



## Blue Carbon Collaborative (BCC)- Notes

### Meeting #13

Thursday, August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024

10:00am – 12:00pm Pacific Time

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87470579368?pwd=YXRUL0ZkNjBaSXNrT240bkVGOUZQUT09>

*After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.*

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#### Meeting Objectives:

- 1) Share about latest BCC participant projects and developments.
- 2) Learn from experts about blue carbon policy updates or policy initiatives that are progressing in the US and around the globe and discuss the strategies, processes, lessons learned and barriers you have experienced around passing blue carbon policy.

#### Meeting Agenda:

10:00am	Welcome, Roll Call, Review Agenda
10:15am	<b>Panel Presentations “Blue Carbon Policy Updates”</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Gillian Sawyer</b>, Senior Manager, Blue Climate Strategy, Conservation International</li> <li>• <b>Clesi Bennett</b>, Senior Environmental Scientist, Climate Change Programs, California Natural Resources Agency</li> <li>• <b>Sree Gopal</b>, Coastal Habitats Program Manager, Ocean Protection Council</li> <li>• <b>Edwin Borbon</b>, Legislative Director, Office of State Assemblymember Tasha Boerner</li> </ul>
11:00am	Discussion
11:30am	<b>Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project updates and developments (all)</li> </ul>
11:45am	Next Steps
12:00pm	End of Meeting

#### Meeting Notes

##### Panel Presentations “Blue Carbon Policy Updates”

**Gillian Sawyer, Senior Manager, Blue Climate Strategy, Conservation International (CI), “CI’s Ocean-Climate Policy Program”**

- CI’s blue carbon approach focuses on technical assistance and capacity building.



- CI's pillars: Blue climate commitments, Adaptation and coastal resilience, Climate finance, Emerging areas. CI uses a variety of Policy Tools to enable blue carbon action nationally and internationally.
- Current projects include: ProMaguezal Decree (Brazil), Implementation/Financing Strategies for National Blue Carbon Strategy (Costa Rica), projects in Indonesia, Kenya, and Guyana.
- Challenges/opportunities: strengthen recognition of blue carbon habitats, climate-biodiversity-sustainable livelihoods linkages, and financing options needed for conservation/restoration.

**Clesi Bennett, Senior Environmental Scientist, Climate Change Programs, California Natural Resources Agency, "Nature-Based Climate Solutions"**

- "CA Climate Adaptation Strategy": roadmap to build climate impact resilience and reduce risks.
- Critical orders for blue carbon: B-55-18 (carbon neutrality as a goal), and N-82-20 (calls on CARB to work with state to include science-based data around natural systems).
- National Working Lands (NWL) in the 2022 Scoping Plan: only delta wetlands are included, not coastal wetlands or other ecosystems due to lack of data. How do we fill those gaps?
- AB1757 (2022): requires CNRA, CARB and DFA to make NBS climate targets for the lands sector.

**Sree Gopal, Coastal Habitats Program Manager, Ocean Protection Council, "State Climate Goals and Blue Carbon Habitats"**

- OPC's priorities: Climate change, Equity, Biodiversity, Sustainable Blue Economy.
- Coastal wetland targets: ensure an additional 10,000 acres of coastal wetlands will be protected, restored or created by 2025, increase acreage of coastal wetlands in CA as defined by coastal wetlands inventory, and develop a coastal wetland action plan.
- California Aquatic Resource Inventory (CARI): statewide coastal wetland inventory, helps to establish updated baseline acreages,
- The only wetlands in the State's climate strategy are delta wetlands. Coastal wetlands lack models, data, and science needed for State's climate strategy. The Blue Carbon Data and Model Assessment Report is out and OPC has an upcoming webinar about this report on 8/19/2024.

**Edwin Borbon, Legislative Director, Office of State Assemblymember Tasha Boerner, "AB 1992 – Blue Carbon Demonstration Projects in Coastal Development"**

- AB 1992 Major Provisions: Authorizes the CA Coastal Commission to approve blue carbon demonstration projects that restore native coastal and/or marine habitats, to require an applicant seeking a coastal development to build or contribute to blue carbon demonstration projects, and requires the CA Coastal Commission to consult with sister agencies and other public entities in developing blue carbon demonstration project programs.
- In 2021 CalTrans completed a project in North San Diego that impacted wildlife living in adjacent ecosystems. To mitigate environmental impacts, Caltrans restored the San Elijo Lagoon.
- Next Steps: AB 1992 is currently in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

**Discussion**

- *Question for Gillian: Please share more details about elements of Costa Rica's Blue Carbon Strategy.*



- The Costa Rica's Blue Carbon Strategy includes several sections. For example, the regulatory context to justify the strategy. The document starts with regulatory context then a set of guiding principles for why have this strategy in the first place. Most of the document has several objectives and within each there are several strategies to meet the objectives, including ways to measure progress.
- *Question for Clesi: In relation to NBS climate targets, how are we tracking progress?*
  - One effort is through the state National Working Lands (NWL) carbon inventory, this inventory is CNRA's way of quantifying contribution of the lands towards carbon neutrality, meant to track change over time. CARB is hoping to build some new things into this, in addition to tracking changes, trying to attribute drivers of those changes, to quantify impacts of land management on carbon stocks. The other side of tracking is understanding the projects happening on the ground, there are a few trackers existing out there in the wetlands restoration space and others in other spaces. Thinking about how to pull info from those various systems and building the gaps.
- *Question for Sree: can you address how other blue carbon habitats might be addressed in the state's scoping plan?*
  - Beyond the delta, there are a variety of other habitat types, but primarily focusing on tidal marshes because their estimated area coverage is 20x more than the other 2 types, significant data gaps for seagrass meadows and kelp. Until those are figured out there is no way to move more tangibly and model development. Even for mapping there is a long way to go. In the interest of time, started to focus on coastal wetlands and tidal marshes. Hopefully now they have addressed the gaps, they can start working on the other habitat types. Sree's focus is on tidal marshes from model and data lens.
- *Question for Edwin: In regards to the example with CalTrans, if CalTrans was able to restore the San Elijo Lagoon without legislation, why is this bill necessary Statewide?*
  - Under current law, CA Coastal Commission can require wetland and estuary restoration, however they do not have the authority to redirect projects for blue carbon efforts. This would allow the Coastal Commission to approve blue carbon projects to offset other development throughout the state.

#### **Updates - Project updates and developments (all)**

- WildCoast just ended a big restoration project funded by OPC. Restored 40 acres of lagoon in Southern California. Also restored some lagoon area in Carlsbad. Looking at additional restoration funding in similar areas.
- Matt Costa working with WildCoast collecting data on blue carbon stocks in all different wetlands in San Diego County. Finally finished analyzing the data. Will be finishing up some analysis. Paper is forthcoming.
- Chris Janousek- project for all Pacific Coast looking at old, restored wetlands, 20-60 years old, some of the pioneering projects. Wanting to quantify the carbon stocks and sequestration rates in these wetlands. Hope to have some results in the next couple of months. Planning a workshop for November 7, 2024 (in person or virtual options). More information coming soon.