

Eelgrass in Newport Harbor – An Ecosystem-Based Approach

Year 4 Update

May 8, 2019



Eelgrass in Newport Harbor

- **CHALLENGE**

- Meeting maintenance dredging needs vs. ecological importance (regulatory requirements)

- **“Newport Specific Plan”**

- Temporary eelgrass impacts while maintenance dredging via the City’s “RGP-54” dredging permit

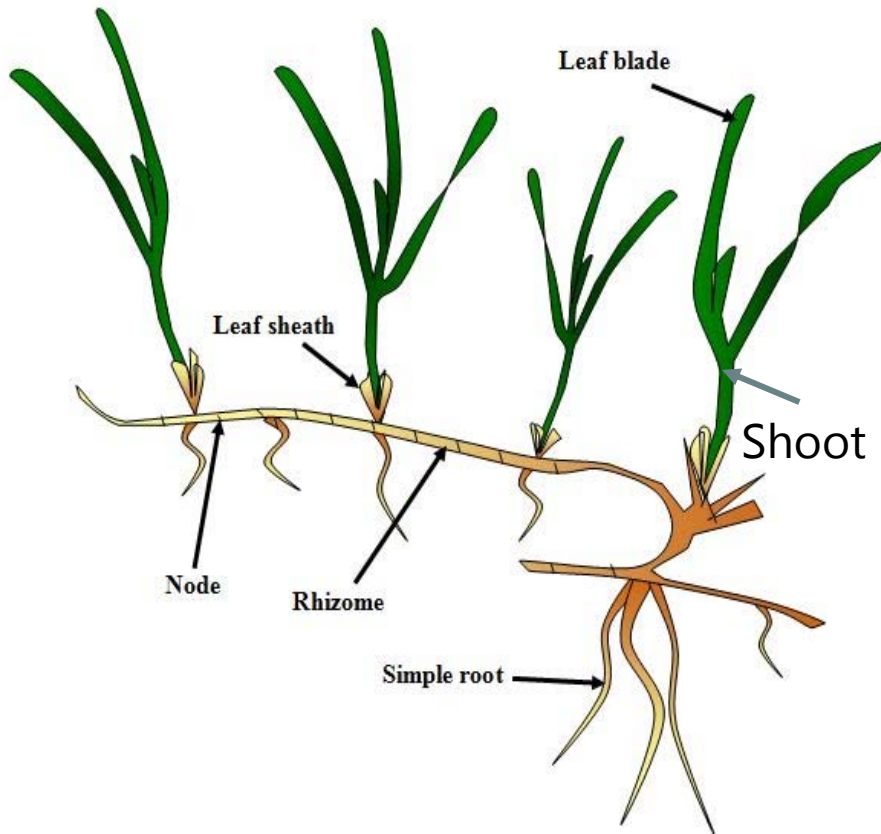


RGP 54 Dredging Permit

Annual maximum volume	75,000 cubic yards (cy)
Individual project volume limit	8,000 cy
Maximum dredge depth	Maximum of -10 ft MLLW plus 2 ft. over-depth
Sediment testing	Periodic harbor-wide characterization (5 years)
Eelgrass	Temporary impacts permitted under the City's Eelgrass Plan



Eelgrass (*Zostera marina*)



- Unique flowering plant adapted to living underwater
- Dense meadows in shallow bays and estuaries
- Shallow and deep water varieties

