

Tomales Bay Vessel Management SAC Working Group

Revised Summary Notes

June 27, 2008

1. Updates

Binder Materials: Miriam provided updated documents for binders. There was a general discussion about tracking changes made to documents. Point of clarification was made on the mission and ground rules and there was a suggestion for action.

STAFF ACTION>> Change language in bullet #4 under mission and ground rules to the following: **If possible**, develop recommendations to the SAC that represent consensus, or provide several recommendations that illustrate divergent views.

STAFF ACTION>> All revisions to future documents are shown via tracking changes (strikeout deleted and underline new text).

Progress on Response to Public Comments: Not all agencies have signed off on response to public comments, but in the meantime, we can at least provide the response to public comment from Gulf of the Farallones for the issues we are covering in the meeting today, which include responses to sewage services and siting, revised criteria for protected areas and mooring tackle.

Progress of Interagency Committee (IC): Since our last working group meeting, the IC has discussed and finalized the revised criteria for protected areas. The IC has been making some progress on a permitting program, and we will be talking about that at the next meeting. We are putting together a meeting of all the agencies that have the authority on permitting to talk about how to streamline the process, which will take place in September.

Seagrass Expert Update: Maria noted that at the last Working Group (WG) meeting it was stated that a subcommittee of seagrass experts would be formed to help answer questions posed by WG members and others. However, in order to create a subcommittee, we have to put all of the experts on the WG, which is not feasible due to the large time commitment. So, the alternative approach the Sanctuary will take is to host a meeting with these experts. Tom Moore, who is on the WG, is planning to be at that meeting and can report back to the working group. Natalie Cosentino-Manning, another seagrass expert, will also be invited to attend the WG meeting when this issue is discussed.

STAFF ACTION>> Miriam will send out a message to WG members announcing the date and time of the meeting with the seagrass experts (which is likely to take place in September).

Introductions:

Introduction of Kathleen (Kit) Stykit - represents CalTrans and has been invited to this meeting as an expert on mooring to participate in the mooring tackle discussion. Background: Caltrans has a lot of information (huge staff of Geotechnical Engineers and can assist with answering questions).

2. Sewage Services and Siting

Dominique went over the document: “Tomales Bay Sewage Services: A Preliminary Proposal” and pointed out that there is a Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC) Meeting in late July so that any of the recommendations the WG makes can be forwarded to the SAC.

There was a discussion about siting a pump-out station at Marshall Boat Works. Issues regarding the use of the East Shore Planning Group septic system were discussed. It was pointed out that the City Council and the homeowners have to approve an additional hook-up. It was pointed out that the Board of Supervisors and possibly the homeowners have to approve an additional hook-up, and that there would likely be a need to buy into the system, which has been financed by homeowner assessments. Concerns were expressed about the effects of introducing chemicals in boat holding tanks and porta-potties into the new community septic system. It was pointed out that there might be considerable concern by the environmental community because the system was set up to be limited to the existing use and footprint, and the Coastal Commission permit also has these conditions. A tanked service station (truck service) was raised as a possibility. Issues of cost were raised and Sanctuary staff plan to follow up with Kevin Atkinson from California Boating and Waterways regarding cost and the possibility of getting the boating infrastructure grant (BIG). Working Group members recommended follow-up actions (listed below).

There was a short discussion about siting a dump station at Miller Park. Working Group members recommended that Miller Park have a dump station and recommended several follow-up actions (listed below).

Additional sites will be discussed at the July meeting.

Marshall Boat Works Actions

Note: The following actions will be forwarded to the Sanctuary Advisory Council for their consideration.

ACTION 1>> The WG recommends that the SAC write a letter to Marin County Environmental Health asking them to look into the following:

- Is there capacity for a Marshall Boat Works pump-out station for East Shore wastewater site under the existing system as structured and existing agreements, permits and capacity?
- What effect would holding tank chemicals have?
- What will be the cost and feasibility to connecting the ES system during phase 2 of the project?

Miller Park

ACTION 2>> The WG recommends that sanctuary staff follow up with Marin County Parks and Open Space District (MCPOSD) regarding putting a dump station at Miller Park.

ACTION 3>> The WG recommends that the SAC write a letter to the Boating and Waterways Commission and Marin County Board of Supervisors to request a dump station at Miller Park and to encourage to approval of phase 2 of the work.

3. Revised Criteria For Protected Areas

Seagrass Beds

Miriam went over the recommended criteria changes from August 2007 based on public comment. Miriam also pointed out that GFNMS has supplied a response to public comment.

There was a concern that some of the comments supplied were paraphrased in the response to public comment document. There was a discussion about the level of impacts that moorings have to seagrass. It was explained that seagrass expansion has to do with turbidity of the bay. The beds run along the shoreline, but there are little beds that come and go. Typical eelgrass habitat is in shallow areas. Flat contour is where it's expected to expand. It was also explained that the criteria is based on California Department of Fish Game survey data, which sites seagrass beds, not little patches of seagrass blades.

