



**Blue Carbon Collaborative (BCC)**

**Meeting #1**

**Monday December 14th, 2020**

**3 pm – 4:30 pm PST**

**Summary Notes**

[Recording](#)

**Welcome**

*Zach Plopper from WILDCOAST welcomed participants to the meeting and introduced meeting facilitator Tegan Hoffmann from Coastal Quest.*

**Meeting Objectives and Agenda**

*Tegan Hoffmann reviewed the meeting objectives and agenda.*

Meeting Objectives:

- 1) Share Blue Carbon Projects and Priorities in California
- 2) Discuss Need and Value of Creating a Blue Carbon Collaborative (BCC)
- 3) Identify Enabling Conditions for Blue Carbon in California

Meeting Agenda:

<b>3:00pm</b>	<b>Introductions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Participants briefly introduce themselves</li> </ul>
<b>3:20pm</b>	<b>WILDCOAST Shares Overview on Current Relevant Projects in San Diego County and BCC Vision</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Input from participants on BCC vision and future outcomes</li> </ul>
<b>3:45pm</b>	<b>Discuss Barriers, Needs, and Opportunities in California for Blue Carbon</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Input from participants</li> </ul>
<b>4:25pm</b>	<b>Next steps</b>
<b>4:30pm</b>	<b>End of meeting</b>

**Agenda Item 1: Introductions**





Participants were asked to introduce themselves and share a short statement on why they are interested in blue carbon.

- 48 participants from across California and Oregon

## Agenda Item 2: WILDCOAST Shares Overview on Current Relevant Work in San Diego County and BCC Vision

Zach Plopper shared an overview of current blue carbon work in San Diego and invited Mathew Costa and Megan Jennings to speak about their blue carbon research.

- WILDCOAST
  - Conserving 36 million acres of coral reefs, mangroves, wilderness habitats
  - Since 2008 working on the conservation of mangroves in Mexico
    - 8500 acres of mangroves set aside for conservation
    - Working to restore degraded mangrove habitat
    - Starting to do research on carbon storage
    - Working to develop Mexico's first policy around blue carbon
  - In CA working on management and conservation of Marine Protected Areas, many of which are wetlands
- San Diego County Blue Carbon Assessment
  - Much carbon is stored in salt marsh wetlands, what sites are at risk, what areas should be restored
  - Working with Mathew Costa, Scripps Institution of Oceanography
    - Trying to map out the baseline carbon sequestration and stock data at various locations in San Diego County
    - Want to build a model to show blue carbon potential and value in these locations
    - Looking at how deep the wetland sediment column is, what is the average carbon content as you go down with depth, what is the accumulative amount of carbon that has been sequestered over time.
      - Can use this to understand the rate of sequestration over time to inform management decisions
- Connecting Wildlands and Communities Project – Megan Jennings, San Diego State
  - Connecting work to protect natural landscapes with work to bring climate adaptation to communities
  - What is carbon sequestration in all natural landscapes in San Diego County and working to develop a framework to how to establish a carbon market

- Currently doing a literature review
- In the early stages of this project right now

### Blue Carbon Collaborative (BCC) Vision

*Zach Plopper outlined the four elements of the BCC Vision which are:*

- Leverage Knowledge and Resources
- Aggregate Blue Carbon Projects
- Streamline permit process and access to blue carbon sites
- Identify opportunities for research and restoration

*Zach Plopper invited Christopher Janousek, and Craig Cornu from the Pacific Northwest (PNW) Blue Carbon Working Group to speak about how they formed their working group and their current priorities.*

PNW Blue Carbon Working Group (<https://www.pnwbluecarbon.org/>)

- Oregon's working group was driven by the development of the methodology for quantifying what it would take to get credits out of emergent marsh and eelgrass restoration.
  - Did not have local data needed to make calculations meaningful. This prompted the formation of the Oregon Blue Carbon Working Group
    - Developed a research prospectus that has guided that collab for the past 5 years
  - Got funding to build a database of blue carbon data in the Pacific Northwest
    - Focused on lots of different blue carbon habitats
    - About 900 soil cores currently in the database
    - This is an ongoing project

### Suggestions for additions to the CA BCC vision or what you would like it to accomplish

*Tegan Hoffmann reviewed the BCC Vision and asked participants to share additions or what they would like the BCC to focus on accomplishing.*

#### *Participant oral comments*

- Build a database for CA (**PNW BCC database includes all of the west coast**)
- Develop projects that explicitly tackle blue carbon but also integrate cultural and other ecosystem service values
- Advocacy for better protecting waterways and wetlands, figuring out how to market this to the public and decision makers
- Share lessons from other States and Countries that are working on blue carbon, for example Texas, Florida, Scotland, etc.

