

## **Delta RMP Steering Committee Meeting**

**May 19, 2014**

**9:00 AM – 2:00 PM**

**Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District Building**

**Sunset Maple Room**

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

### **Draft Summary**

#### **Attendees:**

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

Kenneth Landau, Regulatory – State (Central Valley Water Board)

Mike Wackman, Agriculture (San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition)

Casey Wichert, POTWs (City of Brentwood)

Dave Tamayo, Stormwater, Phase I Communities (Sacramento Stormwater Quality Partnership)

Tim Vendlinski, Regulatory – Federal (USEPA)

Linda Dorn, POTWs (SRCSD)

Erich Delmas, POTWs (City of Tracy)

Gregg Erickson, Coordinated Monitoring (Interagency Ecological Program)

Val Connor, Water Supply (SFCWA)

*By phone:*

Stephanie Reyna-Hiestand, Stormwater, Phase II Communities (City of Tracy)

*Others present:*

Brock Bernstein, Facilitator

Thomas Jabusch, SFEI-ASC

Brian Laurensen, LWA/Sacramento Stormwater Quality Partnership

---

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

Meghan Sullivan, Central Valley Water Board

Dalia Fadl, City of Sacramento

Vyomini Upadhyay, SRCSD

Stephen McCord, MEI

Stephanie Fong, SFCWA

Tom Grovhoug, LWA

Betsy Elzufon, LWA

Jay Davis, SFEI-ASC

Patrick Morris, Central Valley Water Board

Debbie Webster, CVCWA

*On phone:*

Stephen Clark, Pacific EcoRisk

<p><b>1.</b></p>	<p><b>Introductions</b> A quorum was established.</p>
<p><b>2.</b></p>	<p><b>Announcements from Committee Members</b> Gregg Erickson announced that IEP is searching a new Lead Scientist.</p>
<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p><b>Approve Agenda and Summary</b> The order of agenda items was modified to accommodate several SC members that were unable to stay for the entire meeting. There were no comments on the January 14 and March 3 meeting summaries.</p>
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>Monitoring Design Update (Item 10 on Agenda)</b> Stephen McCord provided progress updates from the TAC and its four subgroups. The final product from the initial TAC process will be a monitoring design document and summary tables of what is being monitored when by whom and how much will it cost. Communication tools to facilitate coordination include Google groups and restricted access websites for each of the groups. Whereas the TAC consists of representatives appointed by the SC, the technical subgroups are less formal and were formed ad hoc to fill in detail for the monitoring design elements for each of the four constituents. The TAC and subgroups were given an ambitious timeframe for completing the monitoring design. Therefore, the groups are continuing to work</p>

on some of the initial tasks that should have been completed by now (i.e.: refining the assessment questions, identifying conceptual models, and assessing critical monitoring needs). Key to the success of the overall effort will be the successful coordination among the four initial design elements (mercury, nutrients, pathogens, pesticides) and with a) the compliance requirements of permittees, b) other programs with mutual interests such as the IEP, MWQI, and c) the larger science needs for managing the complex Delta system.

In general, the initial monitoring plan will focus on a core monitoring design for each priority constituent but also identify special studies needed to answer initial questions, with the proposed pathogen study being much more targeted than the other elements and somewhere in-between.

Finalizing the monitoring plan will involve negotiating the needs of the Steering Committee, the needs identified by the technical subgroups, and the interests of additional partners. Overall, the monitoring interests and regulatory drivers for each of the subgroups are considerably different.

Mercury – For the mercury subgroup, fish tissue concentrations are a primary interest. High quality, standardized monitoring data for Hg in fish are available since the early 90s. Status and trends assessments would require the collection of additional data near- and long-term. Numerical modeling would fill in temporal and spatial gaps. DWR and other water agencies are currently committing significant resources (~\$1.5M) to the development of a mercury model based on DSM2. Jay Davis suggested that the ongoing model development would provide an opportunity to supplement the effort with field data and help it succeed.

Nutrients – There is no clear regulatory driver to inform the nutrient monitoring design development. However, nutrients are implied as a factor involved in various undesirable conditions (macrophytes, species shifts, low DO). Concerns over potential nutrient effects vary depending on affected beneficial uses (e.g. in-Delta loadings, losses, and transformations affecting the Delta ecosystem per se vs. nutrient exports to source water conveyance systems or downstream resources). The nutrient element would build heavily on on-going work by others (e.g. ongoing SFEI and USGS studies). SC members suggested that dovetailing with the approach taken by the San Francisco Bay Nutrient Science Strategy (led by David Senn, SFEI-ASC) would be a positive development.

Pesticides – the pesticide subgroup is developing a toxicity-based monitoring element, corresponding to the need to understand how the combination of pesticide active ingredients (AIs) + AI degradates + formulation “inert” ingredient(s) + their degradation products + any other potential toxicants overlying in the water and sediment (e.g., heavy metals) contribute to toxicity. Continuing work will be informed by DPR’s prioritization model analysis and results from the USGS co-occurrence study.

