James Fitzgerald Marine Reserve Critical Coastal Area Pilot Project

DESCRIPTION:

Critical Coastal Areas (CCA) Program-James Fitzgerald Marine Reserve CCA Pilot Project

California's CCA Program is an innovative statewide program designed to identify coastal areas where water quality is threatened or impacted by new or expanding development and to accelerate the implementation of Management Measures (MMs) identified in California's Nonpoint Source Plan http://www.coastal.ca.gov/nps/npsndx.html#NPS so that water quality is protected or restored. The CCA Program is a non-regulatory planning tool intended to foster collaboration among local stakeholders and government agencies, to better coordinate and direct resources to coastal watersheds in critical need of protection from polluted runoff. The Program is jointly administered by the State Water Resources Control Board and the California Coastal Commission, in partnership with many state and federal agencies. Through this program the state has identified one hundred (100) areas of the coast as CCAs, which supports the acquisition of grant funding by prioritizing protection efforts. For more information on the CCA Program, see: http://www.coastal.ca.gov/nps/Web/cca_project.htm.

The state agencies participating in the CCA program identified five (5) pilot project areas throughout the coast where state agency staff will work with local stakeholders to test the benefits of developing watershed-based plans and implementing appropriate MMs to protect coastal resources. James Fitzgerald Marine Reserve is the pilot CCA project selected for the San Francisco Bay Area (coastal) based on criteria including: (1) existing water quality impairments, (2) value and sensitivity of coastal resources (e.g., it is an Area of Special Biological Significance-ASBS), (3) new or expanding threats to beneficial uses, and (4) high degree of local support.

GOALS:

- Improve water quality by minimizing or eliminating adverse water quality impacts to Fitzgerald Reserve from the contributing watersheds
- Foster a watershed ethic in the MidCoast communities that protects and improves coastal water quality
- Apply appropriate management measures to all land uses in the watersheds that flow into Fitzgerald Reserve to prevent NPS pollution from getting to the Reserve

OBJECTIVES:

- Conduct a Watershed Assessment that identifies and evaluates existing and potential NPS pollution impacts to coastal and marine resources at and around the Reserve by compiling and analyzing available data;
- Characterize the contributing MidCoast watersheds to identify and compare all existing and potential sources and pathways of NPS pollutants and their impacts on the Reserve and coastal resources;
- Develop an Action Plan that identifies the steps required to address NPS impacts and improve water quality conditions in the CCA's watersheds, including evaluation and application of appropriate Management Measures
- Identify a schedule for highest priority actions
- Identify and secure funding to implement Action Plan
- Use pilot CCA Project as a collaborative model for other watersheds

TARGETS:

- Complete full Assessment within one year
- Complete Action Plan within eight (8) months of completing Assessment
- Implement all highest priority actions within proposed schedule and re-evaluate actions and schedules biennially
- Reduce beach closures and advisories by 50% in 5 years
- De-list James Fitzgerald Reserve, San Vicente Creek from 303(d) list for Coliform in 5 years
- Achieve water quality improvement and/or protection in the CCA as measured by reduced beach closures

STRUCTURE:

(1) Stakeholder group
(2) Pilot Subcommittee
(3) Statewide CCA Committee

(1) Stakeholder Group:
-Composition: State and local agencies, local organizations, etc.
-Meeting Frequency: Full Stakeholder meetings at least 2 times per year or as needed
-Input: Provide input on pilot project at full meetings and through Pilot Subcommittee

(2) Pilot Subcommittee:
-Composition: State agencies and local organizations, individuals:

Coastal Commission, Regional and State Water Boards, San Mateo County (SMC), SMC Parks and Recreation, San Mateo County RCD, MidCoast Community Council, Montara Water and Sanitary District, Ad Hoc MidCoast Community Representative

-Type: Primarily Steering Committee with some technical expertise; additional technical expertise will be brought in as needed
-Meeting frequency: meet once every 2 months, second Thursday of the month
-Input: Provide input at meetings and through Coastal Commission staff; CCC staff will provide updates to Pilot Sucommittee

(3) Statewide CCA Committee:
-Composition: State agencies and partners (Coastal Commission, NOAA, Regional Water Boards, State Water Board, Department of Forestry, Department of Fish and Game, Caltrans, Caliornia Coastal Conservancy, California CoastKeeper Alliance, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, US EPA, Ocean Conservancy, CA Department of Parks and Recreation, State Lands Commission)
-Meeting Frequency: Quarterly or as needed
-Input: Coastal Commission and State Board staff will provide updates from Pilot Subcommittee to Statewide CCA Committee

PARTICIPATION:

Provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to weigh-in if any significant decisions are to be made in the pilot subcommittee. Full stakeholder group will be notified through distribution of agendas via e-mail to the group list; the full group will be sent e-mail for providing input on work products, etc.

DECISION MAKING:

In general, decision making for the Pilot Project will be by consensus of the Pilot Subcommittee, with input from the stakeholder group. If consensus can not be reached, then:

(1) A simple voting majority process will be used;
(2) Decision by responsible parties, e.g., agencies decide regulatory approach, landowners can opt out, etc.