Eelgrass Regulatory Requirements

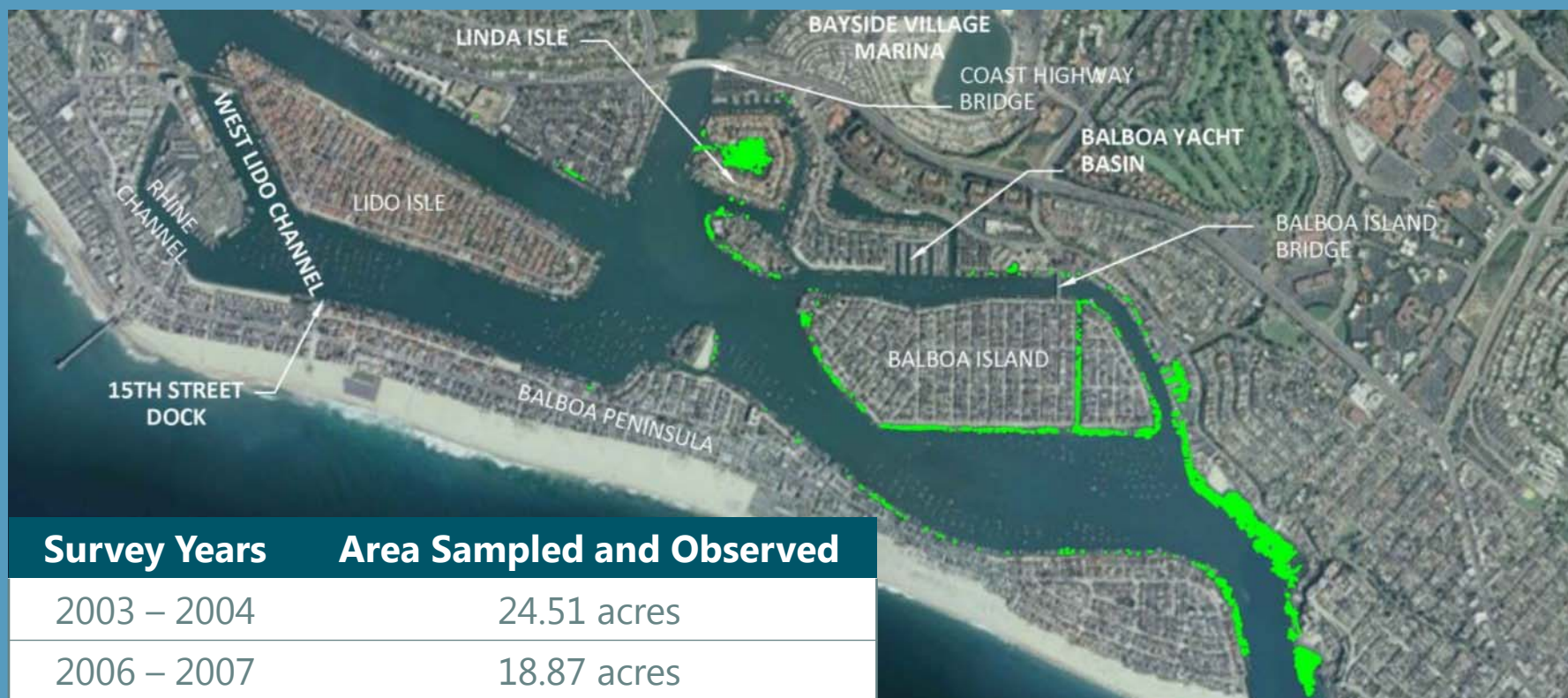
- Considered a sensitive resource
- National Marine Fisheries Service (federal) leads when impacts are proposed
- California Eelgrass Mitigation Plan (CEMP)
 - Default plan for California
 - Impacts = 1.38:1 mitigation
- “Newport Specific Plan”
 - **Temporary** impacts allowed based on overall eelgrass population and distribution



