**California Water Quality Monitoring Council**

**Council Meeting DRAFT Notes**

**April 2, 2009, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM**

Conference Room 550 – Fifth Floor
Joe Serna Jr. Cal/EPA Headquarters Building
1001 I Street, Sacramento

Monitoring Council Members in attendance:
Jonathan Bishop, Sarge Green, Rufus Howell, Terry Macaulay, Armand Ruby, Linda Sheehan, Steven Steinberg, Stephen Weisberg

SB 1070 Work Group members in attendance:
Brock Bernstein, Bob Brodberg, Valerie Connor, Melenee Emanuel, Terry Fleming, Jon Marshack

Others in attendance:
John Borkovich (DWQ), Jay Davis (SFEI), Jennifer Doherty (SWAMP), Michael Gjerde (DWQ), Liz Haven (DWQ), Jason Lofton (SRCSD), Stephen McCord (LWA), John Oram (SFEI), Dave Paradies (Region 3, by phone), Tom Peltier (DFA), Karen Taberski (Region 2)

| **ITEM: #** | 1 | **Assigned to:** | **Time:** |
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| **Title of Topic:** | **INTRODUCTIONS, HOUSEKEEPING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS** | Jon Marshack | 9:00 – 9:30 |
| **Purpose:** | 1) Introductions<br>2) Approve notes from February 2, 2009 Council meeting<br>3) Review agenda for today's meeting<br>4) State Budget update (Jonathan Bishop/Val Connor)<br>5) March 15, 2009 Meeting of the National Water Quality Monitoring Council – discussion of State and Regional Monitoring Councils (Val Connor/Jon Marshack)<br>6) Support for Geographic-based Monitoring Efforts (Val Connor) | | |
| **Desired Outcome:** | 1) Approve February 2, 2009 Monitoring Council meeting notes<br>2) Adjust today's agenda, as needed<br>3) Information | | |
| **Attachments:** | notes_020209.pdf<br>nwqmc_notes031509.pdf | | |
| **Contact Person:** | Jon Marshack | jmarshack@waterboards.ca.gov, (916) 341-5514 | |
| **Decisions:** | February 22 meeting notes approved with addition to Item #2 Action Items that Jon Marshack will attend meetings of the 4 workgroups already identified. | | |

| **ITEM: #** | 2 | **Assigned to:** | **Time:** |
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| **Title of Topic:** | **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SWAMP AND THE MONITORING COUNCIL** | Dawit Tadesse<br>Terry Fleming | 9:30 – 10:10 |
| **Purpose:** | Discuss the objectives, projects, and products of the State and Regional Water Boards' Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP), how they fit the Monitoring Council's vision, and the relationship between SWAMP and the Monitoring Council. | | |
| **Desired Outcome:** | A mutually beneficial relationship between SWAMP and the Monitoring Council and the integration of SWAMP with the theme-based efforts of the Monitoring Council. | | |
| **Background:** | At its March 11-12, 2009 meeting, the SWAMP Roundtable discussed how SWAMP objectives, projects, and products relate to the Monitoring Council. The SWAMP Roundtable agreed to work with the Monitoring Council to achieve mutual goals.<br><br>The Monitoring Council has similar objectives to those of SWAMP: fostering more efficient and effective water quality monitoring, development of water quality assessments on a variety of spatial and temporal scales, and reporting water quality information to decision makers and to the public. SWAMP has been defining comparability standards for water quality monitoring for many years. SWAMP has developed monitoring and assessment partnerships that provide answers to important water quality questions:<br><br>• Are our aquatic ecosystems healthy?<br>• Is it safe to eat sport fish from our waters?<br>• What stressors and processes affect our water quality?<br><br>For these reasons, SWAMP projects and products can play an important role in the Monitoring Council's vision of a more efficient and effective monitoring, assessment and reporting program for California. A more formal relationship between the Monitoring Council and SWAMP would be a benefit both. | | |
| **Attachments:** | swamp_relationship.pdf<br>swamp_presentation.pdf | | |
| **Contact Person:** | Dawit Tadesse | dtadesse@waterboards.ca.gov, (916) 341-5486 | |
| **Notes:** | Terry Fleming made a PowerPoint presentation on the relationship between SWAMP and the Monitoring Council. SWAMP and the Monitoring Council have similar goals, with SWAMP focused on coordination of Water Board monitoring and the Monitoring Council focused on coordination between agencies and organizations (statewide focus).<br><br>SWAMP views the relationship as providing benefits from additional cooperation and visibility, but is concerned with mission creep and the imposition of additional tasks/burdens by the Monitoring Council.<br><br>Dave Paradies expressed the view that EPA's random site selection technique (probabilistic sampling design) ignores local knowledge and misses | | |

