

## **Delta Regional Monitoring Program (RMP) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting**

**February 5, 2014**

**1:00 – 4:00 PM**

**Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District Building**

**Sunset Maple Room**

**10060 Goethe Road, Sacramento, CA 95827**

### **Draft Summary**

#### **Attendees:**

*Voting TAC (and/or Alternate) members present<sup>1</sup>:*

Stephanie Fong, Water Supply (State and Federal Contractors Water Agency [SFCWA])

Brian Laurenson, Stormwater – Phase I Communities (Larry Walker Associates [LWA]/Sacramento Stormwater Quality Partnership [SSQP])

Meghan Sullivan, Regulatory – State (Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board [Regional Board])

Joe Domagalski, TAC co-Chair (U.S. Geological Survey [USGS])

Vyomini Upadhyay, Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTWs) (Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District [SRCSD])

Karen Ashby, Stormwater – Phase II Communities (LWA/City of Stockton)

Claus Suverkropp, Agriculture (LWA/Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition [SVWQC], San Joaquin & Delta Water Quality Coalition [SJDWQC])

Stephen McCord, TAC co-Chair (McCord Environmental, Inc. [MEI])

Timothy Mussen, POTWs (SRCSD)

Debra Denton, Regulatory – Federal (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [USEPA])

Erwin van Nieuwenhuysse, Coordinated Monitoring (U.S. Bureau of Reclamation [Reclamation])

*By phone:*

Tony Pirondini, POTWs (City of Vacaville)

*Others present:*

Thomas Jabusch, San Francisco Estuary Institute-Aquatic Science Center (SFEI-ASC)

Jay Davis, SFEI-ASC

Shaun Philippart, California Department of Water Resources (DWR)/Interagency Ecological Program (IEP) Environmental Monitoring Program (EMP)

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<sup>1</sup> Name, Representation (Affiliation)

Tony Hale, SFEI-ASC

Cristina Grosso, SFEI-ASC

*On phone:*

Valentina Cabrera-Stagno, USEPA

Stephen Clark, Pacific EcoRisk

Rachel Kubiak, Western Plant Health Association (WPHA)

1.	<p><b>Introductions</b> A quorum was established.</p>
2.	<p><b>Approval of Agenda</b> Participants agreed on the meeting goals, outlined by Stephen McCord as: 1) get to know fellow TAC members, 2) review &amp; comment on key documents, 3) understand TAC roles &amp; responsibilities, 4) review &amp; revise organizational tools, and 5) track action items.</p>
3.	<p><b>Announcements from Committee Members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SFCWA is in the process of passing its budget and coming out with a Request for Proposals (RFP) in a few weeks for an estimated total amount of \$1,000,000. One of the possible topics is nutrients and the foodweb in Cache Slough (Stephanie Fong).</li> <li>• USGS might receive funding for additional drought-related monitoring in the Delta (Joe Domagalski).</li> <li>• SFEI-ASC is looking for a new Director. The search is in progress and there is an aggressive timeline. Potential candidates can obtain details from the SFEI website (Jay Davis).</li> </ul>
4.	<p><b>Review Foundational Information</b></p> <p><i>RMP organizational structure:</i> TAC organizers include the co-Chairs (Joe Domagalski and Stephen McCord) and planning staff (Thomas Jabusch and Meghan Sullivan). SFEI-ASC will be responsible for producing materials for the TAC with guidance by the TAC.</p> <p><i>TAC setup:</i> Participants asked questions about the composition of the TAC, e.g the need for three participants representing POTWs. Stephen explained the TAC setup:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Composition: 1 TAC member per SC seat</li> <li>2. Subgroups: As needed; use existing groups to the extent possible</li> <li>3. Funding: in-kind (except Stephen, who is partially supported through a contract with the Sacramento Stormwater Quality Partnership to serve as one of the TAC co-Chairs)</li> <li>4. Term on TAC: 2 years; renewable</li> <li>5. Formality: “voting” outcomes (majority vote based on quorum) serve to inform the SC but are not binding; all meetings are open to the public.</li> </ol>