#### *Participant comments in the Chat*

- Understand regulatory barriers to developing projects and where funding gets channeled
- The sharing of novel methods - estimating sequestration via "non-traditional" processes is very new and we are reaching out to so many people individually to learn. A network that connects people would really help
- Understanding the vision for monetizing the sequestration and avoided conversion
- Learn from other MPA managers in California - have they incorporated blue carbon into how they manage their resources?
- How does blue carbon fit into the existing verified offset ecosystem and who the offsets would be geared towards? Climate action plans for city, county, state, or private enterprise?
- Focusing on measuring and communicating the value of existing blue carbon sites and promoting their preservation
- Incorporating parts of the research into educational projects, curriculum

### Agenda Item 3: Discuss Barriers, Needs, and Opportunities in California for Blue Carbon

*Tegan Hoffmann outlined Coastal Quest's effort to understand the landscape of needs and opportunities inside and outside of marine protected areas for blue carbon, mitigation, and water quality enhancement. She asked the participants to share insights on how to create enabling conditions for blue carbon projects. Specifically, she asked participants during the meeting to identify barriers and opportunities to overcome those barriers, as well as identify opportunities in California for blue carbon projects.*

#### Barriers to Blue Carbon Work

##### *Participant oral comments*

- There is more of a focus on terrestrial carbon
- Lack of understand of what blue carbon is and why it is important
- There are data gaps in small estuaries
  - There needs to be a way of articulating the value that small estuaries have
- There is not a clear definition of blue carbon
  - How far inland does it go?
    - PNW Blue Carbon Working Group defines it as the annual high tide mark
- Restoration projects take a long time to plan, implement, and maintain and they are very expensive
  - Coastal Commission says it take 20 years from planning to implementation

##### *Participant comments in chat*

- Lack of clarity around what blue carbon means, and what is at stake if we lose it
- Lack of local and regional data
- Jurisdictional issues
- Lack of inclusion of ocean-based processes and lack of data for estimating kelp sequestration to the deep sea. In Scotland, they have developed a Blue Carbon Forum that organizes funding, and they have over a dozen PhD's focused on components of the country's identified data gaps.

- Small scale project limitations - costly for limited benefits, limited methods for small-scaled projects

#### How to overcome barriers/opportunities

##### *Participant oral comments*

- Love to see more of an emphasis on protecting environments that already exist, such as Tijuana estuary and Batiquitos Lagoon – some of the best ecosystems for carbon storage, by owners and managers
  - What opportunities are within these jurisdictions already?
    - Opportunities could be trainings or other ways to improve understanding of blue carbon
    - Identify “low hanging fruits” that local jurisdictions can capitalize on
- Partner with the Southern California Wetland Recovery Project
- Integrate into Climate Action Plans

##### *Participant comments in chat*

- Incorporating blue carbon into fisheries: financial incentives for fishers to participate <https://advances.sciencemag.org/content/6/44/eabb4848>
- The Governor's Biodiversity and Climate executive order (<https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/10.07.2020-EO-N-82-20-.pdf>) and the Ocean Protection Council's strategic plan ([http://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/agenda\\_items/20200226/OPC-2020-2025-Strategic-Plan-FINAL-20200228.pdf](http://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/agenda_items/20200226/OPC-2020-2025-Strategic-Plan-FINAL-20200228.pdf)) could/can both help to elevate the role of coastal habitat protections as part of climate mitigation strategies

#### Agenda Item 4: Next Steps

##### *Zach reviewed next steps for the BCC*

- We will figure out where this BCC goes and will be reconvening soon
- We may have an additional follow-up conversation to look at key global example of where blue carbon restoration is working
- Email Zach with questions or ideas
  - [zach@wildcoast.org](mailto:zach@wildcoast.org)