

**North Bay Watershed Association (NBWA)  
Strategic Planning Session 1  
October 5, 2018  
Notes**

**Agenda 9:30 -12:30**

**Opening**

**Review of NBWA mission**

**Learning from the past**

**Break**

**Assess and Understand current environmental (external and internal)**

**Identifying our assumptions**

**Next Steps**



**Opening and Strategic Planning Framework Overview**

*Judy Kelly, Executive Director and Jack Gibson, NBWA Board President welcomed everyone and provided the context for our strategic planning sessions. Judy introduced Lori Lewis (Chaordic Balance) our facilitator who will guide us through an interactive strategic planning process. Lori reviewed the strategic planning framework, explaining that this is a process that individually we go through, consciously or unconsciously, each time we make a decision. Going through it as a group allows us to better understand the issues, explore assumptions, be open to new ideas and come to agreements. As a group we will*

1. Explore and learn from past efforts and actions
2. Assess and understand the current environment (internal and external)
3. Envision a future and identify key strategic directions/goals
4. Understand what success will “look like” and “sound like”
5. Create strategies and action plans as needed
6. Identify systems that allow the “plan” and the organization to evolve and be dynamic, i.e., respond to internal and external events





**NBWA Mission**

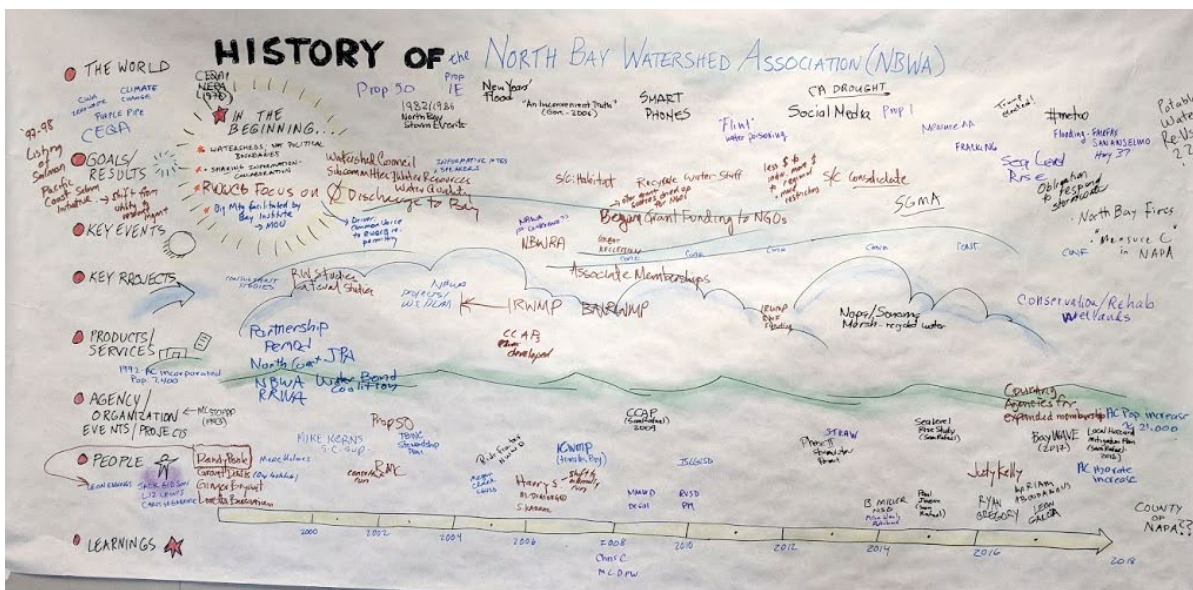
The group reviewed the NBWA mission. Lori asked us to keep this in mind throughout our session. We will return to this Mission statement at the end of our second strategic planning session in November to assess if it is still true for the organization or if it needs to be revised.

**NBWA Mission: Facilitate partnerships across political boundaries that promote stewardship of the North San Pablo Bay watershed resources.**

**Looking Back- What we have accomplished, what we have learned**

The group charted the history of the North Bay Watershed Association identifying and discussing three different levels:

- The World – the context in which everything happens - key events, people
- NBWA - Key activities, policies, regulations, initiatives, events, accomplishments etc.
- Agencies/Organizations/People –key people and organizations, etc.



