




**City of Santa Barbara**  
Airport Department

**DATE:** November 19, 2014  
**TO:** Airport Commission  
**FROM:** Hazel Johns, Airport Director   
**SUBJECT:** Goleta Slough Management Committee  
Goleta Slough Ecosystem Management Plan Update

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Airport Commission receive a presentation on the Goleta Slough Management Committee and the Goleta Slough Ecosystem Management Plan update.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Goleta Slough comprises approximately one third of Santa Barbara Airport property, extending both westward onto California Department of Fish and Wildlife and UC Santa Barbara property and eastward to Goleta Beach County Park and More Mesa. Thus portions of the Slough fall within Santa Barbara, Goleta, County, and State jurisdictions.

In 1991 the Goleta Slough Management Committee was founded to bring together various property owners, government agencies, and environmental interest groups with a stake in the ecological health of the Slough in order to coordinate land use decisions, restoration efforts, and long range planning with respect to the ecological health of the Goleta Slough.

As the largest coastal wetland between Point Mugu and Morro Bay, and the northernmost extent of dozens of species of southern California wildlife, the Goleta Slough is an ecological resource of statewide importance. Both the Goleta Slough State Ecological Reserve and the Goleta Slough State Marine Conservation Area fall within portions of the Goleta Slough.

In order to provide a unified vision for the long-term health of the Goleta Slough, the Goleta Slough Management Committee prepared the Goleta Slough Ecological Management Plan in 1997. This plan focused on preservation and restoration of degraded habitat and opportunities for collaboration. Several of these restoration opportunities (tidal restoration, seasonal and upland habitat restoration, sediment detention basins, and invasive species removal) were subsequently proposed and

completed by the Airport for mitigation for the Runway Safety Area project in 2006-07.

With the 1997 Plan largely implemented and increasing concern for the risks presented to both infrastructure and critical habitat by sea level rise, the Goleta Slough Management Committee has undertaken an update to the Goleta Slough Ecosystem Management Plan. Six organizations (non-profits, local, state, and federal agencies, and the Airport) have provided funding to hire a consulting firm to prepare both the update to the plan and a sea level rise study.

The Draft Sea Level Rise Study was released for public review and comment in September, and is currently being finalized. The study identified both infrastructure and habitat resources that are at the greatest risk from rising sea level, including the Terminal ramp, the airfield storm drain system, portions of Fowler Road and Placencia Street, and the pickleweed habitat that dominates the Slough. These areas will be first to flood in winter storms. With sea level rise they will flood more often and take increasingly longer to drain. While this risk from sea level rise is long-term, planning for sea level adaptation avoids hazards to life and property and the need for emergency response.

Pat Saley will give the presentation to Airport Commission. She has been contract staff to the Goleta Slough Management Committee since its inception.