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| | important water quality problems as a result. EPA funding is tied to the use of the probabilistic sampling design.<br><br>SWAMP needs to get more of its data out to the public on a regular basis. Should not wait for perfection (everything to everyone). Will help to elicit support and funding. At the same time, there is a need to ensure credibility and be able to defend information.<br><br>SWAMP study data needs to be merged with NPDES and Stormwater regulatory program receiving water data. Monitoring data needs to support water management efforts. |
| **Decisions:** | 1. SWAMP should act as the Water Boards' ambient/receiving water monitoring program manager.<br>2. The Monitoring Council will provide guidance to SWAMP and Regional Data Centers as needed to enable coordination with other agency/organization monitoring and assessment efforts. |
| **Action Items:** | 1. Set up meeting of the funding workgroup of the Monitoring Council.<br>2. Get Monitoring Council web portal out to public by end of June. |

| **ITEM: #** | 3 | **Assigned to:** | **Time:** |
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| **Title of Topic:** | **IMPLEMENTING DECEMBER 2009 MONITORING COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS** | Jon Marshack | 10:10 – 12:00<br>LUNCH<br>1:00 – 2:00 |
| **Purpose:** | Receive updates from representatives of each of the four initial workgroups on their recent activities in support of the Monitoring Council's vision.<br>Review a mockup of proposed Safe-to-Eat Fish and Shellfish web portal. | | |
| **Desired Outcome:** | Monitoring Council review and comment on progress of each workgroup.<br>Monitoring Council review, comment, and approval of proposed Safe-to-Eat Fish and Shellfish web portal design and content. | | |
| **Background:** | In its December 1, 2008 recommendations report, the Monitoring Council outlined a vision for enhancing monitoring, assessment, and reporting. Identified near term actions include working with initially identified workgroups in four sub-themes:<br>a) Groundwater sub-theme of "Is our water safe to drink?" – Water Boards' Groundwater Ambient Monitoring and Assessment (GAMA)<br>b) Sportfish sub-theme of "Is it safe to eat fish and shellfish from our waters?" – Bioaccumulation Oversight Group (BOG) of the Water Boards' Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP)<br>c) Coastal beaches, bays, and estuaries sub-theme of "Is it safe to swim in our waters?" – Beach Water Quality Work Group (BWQW)<br>d) Wetlands sub-theme of "Are our aquatic ecosystems healthy?" – California Wetlands Monitoring Workgroup (CWMW) | | |

