

Spring Update Letter

April, 2012

Dear Central Coast Wetland Managers and Scientists,

The members of the Central Coast Wetlands Group have been working hard since our last update in October, and we are excited to share our progress in building a collaborative community of wetland scientists and resource managers. Our current work includes the following:

Bar-built Estuaries Grant

CCWG was granted funding from the EPA to study California Bar-Built Estuaries (river/creek mouth lagoons). Some of the work for that grant includes:

Module development and data collection: We had a very productive TAC meeting combining office updates and a field visit to Lombardi lagoon. With input from our TAC and the Level 2 CRAM committee we have created a revised CRAM module for bar-built estuaries and will be collecting data this spring and summer using the new version. We will also be collecting more intensive data including plant surveys, topographic surveys, water quality testing, and ambient weather conditions.

Data Analysis: The CRAM data and intensive survey data will be analyzed for correlations.



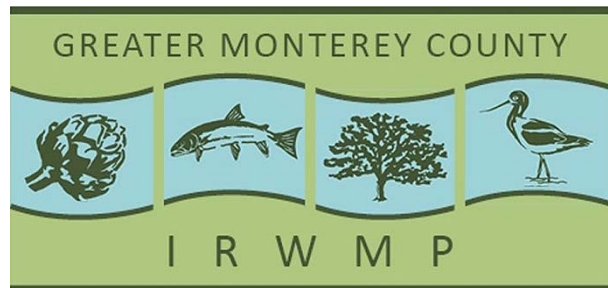
Exhibit Summary: An exhibit based on this research called “Coastal Lagoons, a Closer Look through Art, History and Science” was on display at the Santa Cruz Natural History Museum from October through the end of February. It was a huge success, with approximately 6,000 visitors learning about the importance of their local lagoons.

The team at the exhibit opening

Upcoming posters and presentations: At this stage in the grant, CCWG has completed enough work to begin presenting results. Ross recently gave a presentation at the Salmonid Restoration Federation Conference in Davis entitled “Historical loss and present day risks to central coast bar-built estuaries,” which is similar to a presentation he will give at the Headwaters to Ocean conference in San Diego at the end of May. Sierra will also be at the H2O conference presenting information on the exhibit, entitled “Using innovative partnerships to bring current scientific research to a broad public audience.” Additionally, CCWG will have a poster up at the Sanctuary Currents Symposium on April 14th.

Integrated Regional Water Management Plan

CCWG has been working closely with the Regional Water Management Group for Greater Monterey County to develop and finalize the IRWMP necessary to be eligible for several funding sources including Prop 84. In addition to attending meetings and participating in multiple subcommittees, CCWG helped to write and is now working on both the Planning Grant and Implementation Grant. Read more below!



The new IRWMP logo

IRWMP Planning Grant

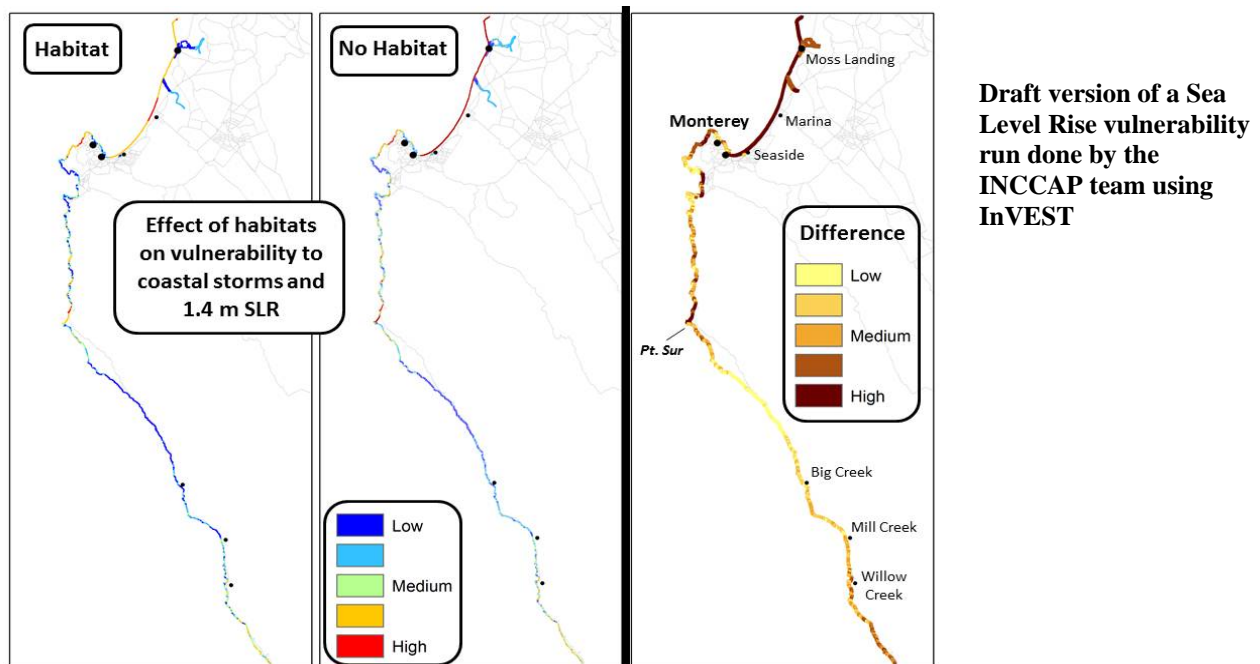
The Planning Grant for the IRWMP is now in full swing. CCWG will be involved in the following:

Water Resource Project Coordination: The Gabilan Watershed is the site of so many projects submitted to the IRWMP, the RWMG decided that the regular project integration process would not be sufficient to ensure that all the potential conflicts and possible collaborations are resolved in advance. To address this, the Group requested funding for coordination. Since the last update, the first Stakeholder meeting outlining the process has been held, and we are currently in the process of hiring a facilitator. The next meeting will take place soon.

Web Development: CCWG is working closely with the Data Management Subcommittee to design and build a website that can easily integrate general IRWMP information, project specific information, and some project data. There have been some exciting developments. We have decided that the best way to present data will be through two websites: “www.greatermontereyirwmp.org” will feature information on the IRWMP and useful regional background information; “www.ccactiontracker.org” will feature project location and information through a web based mapping portal that will include IRWMP, RCD, and other projects as well as a compilation of Central Coast spatial data.

Economic Feasibility Analysis: CCWG is working with other RWMG members to develop an economic feasibility section for the Plan. With the help of an economist, the analysis will include the synthesis of existing data and preliminary valuations of environmental services. It will also provide guidance to project proponents on how to write the benefits analysis section of their applications.

Climate Change Analysis: CCWG is writing the Climate Change chapter for the IRWMP including a vulnerability analysis and risk assessment process. We are working with the INCCAP (Incorporating Natural Capital into Climate Adaption Planning) project team, a collaboration between the Center for Ocean Solutions, the Natural Capital Project and the Nature Conservancy. We are using the InVEST tool (Integrated Valuation of Environmental Services and Tradeoffs) developed by the Natural Capital Project to model the vulnerability and risk to habitat and infrastructure under multiple climate change scenarios. For more information on InVEST, visit the website <http://www.naturalcapitalproject.org/InVEST.html>.



IRWMP Implementation Grant

CCWG was one of the organizations that submitted a project to the first round of IRWMP implementation funding through the Greater Monterey County. The contracting for this project has been slow, but it is picking up now. CCWG is working on the following:

Watershed Approach to Water Quality Solutions is a project in which we are partnering with the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and the Monterey County Resource Conservation District. Integrated Watershed Restoration Program funds provided by the

Coastal Conservancy and distributed by Monterey County RCD are currently being used for planning and permitting of restoration along Santa Rita Creek in Salinas. That project is almost wrapped up now and we hope to begin implementation this summer. The greenhouse is gearing up for a lot of planting!

CCWG is the lead on the proposal, *Water quality enhancement of the Tembladero Slough and Public Access for the Community of Castroville*, which is the first phase of a project that hopes to restore or enhance 16 acres of land in and around the lower Gabilan watershed as well as provide for coordination within the region for issues regarding restoration. We have been talking with both local landowners and the Regional Board to find a way to integrate our wetlands into practices that will meet everyone's needs.



Figure 1 Example of the type of restoration CCWG hopes to implement with the IRWMP grant.

