

Blue Carbon Collaborative (BCC)

Meeting #6 Notes

Wednesday September 21st, 2022

3:00 pm – 5:00 pm PST

Meeting Recording Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/YIHwB6d2c_qA86-BebznXhQ6z5-Y6Gjz9km8JRGL3NiR2Yoh-vTc7qt9Ez2hJK75.y_Hln5JPRXXicxWI

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Meeting Objectives:

- 1) Share about latest BCC participant projects and developments.
- 2) Share approaches, case studies, best practices, and lessons learned regarding effective blue carbon talking points/messaging to support local to national efforts

Meeting Agenda:

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| 3:00pm | Welcome, Roll Call, Review Agenda |
| 3:15pm | Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project updates and developments (all) • CA State Legislation Update • Blue Carbon Testing & CEQA (Udo Wahn, Matt Costa) |
| 3:45pm | Panel Presentations “Messaging Blue Carbon” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nathan Henry, US Nature4Climate, Program Manager • Sylvia Troost, Pew Charitable Trusts, Senior Manager, Conserving Marine Life in the United States • Coowe Walker, Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Reserve Manager |
| 4:10pm | Discussion |
| 4:55pm | Next Steps |
| 5:00pm | End of Meeting |

Updates

- **Project updates and developments (all)**
 - Port of San Diego & US Maritime Administration, ESA completed a baywide assessment of Blue Carbon in the bay’s eelgrass beds, 1.2 million metric tons stored in eelgrass beds. If you want to see it, you can reach out to Heather and her colleague Walden directly at hkramp@portofsandiego.org and cwkiker@portofsandiego.org

- If interested in education/awareness and compliance with estuarine marine protected areas and connecting in an interdisciplinary way, we have an Estuary Working Group. Also, I'll be presenting at the RAE conference in New Orleans if anyone wants to connect! Please email: aubrie@mpacollaborative.org
- EDF wrapping up report for blue carbon pathways – Monia Moritsch, EDF (mmoritsch@edf.org)
 - Mangrove, open ocean, macroalgae
 - Opening up soon, email Monica if you want a copy
- Matt Costa: New paper out: https://www.int-res.com/articles/meps_oa/m695p015.pdf

- **CA State Legislation Update (Sylvia Troost, Pew)**
 - **AB 1757** Signed by Gov Newsom <https://theclimatecenter.org/governor-newsom-signs-californias-natural-climate-solutions-bill-ab-1757-into-law/>
 - Calls on CA NRA to work w/ CARB to develop emissions reduction targets related to natural working lands
 - Pathways outlined in bill, including Blue Carbon, specifically relate to tidal wetlands
 - <https://resources.ca.gov/Initiatives/Expanding-Nature-Based-Solutions>
 - Skinner Bill signed last year, CRNA developing project registry
 - They are seeking public input on this – matchmaking for funding
 - California Carbon Sequestration and Climate Resiliency Project Registry – Webinar link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1gisaTV_Q0&t=2s
 - Pew is urging climate managers in California to recognize coastal ‘blue carbon’ habitats like tidal wetlands and eelgrass as an important natural climate solution in the California 2022 Climate Change Scoping Plan. A key part of this work is elevating the data and science that managers can use to assess how much carbon these habitats are currently sequestering, and how much more carbon could be captured and stored through greater conservation and restoration. Two recent reports conducted by Silvestrum Climate Associates and the San Francisco Estuary Institute provide new insights into this issue.

Silvestrum’s “Coastal Wetland Greenhouse Gas Inventory for San Francisco Bay Estuary” quantifies annual sequestration rates from 1990 to 2020, demonstrating that the Estuary is an important net carbon sink for the state. San Francisco Estuary Institute’s “Leveraging Wetlands for a Better Climate Future” provides an overview of available coastal wetland datasets, methods, and scenario planning considerations to help climate managers incorporate coastal wetlands and eelgrass into forward-looking climate mitigation targets. Collectively, these reports demonstrate that California’s coastal blue carbon habitats can be an important component of the state’s climate response strategies.

- **Blue Carbon Testing & CEQA (Udo Wahn, Matt Costa)**
 - City of Del Mar interested in testing Blue Carbon for CEQA processes
 - Scripps lab is not set-up to process Blue Carbon samples. Would fill a good need, but unfortunately not ready.

