



Appendix D

A Northern California Coastal Conservation Needs Assessment

Del Norte County Meeting Summary

The following is a summary of meeting notes and questionnaire responses collected at the Del Norte County Linking Land and Sea meeting held at the Rural Human Services meeting room on March 14, 2006. The meeting was attended by 23 people. Twelve people completed a *Regional Coastal Conservation Planning and/or Implementation Questionnaire*. The results were summarized by Ruth Blyther, project consultant, and include input from the group discussion and questionnaires.

I. Do we need more regional coastal conservation planning?

Written responses (12 total):

Yes – 6 total. Three people noted that the need was for marine and five for connecting marine and terrestrial plans. Two people noted the need for more terrestrial planning.

No – 0 total.

Maybe – 4 total. One person noted there was maybe a need for both marine and terrestrial planning.

Not Sure – 2 total. One person noted that Del Norte organizations have not been involved in the regional planning or marine planning efforts that were presented to them. This includes The Conservation Fund and The Nature Conservancy assessment/studies.

Comments (from group discussion and questionnaire):

We need a better understanding of what plans currently exist, and how they link together and compliment each other. Integration and implementation of existing plans seems to be absolutely necessary. There is a need not for more planning but for more coordination. Hard to know – depends on type of plan – management or conservation? That depends on ecosystem, marine or terrestrial.

We need to know more about the existing plans that are out there (most of the participants agreed).

Depends on what type of planning – management or conservation, they are not the same. Management plans have not been good socially/economically, for example there are two different planning processes dealing with same resources and they are conflicting like the Lake Earl Management Plan

A. If we need more regional coastal conservation planning, then what type of planning is needed?

a) Marine Planning –

b) Terrestrial Planning -

c) Address Connection between Terrestrial and Marine

Six of the respondents noted this as a need.

Comments:

An obvious connection would be the coastal streams feeding Lake Earl coastal lagoon. Sea and shorebirds cross between these to biomes and are easy for people to connect with and care about.

d) Specify Regional Priorities

Five people noted this as a need on the questionnaire.

Comments:

The Smith River Anadromous Fish Action Plan is a good plan for the region for salmonids.

Coastal streams are not always identified in plans but they are sub-hydrologic units.

Need assessment of water quality and other parameters in coastal streams and Lake Earl lagoon. There is no Lake Earl/Coastal stream plan, we need to prepare a restoration plan for Lake Earl.

Del Norte County Local Coastal Plan update is currently in progress.

e) Implementation Strategies for existing plans

Six people noted this as a need on the questionnaire.

Comments:

Two people noted that it is a priority to make sure there are funds to implement existing plans.

Yes, this needs to happen. We have the California Coho Recovery Strategy and should implement its recommendations. Implement the Smith River Anadromous Fish Action Plan.

Coordinate all plans into one vision.

f) Other – We need plans that

Four people identified this as a need and provided input.

Comments:

We need plans that:

- Summarize what already exists and once an idea of what is out there is obtained, look at the need within Del Norte County. Conservation needs that are the result of local input should be the only ones given high priority.
- Recognize the need to educate the public as to why plans are needed and how they will benefit the community.
- Action that addresses the impact of human activity on wildlife (vehicle-induced injuries, monofilament, deliberate cruelty, etc)

B. Who would be the target audience for such a plan? Who would use it?

Four people responded to this question.

Government Agencies (1) -

Implementation organizations (2) – Restoration volunteers

Private property owners (3) - Landowners.

General Public (2) – Residents of the county being affected. “I believe the county and its citizens would use a planning document if it looked at a facts based assessment of the current baseline.”

Other (3) – Commercial and sport fisherman.

2. Is there a need to integrate terrestrial and marine plans?

Six (50%) out of 12 people provided written response to this question, and all of them agreed that this is a need, although there was uncertainty about how it could be accomplished.

Comments:

Where do we start linking terrestrial with Marine? The audience wanted to hear feedback from the presenters. Jennifer Bloeser – Terrestrial planning is way ahead of marine planning. We need to work on bringing the detail and specificity of the marine planning up to match existing terrestrial plans and science.

Ruth Blyther – Linking terrestrial and marine has not been done in our region.

Monterey has habitat mapping off shore so folks can see what the habitat offshore consists of and what it looks like. Habitat mapping for the marine environment is being done to the south but has not been prioritized for this region.

A. How could this be done?

Integrating the marine and terrestrial plans can be accomplished by thinking of it as merely one plan. To integrate the two ecosystems in a plan consider watershed links to estuaries, coastal streams, and commercial and recreational user groups.

“It sure seems important for anadromous fish and all the ways they impact our

ecosystems and economy.” Look at where existing marine and terrestrial plans overlap.

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3. What do you think are the most important gaps in existing coastal conservation plans?

Eleven people responded to this question (92%).

Comments:

Important gaps include:

- Good facts based assessment on baseline data associated with what exists currently, what is the use of the area, and what are the current needs of existing conservation areas.
- Is there any room to include wildlife rehabilitation centers? I deal with seabirds and shore birds, but also receive raptors and passerines which are transported out of the area.
- Addressing commercial interests and resource-based industry (marine and watershed-based.)
- Dissemination of knowledge, plans, information. Need a huge public relations, public information blitz. Awareness of what is in the plans is thin, maybe non-existent.
- Need a strong educational component, so people can see that they ultimately will benefit from conservation.
- We need to have a list of local plans being used in our county for review.
- We don't have one large vision that includes issues from all plans.
- Estuaries.
- Del Norte has a lot of public land but few or no conservation plans. I would certainly say the Lake Earl lagoon and watershed deserves a conservation/restoration plan, but it doesn't have one.
- Education. Sea and shorebirds are a very good way to connect people to the estuary, near shore and ocean environment. The wild bird rescue centers and their volunteers are already doing a lot of education, with very small resources.

4. Do we need more specific (local geographic focus or resource focus) plans within the region?

A total of 9 people responded to this question. (Yes, 9).

A. If so what specific focus would you like to see?

Geographic focus

- Del Norte County; Elk Creek estuary; Smith River; Smith River estuary; Lake Earl Lagoon; Crescent City Harbor; Klamath River watershed wetland conservation plan.
- Coastal streams action plan for the area between the Klamath River and Oregon border.

- Restoration plan for Lake Earl Lagoon, wildlife area and watershed and for Tolowa Dunes State Park.

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Resource Focus

- Possibly include bird rehabilitation as mitigation for the creation of coastal bird trails. Need focus on education, and the wild bird rescue is a good vehicle for this.
- Summarize what is out there, see if there are needs, take the local temperature on such a synthesis, and find the funds if any “needs are identified.”
- Conservation plans, ditch the bogus “multi-use plans”. Conservation, preservation. Seventh generation kind of thesis.

5. We don't need more planning we need to focus on implementing the plans we already have.

A total of 11 people responded (92%). Strongly Agree, 3; Somewhat Agree, 1; Neutral, 5; Somewhat Disagree, 2; Strongly Disagree, 0

Comments:

Need to review what is out there to become more knowledgeable on the subject. Need for implementation and follow through. “Strongly agree if implementation means abandoning intrusive, recreational activities.”

There is a lot of agency land in Del Norte County, but agencies lack resources and money. They are under funded to manage what they have (example the Forest Service).