Grant Applications

CCWG submitted two grant applications this winter. We do not know yet whether or not they will be funded:

SWRCB 319 h- A Watershed Approach to Tracking and Quantifying TMDL Reduction for Watsonville Slough and the Lower Pajaro River: This project will focus on the lower Pajaro River Subwatershed which flows into both the lower Pajaro River and Watsonville Slough system before reaching the Monterey Bay Sanctuary. The project will focus on the agriculture and rural areas within watershed where Erosion and Agricultural management efforts are underway, (approximately 90% of the overall watershed). The subwatershed suffers from water quality impairments caused by Bacteria (Pajaro River and Watsonville Slough) and Sediment (Pajaro River). Tasks include:

- Establish a comprehensive nomenclature of load reduction/ water quality management measure activities
- Complete a Water Quality Management Measure Inventory
- Establish and Test Load Reduction Estimation Methods:
 - Proof-of-concept load reduction value estimate
 - Management Measures evaluation

- Advise MM Implementation type and location
- Support regional adoption of the developed nomenclature and inventory techniques

USEPA WPD-Development of New Tools to Assess Riparian Extent and Condition-A Central



Coast Pilot Study : Through the development of new tools to assess riparian habitat extent and condition, this project will pilot the State’s Wetland and Riparian Area Monitoring Plan (WRAMP) to better manage riparian and riverine resources, integrate multiple monitoring and regulatory programs and stand as a model for rural and agricultural regions around the state. This proposal is in part a response to RB3’s specific request to develop tools and capabilities that support their “Vision of Healthy Watersheds.” The four major tasks are: 1) Project administration, reporting, and formation of a Riparian TAC, 2) Map all riparian resources on the Central Coast using newly developed GIS methodologies, 3) Use of Level 1-2-3 data to evaluate a new Remote Riparian Assessment Method to support State riparian protection

policy development, and 4) Expand the Riparian Area Mapping Tool to allow integration of aerial imagery into its analysis and allow for the tracking of temporal change in riparian habitat extent.

Statewide Wetland Monitoring Strategy

CCWG continues to represent the Central Coast at the meetings of the California Wetland Monitoring Workgroup and the Level 2 Committee of the CWMW.

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/mywaterquality/monitoring_council/wetland_workgroup/

CRAM Reference Network

Over the past several months CCWG staff worked with our north coast partners to select 3 reference sites on the north coast for depressional wetlands. For each of these 3 sites we have put together a site packet that describes the location, the CRAM score it received and justification for that score. These packets will be uploaded to the CRAM website for use by CRAM practitioners.

Upcoming CRAM projects

CCWG is actively involved in the development of new CRAM modules. We are working with the

San Francisco Estuary Institute and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board on a module for wet meadows and will be conducting field testing at 12 sites in the Sierra Nevada this summer. We will also be field testing the new Depressional CRAM module along gradients of hydroperiod and condition throughout the state, along with partners from the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project and Roberts Environmental and Conservation Planning LLC. The effort to assess ephemeral arid streams will also begin this summer.

Upcoming Events

CRAM Trainings: CCWG will be offering CRAM trainings for riverine and estuarine wetlands this summer, <http://www.cramwetlands.org/training.html>

- PART 1—June 4-6, 2012: CRAM Riverine Training in Moss Landing, CA
- PART 2—June 7-8, 2012: CRAM Estuarine Training in Moss Landing, CA (Part 1 is a prerequisite)

Watershed workshop: CCWG is partnering with the Sacramento River Watershed Program, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and others to host the first in a series of Watershed Management Technical Assistance workshops on June 18th-19th. More information will be available on our website shortly.

MLML Open House: The Moss Landing Marine Labs Open House is April 21-22nd from 10am-5pm. Come watch the puppet show, enter the raffle, and tour the labs. The event is free and fun for adults and children alike. CCWG will be up in the Benthic Ecology lab, and panels from our exhibit hung around the entire building. Stop by and say hello!



Office Remodel

Many of our partners have been to meetings that CCWG has hosted at Moss Landing Marine Labs, with a view of the Bay that is second to none. Most people don't realize that our office is actually down the hill from the main building. As our staff has grown, our space has not. So now, with support of the MLML faculty and help from staff, we are adding another room which will almost double the size. Next time we invite you to a meeting here, we might hold it in our office!

Do you have any questions? Want to contribute your ideas about the structure and function of CCWG? Interested in working together? Please contact Sierra Ryan at sryan@mlml.calstate.edu with any ideas, questions or comments – we'd love to hear your feedback.