- ESA working with the Port of San Diego.
- Can also take samples and farm out analysis. UC Davis Group that does a whole range of soil analyses: <https://anlab.ucdavis.edu/analysis/Soils/322>
 - Can send out samples and key analysis
 - Protocol for what you need for Blue Carbon analyses: <https://verra.org/methodology/vm0007-redd-methodology-framework-redd-mf-v1-6/>
- Matt is happy to answer any questions that come up
- Jeff Crooks – We’re doing an analysis, but did not need to account for blue carbon. More about impacts, not benefits. Vague language about blue carbon work. More important for funding phase of the project.
- If you would like to learn more about blue carbon potential in MSP in the Falkland Islands, this is our recent paper: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmars.2022.872727/full> and Antarctic Blue Carbon here: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/gcb.15392?casa_token=PZD2vxk54XYAAAAA%3A1Ldt8OQyqgrVqSh-HFBqjy7MJz0biSZA4Uoylv4ARvLzJTpbR6-FCJM_4PGwjWYZHMPyNXOMreRGEhT (this one is not open access, but happy to send to anyone interested email: narissa.bax@gmail.com).

Panel Presentations “Messaging Blue Carbon”

Key talking points from each speaker below, please see recording where you have access to PPTs.

- **Nathan Henry**, US Nature4Climate, Program Manager
 - Advancing forest, agricultural and blue carbon pathways; challenges on blue carbon:
 - Not everyone knows what you’re talking about
 - Coastal vs. oceanic (USN4C focuses on coastal)
 - Overshadowed by forest and agricultural pathways
 - Science is evolving – lots of gaps in science
 - Few members equipped to tackle the challenges
 - TNC; staff capacity lack of understanding of Blue Carbon
 - Limited access to compelling content
 - Underdeveloped communications channels
 - Important to increase knowledge on science, policy by expanding coalition
 - Focusing on adding members that have expertise in Blue Carbon – storytellers, capacity
 - Establish working relationships w/ federal agencies, Silverstrum, Coastal Quest
 - Build out communications infrastructure: blog on website
 - Campaigns; i.e. economics of nature based solutions, storytelling
 - Build out networks and social (some paid)
 - Develop clear audience early on
 - Don’t try and convince everyone, focus on influential orgs, decision makers, policy makers in position to do something
 - Dictates choice of language, messengers (i.e. expand variety of messengers to hunters, etc.)
 - LinkedIn, Twitter focus on influencers
 - Make science more accessible to non-scientists

- Did research to see what our audience already knew about natural climate solutions – economic benefits particularly compelling
- Come up w/ a clear concise message, repeat over and over again – Define, frame as a powerful solution, stories
- Blog articles – Pew has a lot of great material
- Integrating Blue Carbon content into focused messaging campaigns
- Invest in storytelling – worked w/ WildCoast to create a testimonial video, allows for key info to be delivered through someone’s story, great for social share. Each video had a complementary blog.
- Created “the Decision Maker’s Guide to Natural Climate Solutions”
 - Toolbox of interactive tools to plan/execute NCS
 - Easy to find Blue Carbon messaging and materials
- **Sylvia Troost**, Pew Charitable Trusts, Senior Manager, Conserving Marine Life in the United States
 - Saw opportunity to do something analogous as what was seen internationally for natural working lands in the US; opportunity to elevate natural solutions
 - Work in CA, OR, NC and started working in NJ –
 - Policy advocacy
 - Support science to policy and managers
 - Education outreach
 - Common challenges across the state – created Blue Carbon Network
 - Communication Challenges
 - Lack of knowledge about what blue carbon is (i.e. is it offshore wind?)
 - Skepticism from climate managers about whether there is actionable sciences
 - Spatial footprint much smaller than forests, agriculture
 - Jump to carbon markets
 - What is blue carbon?
 - Pew developed a foundational brief to clarify how Pew defines blue carbon; tied to climate policy (IPCC GHG accounting for vegetated coastal ecosystems)
 - <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2021/09/coastal-blue-carbon-an-important-tool-for-combating-climate-change>
 - Articulates policy pathways for states and nations
 - Notion that there isn’t enough actionable science
 - Worked w/ Smithsonian to do an assessment of the state of coastal carbon in coastal states
 - Report card will be redone next year
 - Elevate and support region-specific research – many policy makers aren’t aware of what’s going on in their own backyard
 - Pacific Northwest BC group – connect researchers to policy makers
 - Does BC provide meaningful mitigation contributions?
 - Support BC inventories Statewide – Oregon, NC, SF Bay
 - No regret strategy – not a silver bullet, but it’s a no regret strategy because of all the co-benefits
 - Blue Carbon is just about markets
 - Pew doesn’t work on markets
 - Careful to not oversell; also emphasize other policy measures