Biennial, Diver-Based Eelgrass Surveys



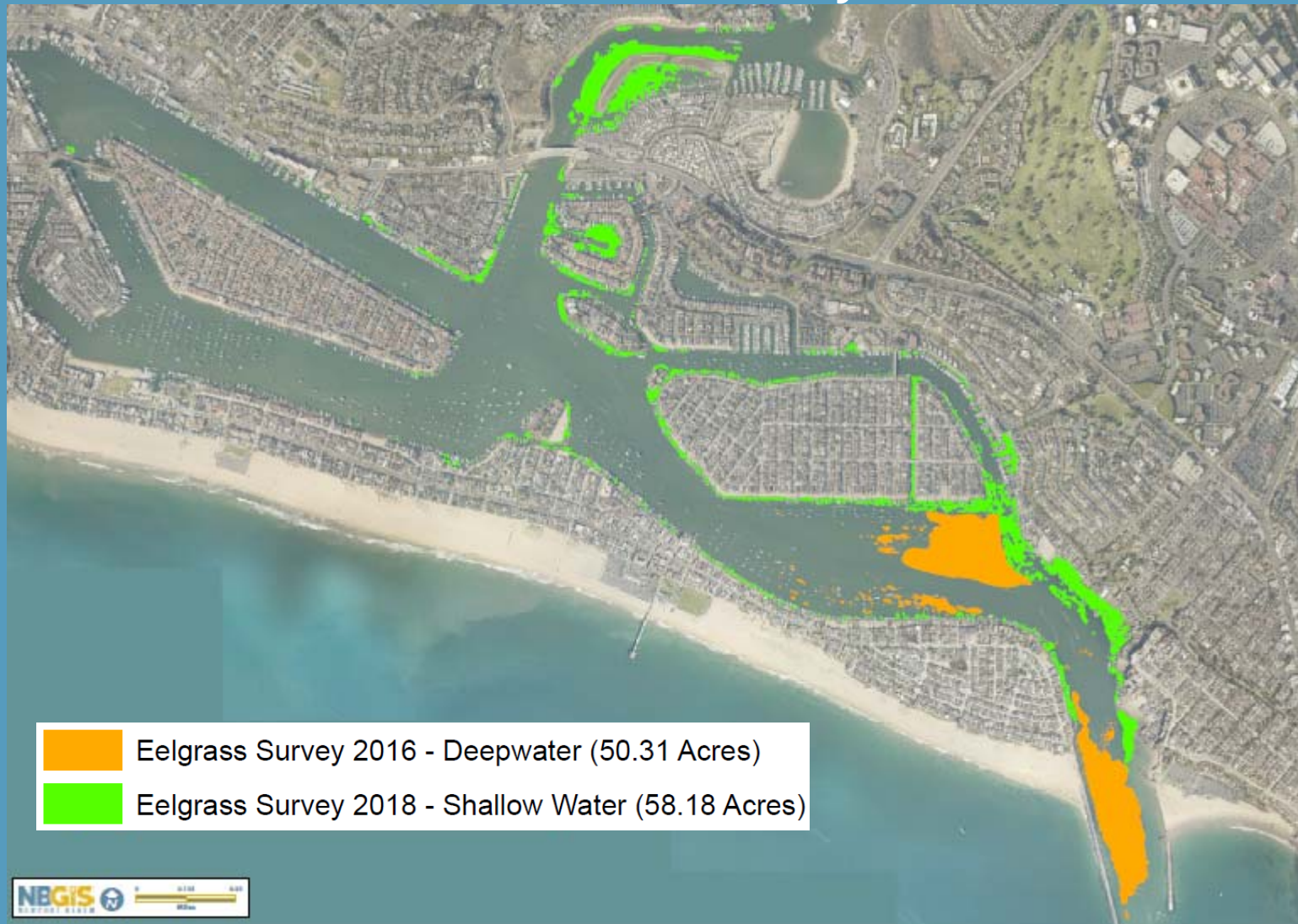
Biennial Surveys



Survey Years	Area Sampled and Observed
2003 – 2004	24.51 acres
2006 – 2007	18.87 acres
2009 – 2010	16.2 acres
2012 – 2014	22.76 acres
2016	27.47 acres
2018	30.22 acres



Biennial Surveys



RGP 54 Program Summary

Year One (2016)

- **43** applications
 - 60,185 cubic yards dredged
 - 18 properties temporarily impacted eelgrass (0.51 acre, **22,216** s/f)

Year Two (2017)

- **32** applications
 - 54,564 cubic yards dredged
 - 25 properties temporarily impacted eelgrass (0.97 acre, **42,253** s/f)



RGP 54 Program to Date

Year Three (2018)

- **10 applications**
 - 24,729 cubic yards dredged
 - 4 properties temporarily impacted eelgrass (0.60 acre, **26,316** s/f)

Year Four (2019 January to March)

- **5 applications**
 - Dredging planning underway
 - Eelgrass impact TBD



RGP 54 Amendment Request and Re-Authorization

- Omit requirement for pre-con Caulerpa Survey.
- Aligned dredging operations plan requirements between permits.
- Addressed inconsistencies in reporting requirements.
- Re-authorization to be filed in 2019 – will include allowance for nearshore (ocean beaches) and carve out for unrestricted beach maintenance.



Questions/Discussion