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| **Attachments:** | sb_1070_full_report_final.pdf<br>bog_update040209.pdf<br>bog_presentation.pdf<br>oehha_presentation.pdf<br>eat_portal_mockup_concept.pdf<br>safetoeat_portal_mockup.pdf<br>bwqw_update040209.pdf<br>cwmw_update040209.pdf<br>cwmw_presentation.pdf<br>wetlands_policy_presentation.pdf<br>gama_update040209 | |
| **Contact Person:** | Jon Marshack | jmarshack@waterboards.ca.gov, (916) 341-5514 |
| **Notes:** | **Safe-to-Eat Fish and Shellfish**<br>Jay Davis of SFEI gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Bioaccumulation Oversight Group's (BOG) efforts to coordinate monitoring and assessment in areas supporting fishing and aquatic life beneficial uses. The focus has been on sport fish due to resource limitations. Web portal, aquatic life protection focus and enhanced mussel monitoring is not currently funded.<br><br>Can raw data be released before interpretive reports are made public? No. A 1-year turnaround for data/report release is good. Time is needed to verify the accuracy of the data. Interpretation efforts help to identify outliers and errors. State Board management needs to be able to answer questions from the public, legislature, Governor's office about what the data mean.<br><br>Bob Brodberg gave a PowerPoint presentation on the perspective of the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) on the BOG. More than indicator species data (BOG sampling efforts) are needed to develop safe eating advisories. 80% of OEHHA's advisories have been updated using new data from SWAMP and others. Since the benefits from eating fish do not accrue for less that one meal per week, OEHHA no longer provides safe eating guidelines for lower eating frequencies. The proposed web portal presents problems for organizations involved – loss of message control, credibility, and over-reaching evaluations.<br><br>Public will also want to know the safety of eating commercially caught fish. CDPH has no program to monitor imported fish. Need to differentiate between "Are the fish I catch safe to eat?" and "Are the fish I purchase safe to eat?"<br><br>Jon Marshack demonstrated a proposed Safe-to-Eat web portal design. With the current budget issues, it may be necessary to streamline this and other initial portal products for the public. Stephen Weisberg provided extensive comments on the portal design.<br><br>**Wetlands Monitoring Workgroup**<br><br>Eric Stein gave a PowerPoint presentation on the progress of this workgroup. Eric suggested that the Wetlands web portal could include user-defined searches and "Web 2.0" functionality to suggest search areas to the user based on user interaction with the website. The suggestion was also made to broaden the portal development to cover aquatic ecosystem health, since the definition of wetlands overlaps most of the other types of aquatic habitat | |

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| | types. This would provide a degree of consistency and shared tools. An expanded dialogue with other potential aquatic ecosystem health groups would be needed. Funding constraints (e.g., bond freeze) is a significant barrier to progress.<br><br>Liz Haven gave a PowerPoint presentation on the development of a wetlands policy by the State Water Board. The Wetlands Monitoring Workgroup will play a role in providing input from a variety of agencies/organizations to make the policy acceptable and usable to a broader group of stakeholders. Sarge Green mentioned that an interface is needed between land use and water quality regulatory authorities. The development community desires greater certainty. |
| **Decisions:** | 1. Monitoring Council website and initial portals will go public by June 30.<br>2. Use web portals to capture what we don't know, inconsistencies, shortcomings, missing data, problems.<br>3. Display of multiple assessment thresholds on the web portals is good. But they need to be explained.<br><br>**Safe-to-Eat Fish and Shellfish**<br><br>4. The BOG needs to broaden its focus to include other agencies involved in fish contamination (e.g. CDPH), shellfish data (current mussel watch monitoring, shellfish warnings), and biotoxins (harmful algal blooms).<br>5. Generally like proposed portal layout and design. Good to parallel layout of Safe-to-Swim portal layout.<br>6. Don't wait for the development of dynamic maps to get the web portal up. Static maps for the web portals are fine as an interim measure. Some graphic-based information or graphic button links should be on the first page of the portal.<br>7. More OEHHA and CDPH involvement is needed in the portal design to avoid confusion and undue concern by public.<br>8. Add current Mussel Watch and Biotoxin program (harmful algal blooms) data to portal design.<br>9. Portal will only consider human consumers. Put wildlife consumer impacts on stressors or ecosystem health portals.<br>10. Statewide perspective needed (e.g., % water bodies > threshold x)<br><br>**Wetlands Monitoring Workgroup**<br><br>11. Initial web portal development focus is to get state-defined questions posted by end of June. Workgroups are free to explore "Web 2.0" functionality, as long as it does not delay getting initial web products out. Additional features (e.g., user-defined queries) can be added later. |
| **Action Items:** | 1. Beach Water Quality Workgroup and GeoTracker GAMA presentations were postponed to the May 22 meeting.<br>2. Jon Marshack and Val Connor will develop a proposed priority list of web portal products for Monitoring Council review/response via email. |