*We discussed the beginnings of the organization and identified, discussed and included key activities and events, key people and external events that have affected North Bay Watershed history. Within the conversations, we identified key learnings.*

### **Key Learnings included**

- Hard to understand different perspectives
- There is strength in numbers
- We have been able to think differently when outside our own silos
- There is value in collaboration, e.g., when it is action focused and towards solving a problem
- The Association has evolved over time. From Dealing with agency issues → dealing with common issues → helping NGOs
- Our area is more affluent and progressive and can take more risks; we are a reflection of the community
- Increased understanding/acceptance of global warming by public (e.g. affected elected officials and general population)
- We have better access to grants across the California area when we have mutual benefit projects
- Important to have people involved who have watershed background, vision, connections and knowledge, e.g., Harry who knew “where the boat was moving”
- Need to make friends before you need friends and friends are more likely to support you
- You can’t get too far ahead of the voters
- Supporting NGOs is important for the region and this also strengthens our relationship with the NGOs
- The way that NBWA has supported watersheds/improvements can change. Initially we followed the money, now we are being more responsive to needs
- It is better if NGOs are at the table
- Watersheds can be political and ruled by emotion
- NBWA has not engaged in political advocacy
- NBWA is a strong regional entity which
  - Works for common regional good
  - Has a common vision
- There is a critical need for disaster preparedness
- More friends are better
- In getting friends and members it is helpful to point to benefits
- A crisis can highlight needs and it is important to be ready to respond, to be proactive
- If we organize and prepare there is a cooperative benefit which is more effective
- We are all in this together; we are connected regardless of outside influences
- Collaboration and sharing is tremendously important
- That we are a smaller organization allows us to be more agile and flexible
- Safe communities and healthy watersheds are connected





**The Present - Internal and External Assessment**

*We worked in small groups and as a large group to brainstorm possible internal strengths and weaknesses and possible external opportunities and threats within the context of a changing and unknowable world. We had conversations about what might affect our work and identified key themes.*

**Looking internally - What are our possible strengths that will support us in being successful?**

**Themes**

- NBWA is a source/clearinghouse for factual, science-based information. We have credibility
- We are a diverse group of individuals and agencies which can collaborate effectively
- Have a clear focus uniting the region
- Good effective leadership
- We are our own boss which allows us to be nimble

**Detailed list**

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judy Kelly, our ED</li> <li>• Not a political advocacy group</li> <li>• Science based</li> <li>• Breadth of technological expertise and knowledge (info sharing/clearinghouse)</li> <li>• Collaborative</li> <li>• Diverse</li> <li>• Have established relationships</li> <li>• Diverse and passionate</li> <li>• Membership dues</li> <li>• Network of people, skills, connections – commitment of Board members with institutional memory</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have a history in the North Bay</li> <li>• Sub-regional ‘limit’ which keeps us focused</li> <li>• Strong NGOs to also support us – Audubon, MCL, etc.</li> <li>• Strong education focus e.g., tours, conference, board agendas</li> <li>• Best practices development/sharing</li> <li>• Nimble/agile/ability to adapt quickly</li> <li>• Common mission/shared goals</li> <li>• Uniting the region</li> <li>• Known entity in the Bay Area with credibility</li> <li>• San Pablo Bay</li> <li>• Cool acronym</li> <li>• Informed, supportive community</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

**Looking internally - What are our possible weaknesses that could keep us from being successful?**

**Themes**

- Competing agency interests
- Limited capacity (funds and people) to do things
- Not everyone knows what we do i.e., limited outreach

**Detailed list**



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty in bringing in new blood</li> <li>• Different individual foci</li> <li>• Limited funds</li> <li>• Overwhelming set of issues to focus on; hard to choose; these compete for air time</li> <li>• Election cycles and rotation of Board</li> <li>• Relative weakness (population size) of North Bay vs. Bay Area</li> <li>• Limited administration support</li> <li>• Member reps spread too thin</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited outreach to the public – not everyone knows of the organization, issues we deal with and/or our successes</li> <li>• The level of scientific knowledge needed to participate</li> <li>• Disconnect with the wants of the State/Feds</li> <li>• Sonoma County is more integrated; Marin is more siloed</li> <li>• Less opportunity to raise money since we are not an advocacy organization</li> </ul> |
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**Looking externally - What are our possible opportunities that we could take advantage of?**

**Themes**

- Regional reliability/resilience partnerships
- Influence future state bonds and their appropriation based on science
- Upcoming election and new administration gives us an opportunity to educate others about NBWA
- Identify common language and points when we are doing outreach
- Identify and recruit new members to strengthen the organization

