

ReWild Mission Bay

Summary of Public Workshop #4

Workshop was held:
Tuesday, April 25, 2017, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Mission Bay High School – Cafeteria
2475 Grand Ave, San Diego, CA 92109

Next Public Meeting Anticipated in Fall 2017
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MEETING OVERVIEW

Public Workshop #4 was the fourth of five planned meetings for ReWild Mission Bay. ReWild Mission Bay is a project of San Diego Audubon Society (SDAS) and its partners, funded by the California State Coastal Conservancy and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program, to protect and restore wetlands in the northeast corner of Mission Bay.

Approximately 140 people attended the meeting. The purpose of Public Workshop #4 was to provide information about the project and to solicit public feedback on the draft conceptual restoration alternatives. In addition, the public was encouraged to provide input via comment card, email, and online through the ReWild website. Comments received between April 26, 2017 and May 10, 2017 are included in this report, in addition to those comments received at the workshop. This feedback will be one of many factors that the project team considers to refine the draft conceptual restoration alternatives before they undergo analysis and evaluation. For the purposes of this restoration planning process, “analysis” is defined as development of construction methods, construction quantities, cost estimates, habitat analyses, tidal modeling, flood modeling, etc., and “evaluation” is defined as comparison of each restoration alternative to the restoration goals.

Public Workshop #4 consisted of an open-house style format with several stations around the room:

- Station 1: What is ReWild Mission Bay? / ReWild Mission Bay Study Area / Timeline
- Station 2: Historical Conditions / Existing Conditions / Key Considerations
- Station 3: Context: Historical and Current Acreages of Wetlands Within Mission Bay
- Station 4: How Were the Restoration Alternatives Developed?
- Station 5: Alternative A, B, and C (Habitat Distributions, Sea Level Rise Modeling, and Public Access/Recreation)
- Station 6: Relationship to De Anza Revitalization Plan



Appendix A contains the station boards displayed at the workshop. Appendix B contains the sign in sheets documenting workshop attendees. Appendix C includes comment cards and alternatives handouts. Appendix D contains additional comments received online and via email. Note that the online commenting opportunity was intended to provide an additional mechanism for the community to provide open-ended input on the alternatives and was not intended as a voting exercise.

Participants were encouraged to note what elements they liked and disliked about the alternatives, and why. This input will help the project team determine which elements of various alternatives to carry forward for inclusion in the final restoration alternatives. For a comprehensive understanding of the richness of input, please review the detailed comments from the workshop provided in Appendices C and D.

The sign-in sheets included a box for attendees to note how they heard about the workshop. The table below provides a rough approximation of how participants responded. This information is useful in focusing notification and publicity efforts for future ReWild Mission Bay meetings. Importantly, roughly half of participants became aware of the workshop through email (either from SDAS or a community group), and more than 15% heard about the workshop from a friend or through word of mouth.

How did you hear about Public Workshop 4?

Flier seen in community	Email from SDAS	Email from community group	Friend/word of mouth	Presentation by SDAS staff	Newspaper	Postcard	No Response
3%	22%	28%	16%	2%	1%	1%	27%

KEY DISCUSSION THEMES

This section summarizes input that was provided during the workshop. The following key discussion themes emerged during the workshop:

Theme 1: Allocation of Wetland Restoration and Recreation Uses
Theme 2: Wetland Restoration
Theme 3: Hydrology/Water Quality
Theme 4: Sea Level Rise
Theme 5: Recreation
Theme 6: Access and Circulation
Theme 7: Process Suggestions/Ideas

Points raised in association with each of these discussion themes are provided below. For each discussion theme, majority and minority opinions are summarized. However, for a comprehensive understanding of the richness of input, the discussion presented here should be reviewed in concert with detailed input from the workshop provided in Appendices C and D¹. Furthermore, the themes are not listed in any order of priority or importance.

¹ Participants were also asked to circle elements of the alternatives they liked and cross out elements of the alternatives that they disliked on their handouts. The handouts are provided in Appendix C. The technical team will review the feedback provided through “circles” and “cross-outs” prior to finalization of the restoration alternatives. However, the circles and cross-outs are not synthesized into key discussion themes; they are intended to provide visual feedback to the project team.