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| | 3. Discussion of potential expansion of Wetlands portal to an Aquatic Ecosystem Health portal was tabled to the May 22 meeting. Other interests in aquatic ecosystem health need to be included in discussion.<br>4. The Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) Map Group will be approaching the Ocean Protection Council at their next meeting for funding to create a web portal. Their proposal should also be brought to the Monitoring Council. |

| **ITEM: #** | 4 | **Assigned to:** | **Time:** |
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| **Title of Topic:** | **COMPREHENSIVE STATE WATER QUALITY MONITORING PROGRAM STRATEGY** | Brock Bernstein | 2:00 – 3:00 |
| **Purpose:** | Begin development of Monitoring Council recommendations on a comprehensive long-term strategy. A conceptual outline of the strategy will be presented for review and comment. | | |
| **Desired Outcome:** | Direction on drafting a proposed strategy and whether the SWAMP monitoring and assessment strategy could be integrated into the Council's comprehensive strategy. | | |
| **Background:** | In its December 1, 2008 recommendations report, the Monitoring Council committed to provide recommendations for this strategy to the agency secretaries, as part of a December 2009 progress report.<br><br>SB 1070 added Water Code Section 13181(a) and (e), which provide direction for this effort.<br><br>In 2005, the Water Boards' Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP) developed a *Comprehensive Monitoring and Assessment Strategy to Protect and Restore California's Water Quality* that focuses on USEPA's 2003 *Elements of a State Water Monitoring and Assessment Program*, which identifies 10 basic elements of a state program. At the February 2 Monitoring Council meeting, Val Connor provided an overview of progress on the SWAMP strategy. The SWAMP strategy and the Monitoring Council's December 2008 recommendations could provide a foundation of the Monitoring Council's recommendations for its comprehensive long-term strategy.<br><br>In its 2008 recommendations, the Monitoring Council consolidated EPA's 10 elements into 6 performance measures:<br>• Program strategy, objectives, and designs<br>• Indicators and methods<br>• Data management<br>• Consistency of assessment endpoints<br>• Reporting<br>• Program sustainability | | |
| **Attachments:** | comp_mon_prog_outline032509.doc<br>sb_1070_full_report_final.pdf<br>cw102swampcmas.pdf<br>swamp_overview.pdf | | |

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| **Contact Person:** | Brock Bernstein | brockbernstein@sbcglobal.net, (805) 646-8369 |
| **Notes:** | Brock Bernstein presented a draft annotated outline of the report. The following points were raised during the discussion:<br>• All aspects of SB 1070 should be covered.<br>• Need sufficient detail to support Cal/EPA audit.<br>• Schedule of effort and cost – deliverables each year<br>• Portal organizational structure, data existing for each, quality, cost to clean up and organize data and to develop portal.<br>• Identify data gaps and problems.<br>• Need consistent look and feel to web portals even if hosted/developed by others. | |
| **Decisions:** | Role of Monitoring Council and committees:<br>• Develop minimum requirements for portals and monitoring programs<br>• Achieve consistent look and feel to portals<br>• Facilitate dialogue with other monitoring/assessment entities<br>• Guiding principles must be followed for a portal to be part of the Monitoring Council centralized information website. | |
| **Action Items:** | UC Berkeley would like to meet with Monitoring Council about data management tools and use by State agencies. | |