**Detailed list**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider combining with NBWRA → NBWater</li> <li>• Recruit new members (within current boundary) e.g., Napa county, Solano county (Vallejo, Benecia), Martinez</li> <li>• Future Grant/Funding opportunities e.g., Measure AA, Prop 1, EPA SFBWQIF funding</li> <li>• Direct potable reuse coordination</li> <li>• Future grant funding</li> <li>• Future regional issues</li> <li>• Reuse of “spoils”</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future Russian River Water coordination</li> <li>• Regional reliability (at N. Bay scale)</li> <li>• MCF – find other sources</li> <li>• Utilize other outreach/messages from Bay Nature or SPEI, etc. and restoration – STRAW, re-oaking, etc.</li> <li>• Decrease silos</li> <li>• Work quickly with new administration(s)                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Efficiency in water/energy nexus</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Create a local source of funding for integration</li> </ul> |
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**Looking externally - What are the possible threats that could hinder our success?**

**Themes**

- Natural disasters (e.g., drought, fire, floods, climate change)
- Loss of funding and/or membership which affect our ability to set priorities and power to make decisions
- Funding or priority changes at the State or Federal level
- Conflicts in priorities or funding within our member organizations
- Impacts to the environment e.g., marijuana, water rights, population

**Detailed list**

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global/state economic downturn</li> <li>• New regulations</li> <li>• Changing state or federal priorities</li> <li>• Competing organizations/efforts e.g., NBW, NBWRA</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too many priorities</li> <li>• Change in popular opinion about the environment and paying</li> <li>• Water rights conflicts</li> <li>• Drought – water goes to people not ag or</li> </ul> |
|---|---|



**Looking externally - What are the possible threats that could hinder our success?**

- Losing members
- Losing funding (e.g., loss of federal or state grants or loans)
- Floods
- environment despite laws
- Impacts to watersheds by illegal diversions/dumping



**Looking externally – The World outside (locally, regionally, nationally, internationally) What could affect our work?** e.g., social or environmental trends, governmental/political factors, economic factors, technology, unknowns?

**Themes**

- There are a lot of things that might affect us. It is important to figure out what we have control over, e.g., where could NBWA be proactive.

**Detailed list**

- End of IRWM \$
- 18 more years of Measure AA funds
- Politics – national, state, etc.
- Elections and current polarization
- Continuing population growth and geographical shifting of populations which shifts assets and needs
- Need for continued and more detailed climate planning
- SLR
- Technology changes
- Workforce housing/compensation/ transportation
- Pension issues (revolt from ratepayers)
- Decreasing labor supply and growing retirements
- Natural hazard funding opportunities
- International agreements e.g., climate
- Recession
- Trade wars leads to decrease in resources
- Possible drought/flood/fire/earthquake at local, regional, state national, international levels
- Direct potable reuse

**Links, Connections and Assumptions**

Lori asked us in small groups to discuss the following questions:

- What links & connections do you see?
- What assumptions do you think you and/or the group are making?

Some of the thoughts shared in the large group included

Links and connections

- The sub regional focus of NBWA puts natural boundaries on our work and allows us to focus



- There are links between the Board and JTC topics
- Your staff may have more limited bandwidth (than you would like to admit)

#### Assumptions

- NBWA history of doing things well in the past and current environment will continue into our future
- Staying a science based organization is in our best interest
- We are all united in a common mission
- The past is no indication of the future although we tend to assume that things will be more or less the same
- That there is still a need for the organization (NGOs and Public Agencies)

#### **Bike Rack**

*(Outstanding questions, ideas, thoughts to think about and/or incorporate in future strategic planning sessions and/or Board meetings)*

- Adoption/regulation of sustainable practices by agribusiness
- Mission – It is about partnership not about accomplishments, specific objectives
- Consider merging or combining functional responsibilities with NBWRA. There is now conversation about a North Bay water organization. To expand NBWRA role so the opportunity to make this consideration is ripe and there is agency/member overlap between NBWA and NBWRA
- This exercise seems superfluous in the context of a president and a congressional majority that is eliminating environmental protections and ignoring global warming. A shaky future for sure especially for long term planning
- Future funding from the federal government for environmental programs, etc.
- Watershed council was always a struggle but the relationship with NGOs that we have built are hugely helpful. But is the council still needed? Is there another way?
- Greater outreach to community (NGO) for projects to JTC
- Napa and Measure C – politization of watersheds
- NBWA as science clearinghouse – advocacy and/or political
- What legacy do we want to leave/have

#### **Next Steps**

*The group will meet again November 2<sup>nd</sup> to continue our strategic thinking and build upon the work at this session. We will focus on identifying a common vision for NBWA's future and 3-5 key strategic directions that will assist the organization in accomplishing that vision. We will also have an opportunity to review our current mission statement to assess if it is still accurate and relevant given the future we are envisioning.*