Theme 1: Allocation of Wetland Restoration and Recreation Uses

- There were mixed opinions on how much land to dedicate to wetland restoration and to recreational uses. Many commenters expressed that they would like to see as much of the project area dedicated to wetland restoration as possible. Many other commenters prioritized preserving existing and/or creating new recreation opportunities over restoration. Some commenters expressed that they would like to see a balanced mix between wetland restoration and recreation areas.
- There were also mixed opinions regarding potential shoreline uses. Many commenters noted their strong desire for waterfront access, such as public walking and biking trails along the waterfront or wetlands, as well as beach access. Some advocated specifically for continued camping and recreation uses. A few others noted that a natural shoreline would provide habitat and educational opportunities.

Theme 2: Wetland Restoration

- Maximizing wetland habitat was one of the most frequently recurring comments. Many of these commenters noted that restoration, and a mosaic of habitat types in particular, would provide habitat for wildlife, including shorebirds, and increase biodiversity. Others noted that large swaths of habitat were desirable.
- Many commenters supported restoration that would increase upland, transitional, mudflat, and intertidal areas, noting that they are crucial habitats for shorebirds and other wildlife, as well as increasing biodiversity.
- There were mixed opinions on the habitat composition shown on the proposed alternatives. Some commenters suggested more allocation to salt marsh, citing studies that support salt marsh for sea level rise mitigation, while a few suggested less salt marsh areas, citing a desire to draw in more diversity with other habitats. Some commenters also suggested more upland and transitional habitat, particularly at the De Anza boot. A few respondents suggested fewer mudflats, citing a concern for their stability, while a small number of others suggested more mudflat areas. A few comments also suggested moving the project boundary south to allow for further fill and restoration. Some participants were opposed to alternatives with increased open water.
- Some commenters shared their opinions on the configurations of habitats within the alternatives. A few respondents felt that upland habitat should not extend around the marshland west of Rose Creek. Others noted that they were not in favor of a “square pad” of marsh area and preferred alternatives with more curvilinear or natural configurations. One commenter suggested relocating any marsh west of Rose Creek toward mudflats for better movement of sediment.
- Several commenters expressed concern for potential environmental impacts caused by the construction process, as well as concern over the potential for additional mosquitoes.
- A couple of commenters felt that the alternatives resulted in too much alteration to Kendall Frost Marsh.
- Many comments on potential wetland restoration included suggestions for habitat configurations that related to hydrology and channel alignment. These comments are summarized in the following section.

Theme 3: Hydrology/Water Quality

- Many commenters noted the importance of improving water quality, and the associated need for increased water circulation in the area, especially in De Anza Cove. Some commenters also stressed the importance of allowing sediment to reach Kendall Frost Marsh.
- There were several comments regarding concern for flooding and blockage of outfalls during strong rain events, and some comments regarding storm drain connections.
- There were some mixed opinions on filling areas in order to create more wetlands and improve hydrology/water quality. Many commenters supported the concept of filling in general. Some

questioned where the fill would come from, how much it would cost, or generally did not support the concept of fill at all or to the extent shown on some alternatives.

Rose Creek

- Many commenters noted that Rose Creek, in its current state, contributes to water quality and flooding challenges. These commenters felt that Rose Creek was not adequately addressed in any of the alternatives.
- Some commenters expressed support for rerouting Rose Creek. Suggestions included rerouting Rose Creek into Kendall Frost Marsh, rerouting Rose Creek through the wetland and into the cove for additional filtration and flushing, or implementing additional smaller branches from the main creek. Other respondents suggested mitigating sedimentation and trash flow from Rose Creek through implementation of bioswales, a berm at the mouth of the creek, rip/rap, or a floating boom.

De Anza Cove:

- There were mixed opinions on placing fill in De Anza Cove. Some commenters supported filling De Anza Cove, citing poor water quality in the cove. Whereas some commenters also expressed concern for the potential loss of swimming areas if De Anza Cove were to be filled.
- While several commenters supported the idea of an island south of De Anza Cove for possible recreation area or wildlife habitat, many did not. Those opposed to the island cited concerns for water quality and silt build-up in the cove, as well as concerns for the island being lost to sea level rise in the future.

Theme 4: Sea Level Rise

- Many commenters expressed general concern over sea level rise and the loss of habitat over time. Many of these commenters supported alternatives or mitigation measures that would lead to the most possible wetland available in 2100. Some commenters suggested filling in 2100 to create more wetland. A few commenters suggested presenting more information about what should or might happen after 2100. Additional specific comments related to the extent of sea level rise, loss of specific habitat types, and a suggestion to quantify the percent change of each habitat type in order to increase the public's understanding of the changes over time.
- Some commenters felt that the alternatives did not adequately address sea level rise, noting that the alternatives seem inundated at 2100.
- A few commenters suggested showing sea level rise in adjacent areas for context, with some questioning whether elements of the alternatives could affect conditions on adjacent properties in the future under sea level rise.