- Initial results
 - OR Global Warming Commission embraced BC in natural and working lands
 - Coastal BC included in CNRA Natural and Working Lands strategy
 - CARB 5-year scoping plan; still TBD on coastal blue carbon, but 60,000 delta acres included in targets
 - NC – incorporate coastal wetlands into next GHG inventory; SAV (1st in nation)
 - Maine, MD, LA doing a lot of interesting work
- Takeaways
 - Be clear on how it’s being defined
 - Talk about protection (avoided emissions) and restoration (enhanced sequestration)
 - Don’t oversell
 - MMM – measurement, monitoring, management
 - BC as one of a suite entry points
- **Coowe Walker**, Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Reserve Manager
 - AK is big, relatively undeveloped (changing quickly)
 - KBNERR doesn’t own or manage land; working in partnerships w/ people who do
 - Kachemak Bay predominantly privately owned – corporations, Tribes, mostly unprotected
 - Come at issues from a salmon perspective - that’s what people care about, way to get some level of protected status on streams. People care about salmon.
 - Increased human activity – gravel mining, very little regulation
 - Research on why our landscapes are good at supporting salmon
 - Peatlands, Alder, water
 - Found that coastal salt marshes are not sequestering; but then realized that the peatlands surely are. Lots of change and human activity on the peatlands. BC could be an opportunity/tool for people to think about when managing lands. What would it take to get peatlands into a carbon market?
 - Illustrations very useful in communicating
 - Lots of personal communications – not a lot of people here.
 - Money is important, amount that people can bring in by choosing peatland conservation over another type of activity
 - Protection/conservation avoids an impact – May make as much money leaving peatland alone
 - Citizen science group formed – Homer Drawdown – to probe and document, validate some of the work we’re doing, involve people in the carbon market
 - Stewardship schools – get students out to take cores, learn about it, share w/ elders and villagers, economic benefit
 - Commercial fishermen – in person field trips w/ fishermen, communicating about the landscapes, showing juvenile salmon
 - Working w/ different ways of knowing – art, respect for alders, respect for peatlands – tools to reach people who aren’t interested in the science
 - \$/acre:
 - In process of putting together a business plan. Willingness to pay being calculated both for carbon and wild salmon.

Discussion

- How do you make a unified message?
 - Nathan: We have 27 organizations, a lot may not align on the way they do science. Get them on the same Zoom call to hash it out. Work from unified set of facts. Create content for others to use instead of having everyone drive their own messages. Make sure it's an opportunity to bring partners in.
 - Sylvia: Have seen some organic coalescing around key messages: not overselling, co-benefits, etc.
 - Coowe: We have to interpret the message for some of the big landowners. They won't go to blogs, websites. We're interested, but tell us when it's a project. They don't want to take the time to learn.
- What challenges have you faced with certain audiences?
 - Sylvia: In some States, they don't want to talk about emissions reductions. Focus more on science and education about the co-benefits of coastal habitats. For climate managers, challenge to get them to understand if they are only looking at the #s.
 - Coowe: Getting people together. When we do, we make big strides.
 - Nathan: Headwind within a headwind. How to find high leverage opportunities, inject blue carbon.
- Who is funding the communications component? Piece meal?
 - USFWS Coastal program very supportive, Smithsonian Working Lands and Seascapes, Fish Habitat Partnerships
 - Doris Duke Charitable Foundation
 - Nature Conservancy
 - NERRS Science Collaborative
 - Science Transfer is what got our work started
- At the State level, which entity has dictated most influential aspects related to Blue Carbon?
 - It's a new space. Wildlife management, natural resources embrace it most. However, needs to be more embraced by policy makers doing carbon inventories/mitigation work. Ocean Protection Council.
 - CA coordinating interagency body sits in the natural resources agency, recognize cross jurisdictional
 - All of our jobs to elevate this with different agencies and jurisdictions
- Common points of misconceptions/communication? How can we as a collaborative work to get clarity?
 - Avoiding conversion in the first place is very important. People jump to the restoration (additionality) but avoiding the loss is first and foremost.
 - With landowners, there's a misconception that if they choose a carbon project, they won't be able to hunt moose or other activities/uses
 - Projects are of interest in places that are red states, especially when talking about economic co-benefits, resilience
 - Jim: Will scams reduce potential for BC in the future?

- Complicated ecosystems; important to consider MMM – monitoring, measurement, management
- Important to make sure it doesn't get that reputation
- Present carbon markets as one pathway, but not the only pathway. Don't defend the market, but defend work that's being done to make them better. Can destroy a lot of good will with one bad story – build warchest of good stories.
- View US Nature4Climate & WildCoast video:
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gEOXtt_Anic
 - Get information out, potential
 - Identify hero messenger
 - Submessage – need to develop huge workforce, careers for young people, conservation workforce
 - Put together 15 second cut for social, pre-roll ad
 - Putting together a campaign now on implementation
- How does social media play in?
 - Good way to target depending on audience
 - LinkedIn can target specific people and orgs. Expensive but more efficient.
 - Twitter more of a blunt instrument
 - Media outlets – DC audience

Next Meeting: Date TBD, Blue Carbon Solutions for Frontline Communities