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| **ITEM: #** | 5 | **Assigned to:** | **Time:** |
| **Title of Topic:** | **STRATEGY FOR OUTREACH TO GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS** | Brock Bernstein | 3:00 – 3:45 |
| **Purpose:** | Begin development of an outreach strategy to involve additional government agencies and other organizations in the Council's implementation of the full range of theme-based web portals. | | |
| **Desired Outcome:** | Direction to staff on principles that would guide the process of outreach to additional participants in the development of web portals. | | |
| **Background:** | The December 1, 2008 recommendations report described theme-based web portals as the core organizing element in the Council's efforts to address the goals of SB 1070, and identified four initial candidates for attention in 2009. The report also provided an initial rating and prioritization of a much longer list of themes that will require web portals. While awareness of the Council's efforts is increasing, a more systematic strategy for engaging the entities involved in these other themes is required. This strategy will involve many elements of a marketing plan (e.g., increasing awareness, motivating participation) but will also include administrative (e.g., relationships with other | | |

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| | state agencies) and technical (e.g., coordination of data management and assessment efforts) features. The outreach strategy is likely to require planning systematically and responding adaptively to new opportunities as they arise. | |
| **Contact Person:** | Brock Bernstein | brockbernstein@sbcglobal.net, (805) 646-8369 |
| **Decisions:** | 1. Council members and staff perform outreach to other organizations.<br>2. Departments mentioned in legislation are target of next outreach effort – need schedule for each and contact.<br>3. The strategy should include granting individual Monitoring Council Members authority to represent the Monitoring Council in forums outside California, such as the National Environmental Status and Trends (NEST). | |
| **Action Items:** | 1. Letter from Jonathan Bishop to heads of departments mentioned in legislation to join Monitoring Council efforts<br>a. Describe Monitoring Council vision – what we do and who we are<br>b. Describe benefits of coordination with Monitoring Council<br>c. Invite to attend Monitoring Council meetings<br>d. Join the listserv<br>e. Describe workgroups<br>f. How your department can help with portals and workgroups<br>g. Identify point(s) of contact to help department to integrate<br>h. Pass along information to lead staff in monitoring/assessment<br>i. Council Members will follow up individually<br>2. Terry Macaulay will initiate outreach to Interagency Ecological Program (IEP). | |

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| **ITEM: #** | 6 | **Assigned to:** | **Time:** |
| **Title of Topic:** | **MEETING WRAP-UP** | Jon Marshack | 3:45 – 4:00 |
| **Purpose:** | 1) Summarize meeting<br>2) Plan agenda items for next Monitoring Council meeting on May 22, 2009 in Costa Mesa | | |
| **Contact Person:** | Jon Marshack | jmarshack@waterboards.ca.gov, (916) 341-5514 | |
| **Decisions:** | 1. Workgroup updates at future meetings need not be in the form of presentations. Short update papers are sufficient.<br>2. Workgroup presentations/update papers to focus on:<br>a. What the workgroup plans to do to help the Monitoring Council efforts | | |

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| | b. Expectations of workgroup<br>c. Expectations of Monitoring Council<br>d. Issues needing guidance from Monitoring Council<br>3. SWAMP activities needed in support of Monitoring Council<br>a. Streams workgroup<br>b. What to do with data – coordination of data centers<br>c. Portal development<br>d. QA/QC<br>4. IT Data Management Group<br>a. Regional Data Center members<br>b. Identify redundancies and holes<br>c. Add Resources Agency representatives<br>d. Include program drivers |
| **Action Items:** | 1. Next Meeting – May 22, 2009 at SCCWRP<br>a. Comprehensive Monitoring Program Strategy<br>b. Beach Water Quality Workgroup<br>c. GeoTracker GAMA<br>d. Proposed expansion of Wetland Portal to Aquatic Ecosystem Portal<br>e. IT Data Management Group<br>2. Main focus between now and May 22<br>a. Outreach to other agencies<br>b. Plan for portal development leading to June 30 public release<br>3. Add Terry Macaulay to Funding and Data Management subcommittees<br>4. Add Steve Steinberg to Data Management subcommittee |

April 15, 2009