Pathogens – the main purpose of the proposed monitoring element for pathogens would be confirming that there would be no increase in *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia lamblia* numbers in drinking water supplies due to changes in source water. The proposed RMP contribution would be to fund pathogen analyses for the proposed work plus coordination of any subsequent special studies. The aim for the RMP should be to synchronize the pathogen study with monthly LT2 water quality sampling at all the intakes by the drinking water agencies, which will begin this summer and continue for two years.

A common challenge faced by all subgroup was the definition of Delta subareas. The management and assessment questions identified by the SC emphasize comparisons between Delta subareas. There was discussion about whether and how to define subareas. Various definitions of Delta subareas already exist, based on differences in geography, geology, soils, etc. On one hand, these would be important to acknowledge. On the other hand, it is challenging to identify meaningful comparisons between subareas.

One of the upcoming tasks will be coordination among the proposed RMP elements. One obvious overlap is the collection of ancillary data. However, there is a high degree of complexity in pulling together the individual designs into a consolidated monitoring plan, including varying drivers and pending tasks to solidify the individual designs, such as power analyses to inform the selection of sampling frequencies and number of samples.

The current plan is that the TAC and SFEI-ASC would report back by October with an initial design of a consolidated initial “no regrets” monitoring plan that would be expected to hold up in a peer review. The general schedule would be to

- Finalize monitoring design details: May-June

- Review consolidated monitoring design & costs: June-July
- Seek coordination efficiencies: June-August

Stephen also discussed the need for coordination with additional programs and agencies currently not represented on the RMP. He suggested that there would be lots of overlap between Delta Science Plan actions and the RMP development. Tim Vendlinski confirmed that monitoring would be part of the conversation of the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee. However, the question was raised at what level (SC vs. TAC) collaboration discussions would need to happen and that messaging would need to be consistent between TAC co-chairs and program staff.

Brock suggested to further develop the roles of different program agents and funding relationships over the next year or more as the RMP design consolidates. Based on his experience, it can be difficult to define these relationships in the beginning but it would be helpful to think of what would make the best sense for operating the program on a continuous, self-sustaining basis. Brock characterized the program as being in the “bootstrapping phase”.

Later on in the meeting (Item 6), there was discussion about the presented monitoring questions. The assessment questions are still being revised so that they can be translated into a monitoring design. SC members felt that there is a discrepancy between expectations and outcomes of the TAC work and would like clarification on why the TAC deviated. They also felt that there should be more direct communication between the SC and the TAC and questioned the splitting up into four different subgroups.

Outcomes/recommendations:

- Work moving forward needs to demonstrate the linkage between the RMP management and assessment questions and the monitoring questions and designs returned by the TAC subgroups
- Sampling design to be informed by power analyses
- Use the Central Valley Monitoring Directory as a centralized point for information on ongoing monitoring. Identify options (funding and mechanism) for keeping the Central Valley Monitoring Directory updated on a continued basis.
- The trajectory of the initial TAC effort needs to be clarified and better

	<p>communicated. The SC needs to provide more specific guidance to the TAC co-chairs for how to improve communications to the subgroups. Before going into the design, the subgroups will need to go through the process of articulating the management questions that inform the design.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>Update: Regional Background Characterization: Potential RMP Sites Proposed by Permittees</b> <i>(was Item 11.1 on Agenda)</i></p> <p>Betsy Elzufon (LWA) presented and explained a map of potential core RMP sites proposed by permittees. The initial set of proposed sites is based merely on the location of sampling sites. The map has already been presented to the TAC and the pesticide subgroup and is being used to inform the work of the TAC. The significance of the proposed locations varies by constituent. Overall, the sites provide a good characterization of important Delta surface water pathways but don't represent back sloughs. Jay Davis suggested that there should be additional discussion of implementing a network of fixed sites versus a probabilistic design. Mike Wackman noted that site access is a huge issue in the Delta that would make a probabilistic design challenging to implement. Also, a probabilistic or hybrid design would be a lot more expensive to implement than a network of core sites. Gregg Erickson suggested that it would make sense to evaluate the benefits of hybrid and probabilistic designs at some point in the near future (e.g. an off year) by means of power analyses etc.</p> <p><u>Outcomes/recommendations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consider sites proposed by permittees as a core foundation for the monitoring design</li> </ul>
<p>6.</p>	<p><b>Action: Funding for Stephen McCord/Program Funding</b> <i>(Item 5 on Agenda)</i></p> <p>Stephen's funding for serving as a TAC co-Chair has ended. Joe Domagalski (USGS) is salaried and currently not receiving additional funding to serve as a TAC co-Chair. However, his situation may be similar because his pro bono availability would end in fall. Thus, a discussion was sought about the additional funding required for Stephen (presumably a \$15-25K grant) to continue as a TAC co-Chair, in the larger context of a) clarifying the roles and responsibilities of TAC co-chairs vis-à-vis program staff, b) a sustainable longer-term program structure, and c) the term and expectations for the initial TAC co-Chairs.</p> <p><i>a. Roles and responsibilities of the TAC co-Chairs vis-à-vis program staff.</i> Clear job descriptions would facilitate the evaluation of the work of the TAC co-Chairs and</p>

