recreational use to avoid impacting wildlife. (Source: Salinas River Lagoon MEP, Measure 13)

Action LAG-36. Manage the pond on the USFWS refuge to maintain wildlife values (Source: Salinas River Lagoon MEP, Measure 14)

Action LAG-37. Control red fox populations. (Source: Salinas River Lagoon MEP, Measure 16.)

Stakeholder Engagement Charter

[Reviewed by Planning Group on 8/2/18. Updated 8/7/18]
Developed by the Consensus Building Institute

Purpose

The Monterey County Water Resources Agency (Agency) is developing the Salinas River Long-Term Management Plan (LTMP). The purpose of this charter is to outline the intent and operating guidelines for stakeholder engagement for developing the Long-Term Management Plan.

The Agency is convening a collaborative process to engage interested parties, landowners, technical experts, scientists, and the public in developing and shaping the plan. To support this process, the Agency is convening a broad-based planning group, issue-specific working groups, and other conversations as needed. The Agency will work with the planning group to develop and implement a communication and engagement plan to share information and solicit feedback from community members.

The Agency has received grant funding that requires it to develop the plan in 2018.

Roles and Responsibilities

Convener

The Agency is responsible for developing the Long-Term Management Plan, and its Board of Directors will consider approving the plan upon completion. The Agency is convening a planning group and working groups to support plan development. The convener commits to running a clear, transparent process. Staff represent the Agency and weigh in on planning group and working group deliberations. Staff will also develop materials to inform planning and working group discussions.

Planning Group

The planning group is made up of a broad group of individuals and organizational representatives including state and federal regulatory staff, landowners, land managers, agriculture representatives, water resource planners, advocacy staff, biological resource specialists, and other interested parties.

The role of the planning group is to shape the goals, components, and overall Long-Term Management Plan. The planning group problem solves on opportunities, challenges, and implementation. The planning group can recommend when issue-specific experts need to convene as a working group. The planning group shares information and promotes understanding about the plan. A vital outcome of planning group deliberations is to build widespread support and understanding for the Long-Term Management Plan and its implementation. Planning group meetings are open to the public. The membership list is included in the appendix to this charter.

Working Groups

Working groups delve into specific issues or process needs to provide insights and guidance to the Agency, consultants, and planning group. For instance, working groups will partner and problem solve with Agency staff and consultants to provide feedback on technical / scientific information and guide LTMP development from technical, scientific, political, socio-economic, and funding viewpoints. Working group members can help identify management issues and coordinate with landowners on solutions. Working groups meet as needed per the Agency, consultants, or planning group's recommendations. Working groups draw on experts from a range of disciplines that may or may not be active in the planning process.

Technical Consultants

Technical consultants work in close partnership with the Agency to conduct analyses and to develop the plan. The technical consultants will share information and draft materials to inform planning group and working group discussions. During planning group meetings, technical consultants will provide expertise and answer planning group and working group member questions; however, technical consultants do not weigh in on planning group final recommendations.

Facilitator

The facilitator will be Gina Bartlett with Consensus Building Institute. The facilitator will design meetings and guide the process toward achieving mutually agreed-upon purpose and goals. The facilitator will work with all the parties to ensure the process is credible, fair, and effective. The facilitator will facilitate meetings, identify and synthesize points of agreement and disagreement, and assist in building consensus among members. Another key role of the facilitator will be to serve as a confidential communication channel for planning group and working group members, as well as other stakeholders. This allows stakeholders who wish to express views privately if they do not feel comfortable doing so in a larger group or to facilitate problem solving and conflict resolution.

If a planning group or working group member has a concern about neutrality or performance of the facilitator, s/he should raise the concern first with the facilitator and then with Elizabeth Krafft or Shaunna Murray of the Agency.

Decision-Making

The purpose of this stakeholder engagement process is to develop a Long-Term Management Plan with widespread support. As such, the planning group and working groups will strive for consensus in its decisions and recommendations. The Agency will be the ultimate decision maker on plan content given that the plan must be complete in 2018. However, the Agency is committed to working with interested parties and stakeholders through the planning group and working groups to reach agreement (as much as possible) on the plan.

The definition of consensus is that everyone can at least "live with" the decision or recommendation. A member can "stand aside" and let the group reach consensus. This would still constitute a consensus agreement and outcome.

When unable to reach consensus, the group will summarize different perspectives in the meeting summary for the Agency to consider in its final decision-making.