	<p><i>Voting:</i> Several participants asked questions about the voting process. Jay Davis commented that he hopes the group can work similarly to the Bay RMP, in which decisions are consensus-based and the consensus process is informal. There is very rarely no consensus, which would be a good thing to shoot for. Additionally, the TAC can recommend multiple approaches to the SC with reasoning behind each approach, as the SC ultimately has the final decision.</p> <p>Initial assignments for TAC laid out by the SC included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refine assessment questions (Feb-Mar)</li> <li>• ID &amp; review conceptual models (Feb-Mar)</li> <li>• Assess critical monitoring needs (Feb-Apr)</li> <li>• Identify coordination efficiencies (Mar-May)</li> <li>• Design &amp; cost monitoring program (Apr-Jun)</li> <li>• Funding needs &amp; collaboration opportunities (Jul-Aug)</li> </ul> <p><i>Informational items from SC Meeting:</i> The Delta Conservancy has submitted a proposal for a Delta Regional Data Center (RDC). SFCWA proposed for consideration by the SC to provide Delta RMP data visualization on the Estuary Portal as a potential in-kind contribution to the RMP.</p> <p><i>Proposed date for the next SC meeting:</i> currently March 4. One of the main purposes of the next SC meeting would be to check in on progress with the TAC and its subgroups. The TAC agreed that it needs more time to work on the initial assignments for the technical subgroups.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>Organization and Coordination of Technical Subgroups</b></p> <p>The current plan is that there would be an initial set of subgroups working on the initial four program priorities: methylmercury, nutrients, pathogens (Cryptosporidium/Giardia) and pesticides/toxicity. A fifth technical subgroup consisting of dischargers and Regional Board staff is currently developing the design for an ambient background characterization. Stephen McCord suggested that one of the initial steps should be to identify existing groups to cooperate with, since it might be advantageous to create efficiencies and benefit from ongoing processes</p> <p>Participants agreed that it would be good if TAC members lead the various</p>

subgroups. They also agreed that there should be an open discussion about how to avoid conflicts of interest. Claus Suverkropp suggested that it would be good to disclose if TAC members are going to bid on work resulting from the RMP. Jay Davis pointed out that it would be good to have the brainpower of consultants in the process, but that for example, in the Bay RMP, when it is time for a decision, consultants are not present and the recommendations are formulated through discussions of stakeholders and external peer reviewers. External peer review is a valuable mechanism for avoiding problems associated with conflicts of interest. Some participants suggested that the Delta RMP structure already has some checks and balances built in. For example, the SC consists of representatives only without any consultants. Tim Mussen asked whether inviting experts would be part of the process of forming the subgroups. Stephen suggested leaving it up to the leads for the respective groups to decide on whom to invite to participate. Debra Denton suggested the State of California's Stream Pollution Trends (SpOT) monitoring program as a good model, where a scientific advisory team provides external review (e.g. it includes Michelle Hornberger from the USGS).

*Process:* There was agreement that technical subgroups should be formed and that they would start out more efficiently if the TAC would provide them with some more direction. However, the group could not agree on a timeline for forming the subgroups, because some participants thought that the TAC would need more time to develop more specific guidance for the subgroups and others thought that forming the subgroups now would provide more diverse expertise, which would allow the TAC to make progress faster. Debra Denton suggested that the TAC would need to be more organized before initiating work in the subgroups.

*Ambient background characterization:* Linda Dorn is the lead for coordinating the ambient background characterization effort, which is identifying locations where the RMP will need to monitor to replace some of the existing monitoring efforts by individual permittees. Responding to a question about the status of this effort, Meghan Sullivan added that Linda would be sending an email with the latest round of comments to Regional Board staff for review. Stephen added that the review being coordinated by Linda Dorn is built on the idea of understanding and building on the existing NPDES compliance monitoring. Debra Denton asked which permittees would be participating in the RMP. Meghan responded that the scope of the Regional Board Resolution generally extends to all permittees within the legal boundary of the Delta. Permit changes initially apply to POTWS and Phase I