	<p>program staff. The funding discussion was tabled pending a clearer description of role and responsibilities of the TAC co-Chairs vis-à-vis those of others.</p> <p><i>b. Sustainable longer-term program structure.</i> The big question to be resolved is the longer-term program structure. Several SC members indicated support for a funding model that corresponds to a joint investment rather than a contract-by-contract approach. Clarity about roles and responsibilities for the different program agents and the lines of communication will set the stage for identifying the longer-term program structure.</p> <p><u>Outcomes/decisions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The expectation for the initial TAC is to guide the development of an integrated monitoring design, based on the initial monitoring priorities identified by the SC</li> <li>- Staff will clarify and specify the job descriptions of the TAC co-chairs and staff, further define the important functions of the TAC, and identify clearer benchmarks toward progress</li> <li>- The main expectations for the initial TAC co-chairs is to make sure the TAC and its subgroups are on task relative to what they were asked to do by the SC</li> <li>- The terms of the initial TAC co-Chairs and TAC will end upon completion of the initial monitoring plan. After that, TAC membership is for a 2-year term</li> <li>- Administrative tasks should be delegated more to administrative staff</li> </ul>
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>Discussion: Bay-Delta Science Conference (Item 8 on Agenda)</b></p> <p>Thomas Jabusch presented several abstract ideas for submitting a Delta RMP-related abstract for the Bay-Delta Science conference. The ideas ranged from updating the existing Delta RMP to organizing a Special Oral Session intended to spark discussion on possible avenues for future coordination of the Delta RMP with other regional scale monitoring strategies. Given the fact that the monitoring plan development is already falling behind schedule, discussion participants favored the poster idea. However, Jay Davis would simultaneously pursue the bigger picture idea in discussions with Josh Collins, SFEI-ASC’s lead scientist.</p> <p><u>Outcome/recommendation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Submit abstract for Delta RMP poster.</li> </ul>
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>Action: Criteria for Participation (Item 4 on Agenda)</b></p>

	<p>The concept of adequate participation only comes into play where permit requirements mandate program participation. Permittees are currently working out differences towards a recommendation to the Regional Board. It is unlikely that Regional Board staff and permittees will have the language finalized in time for the August Regional Board meeting. The group discussed the Central Valley Salinity Coalition as a potential model and agreed that it would be desirable to have a similar level of specificity, but there was no consensus on whether funding should be required. Active program participation can potentially consist of funding, in-kind contributions, and constructively engaged Committee participants that are making the program run more efficiently by being prepared, bringing in ideas, etc.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p><b>Action: Conflict of Interest Principles</b> (<i>Item 7 on Agenda</i>)</p> <p>Conflicts of interest are a natural part of participatory processes and multi-stakeholder programs. For the RMP, one main aspect of conflict avoidance is to put in appropriate checks and balances to ensure fair play when deciding on program priorities, projects going forward, funding allocations, etc. The National Academy of Sciences makes Committee members sign a form acknowledging that the potential for conflicts of interest is always there. In the Bay RMP, when the TRC and its workgroups get to the point of making recommendations, consultants and scientists with a potential conflict of interest recuse themselves from the discussion. Only stakeholders and outside groups are involved in making recommendations.</p> <p><u>Outcome/recommendations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have some level of peer review</li> <li>- Roles and responsibilities should include some bullets on conflicts of interest</li> </ul>
<p>10.</p>	<p><b>Next meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting has been tentatively scheduled for June 24 (9:30 am -12:30 pm at the Central valley regional Water Board or 12:30 to 3:30 pm at the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District). Meeting topics will include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Messaging to other programs and organizing at what level outreach happens</li> <li>2) TAC update</li> <li>3) Funding for TAC co-chairs/program funding</li> <li>4) Criteria for active participation</li> <li>5) Election and transition to SC co-chairs</li> </ol>
<p>11.</p>	<p><b>Action items:</b></p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>7.1. Discuss Bay-Delta Special Session idea with Josh Collins (Jay Davis, by May 23)</li><li>7.2. Point TAC to flow objectives background papers (Val Connor, by May 30)</li><li>7.3. Call individual SC members and provide input to Thomas and Meghan Sullivan to provide more concrete job descriptions and guidance (Brock Bernstein, by June 3)</li><li>7.4. Distribute map of potential RMP sites to SC (Thomas Jabusch, by June 10)</li><li>7.5. Send language defining criteria for active participation in CV-SALTS to Thomas (Debbie Webster, by June 3), distribute with agenda (Thomas and Meghan, by June 10)</li><li>7.6. Make roles and responsibilities document more specific based on meeting outcomes (Thomas, by June 10)</li><li>7.7. Submit Delta RMP poster abstract (Thomas and Meghan, by June 11)</li></ul>
--	---