Process Agreements

All Planning Group meetings are open to the public.

Everyone agrees to negotiate in good faith. All participants agree to participate in decision making, to act in good faith in all aspects of this effort, and to communicate their interests during meetings. Good faith also requires that parties not make commitments they do not intend to follow through with, and that parties act consistently in the meetings and in other forums where the issues under discussion in these meetings are also being discussed.

Everyone agrees to address the issues and concerns of all participants and create a problem-solving environment, treating concerns as problems to be solved rather than battles to be won. All the parties agree to consider the issues and concerns of the other parties and strive to reach an agreement that takes all the issues under consideration.

Everyone agrees to inform their leadership and constituents about the outcome of the facilitated discussions.

Agreements stand even if representatives change. If an organization changes its representatives, organizations commit to a thorough debriefing of new representatives with the facilitator. New representatives agree to uphold previous agreements reached.

Working Together

Participants and the facilitator will work together to create a problem-solving environment and follow these agreements to that aim:

- Listen to understand
- Encourage others to contribute
- Focus on the topic
- All ideas and points of view have value
- Be honest, fair, and as candid as possible
- Think innovatively and welcome new ideas, creative thinking, and problem solving
- Invite humor and good will
- Be comfortable

Communication and Media

The facilitator, in cooperation with the planning group and the Agency, will develop a communication plan to organize briefings and information about the plan. The facilitator will provide meeting summaries; each will begin with a concise description of meeting highlights and outcomes, intended for participants to easily share with others.

Participants reserve the freedom to express their own opinions to media representatives, but not opinions of others nor on behalf of the planning group or working groups. Participants can refer media inquiries to other members for individual comments, or to Agency staff for comments on planning group or working group deliberations or outcomes.

If contacted by the press or an external party concerning the discussions, participants are asked to:

- Point out that they are not speaking on behalf of the group;
- Present their views only and conscientiously refrain from expressing, characterizing or judging the views of others; and
- Avoid using the press as a vehicle for negotiation.

The facilitator will avoid speaking with the media.

Planning Group Membership

Regulatory Agencies

California Department of Fish & Wildlife, Annee Ferranti and Sarah Paulson
Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, Phil Hammer or Mark Cassady
NOAA Fisheries, Bill Stevens
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Jake Martin or Leilani Takano
(Tentative) California Coastal Commission

Resource Issues: Scientists and Interest Groups

Water Quality and Lagoon Management: Monterey Bay Natural Marine Sanctuary, NOAA, Bridget Hoover, Director
Habitat / Wetlands and Lagoon Management: Central Coast Wetlands Group, Ross Clark, Kevin O'Connor
Fisheries: Trout Unlimited, Tim Frahm
Natural Resource Management (focus on steelhead habitat): Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District, Devin Best
Aquatic, Coastal: The Otter Project and Monterey Coastkeeper, Steve Shimek
Natural Resource Management (focus on vegetation management): Resource Conservation District of Monterey County, Paul Robins
Plants and Watershed Restoration: CSU Monterey Bay School of Natural Resources, Nicole (Nikki) Nedeff
Natural Resource Management: The Nature Conservancy, Abby Hart

(Tentative) Geomorphology: CSU Monterey Bay, Fred Watson

Stream Maintenance River Management Unit Association and Agriculture / Landowners

RMU Association Board Member David Costa, Costa Farms (mid-Valley)
RMU Association Member Merrill Farms, Allan Clark with alternate John Bramers (northern)
RMU Association Member Melissa Duflock, Rancho San Bernardo (south)
Water Quality and Operations Committee Chair Dale Huss (lagoon)
Eric Morgan, Braga with alternate Bill Lipe, Rava Farms and (south)
River Management Unit Association, Donna Meyers

Waters Operations and Groundwater Plan Coordination

Monterey County Water Resources Agency, Elizabeth Krafft, and Shaunna Murray
Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency, Gary Peterson, General Manager

Greenfield GSA, Curtis Weeks, General Manager
Marina Groundwater Sustainability Agency, Keith Van Der Maaten, General Manager
Monterey County Resource Management Agency, Melanie Beretti

Other

Salinas River Watershed Coordinator, Steph Wald
(Tentative) San Luis Obispo County
State Coastal Conservancy, Tom Gandesbery
Grower-Shipper Association of Monterey County, Abby Taylor Silva