

Notes

The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:00. Present were:

Committee Members

Ken Bates
Dennis Mayo

Bob Gearheart
Richard Trygar

Ted Kuiper
Mark Wheatley

Commission Staff

David Hull

Patti Tyson

The meeting was facilitated by Ted Loring, Jr.

The initial discussion was about change. What changes have become visible during the last five years in the district, the bay or the community at large?

1. There are new players, non-governmental organizations, acting as advocacy groups. They include Friends of the Dunes, RiverWatch, EIC, Bay Stewards, Bay Keepers and the Center for BioDiversity. Their areas of interest increasingly overlap with the District's.
2. The decision making environment is evolving. The consultative process, CEQA et al., defines the structure. But ultimate decisions are increasingly influence by the politics and emotions of the situation, sometimes without regard to established policy.
3. New political strategies for influencing bay related decisions include: choosing not to participate in the consultative process and the weighing in at the last minute with value based appeals, direct lobbying of participating state agencies; and trying issues in the court of public opinion.
4. The public trust doctrine is being expanded beyond its traditional scope.
5. The political environment around bay issues is becoming increasingly polarized. At times groups are characterized in a one-dimensional way, as anti-growth or purely pro-development.
6. Citizens around the bay increasingly view it as an amenity rather than an economic resource.
7. Dredging has become a hot-button issue and isn't likely to cool off.
8. Legal challenges to controversial decisions are conceivable if not inevitable.
9. The use plan for Redwood Dock now under development is likely to prove controversial, particularly if public concerns are not raised – and resolved – in the study process.



10. The utility of the EIR process has declined. It's difficult to get agencies to comment significantly. Agencies are too busy. Some tend to vacillate between the conflicting roles of resource manager and regulator.
11. Public involvement in bay related issues is increasing.
12. The process for handling big issues (dredging, LNG, waterbags, dioxin contamination) has become increasingly ad hoc and emotional.
13. The community cares deeply but lacks the sophistication to deal effectively with the more complex coastal issues.
14. The Humboldt Bay Management Plan is a major accomplishment, providing a foundation for addressing many bay related issues.
15. The adversarial nature of recent controversies has negatively impacted the credibility of all participants, at least in the eyes of some of the partisans.
16. Issues of the bay and surrounding watersheds have become entwined. A focus on water quality has lead to increased interest in the bay.
17. Coho and tidewater goby listings have complicated analysis of bay use issues.
18. District staff has increased its capacity and is capable of managing an expanding range of quite complex issues.
19. Global warming and an anticipated rise in ocean levels have become a factor that must be taken into consideration.
20. The District has become a major owner of industrial land adjacent to the bay.
21. Recreational interest in trails and kayaks has increased.
22. Cultural issues, especially those associated with the Wiyot Tribe, have increasing prominence.
23. Implementation of the Marine Life Protection Act will impact the bay and adjacent waters.
24. The de-listing of the Aleutian goose will impact land use adjacent to the bay.
25. The District has become the default operator of its Fields Landing boat yard.
26. Tideland receipts are declining, in part because the District now owns industrial properties on which it had been receiving lease revenues.
27. The major ports of the west coast are maxed out, which will tend to encourage harbor development on the bay and introduce new security concerns.
28. Increasing imports of logs has swung the shipping balance, measured by tonnage, from export to import.
29. Substantial portions of the land adjacent to the bay have been added to refuges or otherwise been given protective status.
30. The link between a vital port and transportation – rail in particular – is as strong as ever.
31. Non-scientific information is increasingly influencing agency decisions.
32. The Eureka Boardwalk has fenced off a portion of the Eureka channel, limiting the area available for water dependent industrial uses.
33. District issues have become increasingly polarized. It used to be easier.
34. State agencies tend to hold local projects to a higher standard because the north coast is pristine and relatively powerless in the political calculus of the state. We tend to be the place where state political battles are fought.



The second discussion focused on the input from outreach meetings as a whole. What did we hear that was new? What didn't we hear that might be significant?

1. Interest in recreational issues had increased markedly.
2. Very few participants commented on economic uses of the bay such as fishing or shipping. Does that reflect the declining economic weight of those sectors?
3. The idea that the District should promote a railroad museum was entirely new.
4. Relatively few people commented on – or showed any knowledge of – the Humboldt Bay Management Plan. From a public perspective, it might as well not exist.
5. The lack of comment on issues associated with economic development and the port suggests a minimal understanding of - or interest in – coastal dependent uses.
6. Fishermen were relatively quiet. Perhaps that reflects the fact that they are relatively satisfied with the local support facilities, especially when they are compared to facilities in other ports.
7. The group had expected to hear more comment about environmental degradation than it heard.
8. There wasn't a lot of blue-sky thinking. Suggestions were relatively predictable. There wasn't a lot of innovation or extraordinary creativity evident.
9. Uses for the Redwood Dock were mentioned only briefly. Will the strategic plan and the pending consultant's report be compatible?
10. There was very little discussion of job development – or even of conserving the existing, living wage jobs.
11. No one talked about tidal or biomass energy.
12. Potential uses for the Kramer property in Fairhaven weren't discussed in any detail.
13. A new concern was raised about whether recreational uses have or will exceed the bay's capacity to host them.
14. Comments suggest that the District should focus most of its energy on issues well outside the narrow confine of the harbor.
15. Comment suggest that the county dynamic is shifting, perhaps under the influence of equity immigrants, folks who tend to see the bay more as an environmental resource than an economic engine.
16. Economic interests seemed to be saying, "If you can't help, then just don't hurt us."

The group looked at the mission and vision statements developed in the last strategic plan. The intent was to deal with them organically, to discuss how well they fit current circumstances without attempting to re-write them.

Comments on the mission statement included the following:



- Limiting the constituency to Humboldt County is both too narrow and too wide. Inland areas depend on the bay. The significance is truly regional. Yet much of the county is irrelevant to the District's practical concerns.
- Balance is a key element in the District's makeup, one that is not explicitly referenced in the mission statement.
- There is no reference to the importance of economic enhancement.
- There is no reference to cultural resources as a District concern.

Comments on the vision statement included the following:

- PR issues are a missing dimension.
- Leadership is still a key issue though there's a question whether District leadership is widely accepted.
- A reference to value generated by District initiatives is missing.
- There should be a suggestion of the collaborative nature of any effective actions.
- The statement should position the District within the community, making the linkages clearer.
- The district role is as a local leader.

Individual group members volunteered comments on the sorted notes from the outreach meetings.

- Note #4: The Regional Water Quality Board and District issues form a nexus critical to both.
- Note #8: The goal of permit streamlining is difficult to achieve. The existing process is increasing influenced by political judo. The EIR process is increasingly dysfunctional. Is a legislative solution the only fix?
- Note # 15: Legacy pollution is an issue of concern to both the Regional Water Quality Board and the District.
- Note #34: With regard to cultural issues and tribal rights, the historic tribal sites are not well mapped.
- Note 41: The Marine Life Protection Act will clearly be a hot button issue in coming years.
- Note 43: A National Heritage Area is more complex than it may seem. It might trigger additional land use planning restrictions.
- Note 73: Jobs, especially longshore jobs, and economic development are critical.
- Note 86: The District should play a role in facilitating a mariculture park, perhaps helping to secure a site and/or providing seed money.