There were questions about how the Sanctuary can permit moorings. It was explained that current regulations do not allow mooring. The Manager's permit as proposed under the Joint Management Plan was summarized for the Working Group to explain how the Sanctuary might be able to permit mooring in the future.

(The new proposed Manager's permit authority and how it may be applicable to the Tomales Bay Vessel Management Plan will be discussed at the October WG meeting.)

The Working Group discussed potential questions for seagrass experts.

Note: The following actions will be forwarded to the Sanctuary Advisory Council for their action.

Proposed recommendations for changes to seagrass beds.

ACTION 4>> The WG recommends updating the seagrass criteria periodically based on eelgrass migration if it expands into a designated mooring area

ACTION 5>> The WG recommends that the draft Mooring Criterion #3 be revised as follows:

3. Seagrass beds.

Seagrass extents from 1992 were merged with updates from 2000, 2001, and 2002 to represent current seagrass beds (the "designated seagrass beds"). (More recent data were not available at the time). No mooring in the designated seagrass beds will be permitted, and a buffer equal to the mooring radius of a boat would be applied. The geographic extent of the designated seagrass beds will be updated from time to time using survey data and adaptive management. *GFNMS is convening subject matter experts to review the criteria for seagrass protection.*

ACTION 7>> The WG recommends that the buffer zone for seagrass beds be defined as the following: no mooring in designated seagrass beds would be permitted and a buffer zone of at least equal a mooring radius of a boat.

ACTION 8>> The WG recommends that sanctuary staff ask the following questions to seagrass experts:

- Do moorings have an impact to seagrass, and if so what type of impact do moorings have?
- Is there guidance that can be given on an adequate buffer for a moored boat?
- Do helical moorings have an impact on seagrass? If so, what is the extent of that impact?
- Is there a precedent that shows zero impact from installing moorings on seagrass beds?
- What is everything known about shading from boats and it's impacts to seagrass considering new technology of mooring tackle?

4. Mooring Tackle

David Foster, Rick Jones, John Halas, Kit Sykit, and Michael Rawlings were invited to join the discussion regarding mooring tackle.

The mooring tackle experts went over various types of mooring tackle.

Summary of points made:

- There are different types of helical anchor.
- 4-6 inch of impact to seafloor with helical with elastic rode.
- Price depends on what types of tackle is needed.
- It is recommended to not use chain. . The elastic rode has had better holding power than chain in the Florida Keys. Need to make sure you have a good embedment system.
- Tomales Bay depth 10-20 ft. w/high wind chop. Elastic rode built to absorb wind chop. Monroe County's experience has been very positive with elastic rode and they have similar conditions.
- Tomales Bay has some hard substrate and may be composed of broken rock
- Mooring field management is needed to have an effective mooring program to ensure vessels are using the appropriate materials in the appropriate manner.
- Stainless wire rope thimble; galvanized steel would be fine in cold water environment.
- Talk to harbor masters and they will confirm whether they like certain types of moorings.
- Twice-a-year maintenance is recommended, including a diver in the water to inspect the ground shackle and swivel.
- Can remove the helical mooring by unscrewing the mooring.

Questions and Answers:

Q: What are the effects on the vessel being attached to an elastic rode?

A: Michael stated that a mooring ball absorbs the shock from the up and down movement of the rode. John Halas verified.

Q: How can chaffing on the boat or banging into the hull of the boat from the use of a mooring ball be prevented?

A: Michael stated the mooring balls he uses are so big that boats never hit the pendant. He has never heard of a problem with his mooring balls damaging the boat. The mooring balls he uses are polystyrene.

Q: How long does the pendant have to be? What is the ratio?

A: 5:1.

Q: Do you have examples of permanent, year round moorings in shallow water?

A: Yes, in Florida they have many permanent year round moorings with long wind fetch in open seas in both soft and hard sediment. Surf buoys and buoys in corals. Chaff can be eliminated by using different systems or materials. Many different options are available: Pass through mooring balls; concerns about chaffing if it is not well maintained. Mooring balls with chain: chain does wear out.

Q: There was a helical mooring installed in soft bottom in the San Juan Islands that kept dislodging. Eventually had to pour a cement disk to keep mooring installed. What do the experts think?

A: There are several aspects to investigate for a failed Helix mooring. A failed helix is typically caused by improper installation (e.g. too big of a vessel for the mooring, too small of an anchor, improper installation, improper match of sediment with anchor).

Q: Do you have a safe breaking load for all of the components? What is the safe working load ratio?

A: 100%=2X. If the estimated load were 100 lbs. then the design would be for 200 lbs.

Q: Do you have to do a sediment analysis before you build a mooring?

A: Yes, you can do either a rebar test or expensive core sediment analysis. FKNMS typically uses a grounding rod to determine mooring. Rubble environment might not work as well as for helix mooring a manta mooring will work better in a rubble environment.

Q: How long will an imbedded mooring last?

A: So far they have been in use 15-25 years without replacement of the embedment. Virtually no maintenance for imbedded moorings.

Wrap-up

STAFF ACTION>> Will extend Oct., Nov., Feb meetings until 3:30.

Need to add issues list to the next meeting's agenda.