Theme 5: Recreation

- Many commenters supported low to medium intensity recreational uses such as hiking trails, kayaking, canoeing, swimming, and birdwatching. A few of these commenters specifically mentioned wanting these activities to be located near wetland restoration areas. Many commenters also emphasized the importance of education and supported implementation of a visitor center, including programming links with Mission Bay High School, and educational signage. Some commenters would like to see more area allocated for medium to high intensity recreation such as an aquatic center, a dog beach, a skateboard area, a new golf course, marina areas, workout equipment areas or volleyball courts.
- Other commenters were concerned that recreation could disturb wildlife and suggested moving trails, baseball fields, beaches, RVs, and other recreation further away from restoration areas, particularly Kendall Frost Marsh.
- A small number of commenters suggested leaving the golf course, ball fields, boat/ski launches, and tennis areas in place. Some of these commenters cited their involvement in specific clubs and their desire for the groups to remain. A few others recommended removing the golf course area to maximize habitat.
- A couple commenters suggested low intensity commercial uses.

Camping/Campland on the Bay

- Many participants commented in support of camping, and specifically in support of Campland. However, several other commenters noted that they would prefer to see the Campland property restored entirely to wetlands in efforts to maximize wetland restoration.
- Many commenters emphasized the importance of maintaining the existing Campland experience and opposed relocating camping away from the water where it must be shared with other types of recreation and near undesirable high traffic areas, such as freeways. These commenters expressed their connection to Campland, citing longtime traditions of camping, its uniqueness to San Diego, and its popular youth activities. Other participants cited revenue and employment as an important reason for keeping the Campland property as a waterfront camping area.
- A few participants noted concern for the short-term construction impacts of removing Campland.

Theme 6: Access and Circulation

- Many commenters supported pedestrian and bike access within the project area, as well as overlook areas. However, there were mixed opinions on the amount and configuration of trails. Most of these commenters desired access adjacent to the restored wetlands on both sides of Rose Creek. Whereas some respondents suggested keeping trails away from, or buffered from, restoration areas (particularly Kendall Frost Marsh) or only having trails east of Rose Creek. A couple commenters stated that they did not like the idea of a circular trail and instead suggested a more meandering configuration.
- In addition, some respondents desired trails near Mission Bay High School. Other commenters also expressed a desire for a walking/biking path around the entirety of Mission Bay.
- Many commenters suggested additional bike facilities, such as continuous bike paths. Some commenters suggested separating bike paths from pedestrian walking paths.
- Some commenters preferred improving public transit access to the area over private vehicle access.
- There were some mixed opinions regarding parking and access roads. Some commenters desired more parking areas, while others felt there was sufficient parking shown in the alternatives. A small number of commenters also suggested additional access roads, including an access road connection to a visitor center.
- A few commenters expressed the importance of reducing impacts of dumping and littering in the area.
- A couple commenters suggested an additional entrance point near De Anza Cove.

Theme 7: Process Suggestions/Ideas

- Some commenters emphasized the importance of aligning ReWild Mission Bay's alternatives with the goals of the Mission Bay Master Plan. Other participants stressed the importance of collaboration between ReWild Mission Bay and the De Anza Revitalization Plan.
- Some commenters were concerned that certain actions would be costly, such as filling large areas or removing large quantities of material. A few commenters expressed a desire to review additional details, such as costs associated with implementation, information on how the project would be funded, and a seismological study.
- Other commenters shared ideas to improve the public's understanding of the ReWild Mission Bay alternatives and process in the future. The suggestions included adding a summary on the boards and handouts of the major differences between the alternatives, as well as providing additional information regarding why restoration should occur specifically within the study area vs. elsewhere in Mission Bay.

NEXT STEPS

The timeline below depicts the steps involved in creation of the ReWild MB Final Restoration Alternatives. Public input provided at Public Workshop #4 will be considered as the project team refines the draft alternatives to develop the final restoration alternatives. As depicted in the timeline, Public Meeting #5 is tentatively scheduled for Fall 2017. Details regarding the time and location of Public Meeting #5 will be posted at www.rewildmissionbay.org.