	<p>stormwater permittees. Regional Board staff are also planning to initiate discussions about the timeline for including Phase II permits.</p> <p><i>Pesticides/toxicity:</i> There was an extended discussion on the merging of pesticides and toxicity as a combined priority topic. Thomas Jabusch explained that combining the two issues was a decision by the Steering Committee (SC), because management of current use pesticides is a priority concern, since these compounds are the source of most of the observed toxicity in the Delta. Tony Pirondini added that there had already been lots of discussion on this issue by the SC. Several participants recommended dropping the toxicity part from the pesticides priority and maintain the understanding that toxicity can be used as a tool for all constituents.</p>
6.	<p><b>Review RMP Assessment Questions</b></p> <p>Participants engaged in a discussion about how the assessment questions should be prioritized. Some participants argued that it would make sense to prioritize among the questions provided by the SC before starting on the technical work, saying that it would be more cost-effective. Debra Denton suggested that the TAC would need to talk about a framework for prioritizing the assessment questions to tackle. A number of technical questions were asked, which resulted in the idea to provide TAC and subgroups members with an information package (to include the information sheets prepared by the planning team) to review as a common starting point. The information sheets are working documents and open to edits. Several participants recommended focusing the review and edits on knowledge gaps. Karen Ashby pointed to the question about subregions and advised to share any information about subregions that are especially significant for any issue.</p> <p><u>Outcomes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In reviewing the assessment questions, consider these common interests: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focus initially on status and trends interests</li> <li>▪ Use an existing prioritization framework such as the one developed by DPR (example for pesticides could be based on usage, toxicity, and chemical properties)</li> <li>▪ Start with water quality</li> <li>▪ Use targeted monitoring stations (rather than a probabilistic design)</li> <li>▪ Focus on answering questions to support making decisions</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Materials to include in information package: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Information sheets for methylmercury, nutrients, pathogens, pesticides, and toxicity</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maps of Delta monitoring stations and brief summary of monitoring directory and other related resources (e.g., estuaries portal for the CWQMC)</li> <li>▪ USGS factsheet describing streamflow (discharge) monitoring stations in the Delta</li> <li>▪ TAC member contact information</li> </ul>
7.	<p><b>Communication Tools</b></p> <p>Thomas Jabusch, Tony Hale, and Cristina Grosso described and demonstrated a Google website that SFEI-ASC has developed as a project-tracking tool for Habitat Restoration Project Tracking, a multi-agency project conducted by the Delta Conservancy, Central Valley Joint Ventures, SF Bay Joint Ventures, and SFEI-ASC. Participants agreed that such a tool would be useful for the Delta RMP TAC.</p> <p><u>Outcomes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SFEI-ASC will develop and maintain a similar tool for the Delta RMP using the Habitat Restoration Project Tracking website as a “template”. The planning team will work with SFEI staff to develop the first draft of the website.</li> </ul>
8.	<p><b>Wrap-up</b></p> <p>The proposed timeline and next steps were discussed. Several TAC members expressed concerns about the proposed schedule, which is to have a fairly well designed monitoring program by the end of summer and start monitoring at the beginning of the next water year, as being ambitious. Brian Laurenson suggested that the timing would be dependent on how well the subgroups come together and their ability to execute the initial assignment. This in turn would depend on the leadership of the various subcommittees. It was agreed that the TAC would meet again late February/early March to develop more focused guidance to the TAC subgroups.</p>
9.	<p><b>Next meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting will be on March 5, 2014 (1-4 pm).</p>
9.	<p><b>Action items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9.1. Send out doodle poll for next meeting and schedule it (Thomas Jabusch, by February 14)</li> <li>9.2. Distribute TAC member contacts table to TAC members (Meghan Sullivan, by February 19)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>9.3. Distribute information sheets to TAC (Thomas, by February 19)</li><li>9.4. TAC members to identify alternates (by March 5)</li><li>9.5. Review and update information sheets (TAC members, by March 5)</li><li>9.6. Subgroup leads to take responsibility for compiling contacts (Stephen will distribute current tables), plan to meet in March after next TAC meeting (by March 5)</li><li>9.7. Thomas to work with SFEI IT staff to set up TAC private &amp; public web sites (Thomas, by March 5 for TAC review)</li><li>9.8. Send out maps of Delta monitoring stations and brief summary of monitoring directory and other related resources (Thomas, by February 19)</li><li>9.9. Distribute discharger and sensor station GIS and map (Joe Domagalski, by February 19)</li></ul>
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