CA Water Quality Monitoring Council
Data Management Workgroup
California EPA Headquarters, Sacramento, Room 550
April 23, 2014

Attendees:
Steve Steinberg (Chair), Jeff Kapellas (notetaker), Mierve Davie (Water Board), Jon Marshack (Water Board), Tony Hale (SFEI), Cristina Grosso (SFEI), Nancy Miller (Water Resources), Lori Webber (Water Board), Mark Emmerson (Public Health), Kris Jones (Water Resources), Katy Landau (Water Board), Rafael Maestu (Water Board), Dave Osti (34 North)

I. Announcements

Nancy Miller will be taking the place on the committee of David Harris, whose change in work assignments have resulted in his stepping down as co-chair of the committee. Nominations for a new co-chair will be accepted. Nancy is representing the Department of Water Resources, not the Resources Agency.

II. Subcommittee Reports

a. Portal and Tools Subcommittee
Discussion ensued on the best document and collaboration platform (such as Google Drive or MS Sharepoint) to share DWMG information and products with other Monitoring Council work groups. SFEI has a non-profit Google Drive account. CA Department of Public Health uses an open-source document content system (DRINC.ca.gov). The system is hosted by UC Davis Information Center for the Environment, is role- and project-based, and could potentially be modified for use by the DMWG.

Nancy Miller will check with current managers of the WQMC wiki to see whether expansion of the current wiki to include other work groups would entail too great an expansion of their workload.

b. Data Standards
With the resignation of Erin Reddy from the DWMG, Tony Hale is the last member of this subcommittee. As a result, the development of the standards document has been delayed. It may be time to consider a change in the group's focus. One alternative to deriving a standards document in a top-down manner would be to inventory the data standards (including QA/QC standards) already used by the current portals and then base the standards on the patterns used to date. The document could also be developed modularly, with focus on individual sections as needed. We need to have a clear picture of what's being used prior to advocating adoption of a standard, because need to know how much to cost to conform. As such, the approach could be to develop the document as a "Best Practices" rather than "Standards" document and bring them before the Council for adoption.

Mark Emmerson and Nancy Miller will join Tony on the Data Standards Workgroup.

III. Workgroup Progress Report for Monitoring Council

Jon Marshack recounted David Harris's presentation to Monitoring Council at their February 19th meeting. The presentation materials are available on the Council website (http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring_council/meetings/2014feb/data_management.pdf).

The key recommendations in the presentation:
- Increase representation and information exchange between DMWG and program workgroups
- Complete data management practices guide and determine which should be formally adopted by the Council.

- Inventory the datasets currently used in portals and look for linkages
- Develop interoperability standards
- Develop approach to dedicate staff time to DMWG

The discussion following the presentation noted the reluctance of DMWG members to make recommendations to take back to their departments and organizations. Also noted was the difficulty in communication between the theme workgroups comprised mainly of scientists and the DMWG comprised primarily of technologists. In response to a query, it was noted that one metric for gauging the DMWG's effectiveness would be the completion and adoption of the best practices documentation.

The audit report draft will be on the agenda for 5/28 Council meeting. The agenda will be on posted on the Council website (http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring_council/meetings) by 5/16.

The audit report is scheduled to be approved by the Council in June or July. It will then pass on to Agency heads and some interested legislative subcommittees.

The Council has been supportive of the workgroup, so we can move forward with our work as proposed.

IV. EcoAtlas

Cristina Grosso and Tony Hale presented on the EcoAtlas (http://www.ecoatlas.org). The EcoAtlas was originally developed in 1999 as a means of mapping and analyzing wetlands and restoration projects in the SF Bay region. The new system builds upon the skeleton of that system and expands the scope statewide. The system integrates data from various sources, but it is different from CA DFW's BIOS system because it is designed as both a data entry point and reporting point (although the data entry module is not completed). The site leverages the current and historic ecologies developed by SFEI. It uses the CA Aquatic Resources Inventory (CARI), a more authorative and refined hydrography than NHD/NWI, as its hydrologic base. The system enables authorized users to upload information and maps about restoration projects, which can then be integrated and reported via the sites reporting module. SFEI is currently working with the joint ventures and the Delta Conservancy to enhance the site's reporting capabilities.

The site's technology stack is a combination of open source and proprietary features. It is possible for other organizations to adopt the tech stack in whole or part, but there are a number of customized elements which would require modification. SFEI is working with the SF Joint Venture to develop a "mini" EcoAtlas which could be adopted for other uses.

The Wetlands Workgroup has asked SFEI to develop a business plan for sustainability for the site. The Delta Conservancy, the joint ventures and SFEI have an MOU pledging support for outreach, marketing & funding opportunities. Funding for the site has to date been pieced together from different funding sources.

V. Delta Science Summit

The Delta Stewardship Council is sponsoring and Environmental Data Summit for June 5-6, through which speakers will be discussing how to bring data together and make it easier to access. A vision document will be coming out the meeting. First day will consist of plenary sessions while the second day will be breakout sessions. The state Assembly is looking at summit as a step in developing a commitment and paths for the agencies to collaborate. Tne summit's focus is still on water resources data, even though the scope of the conference has expanded from the Delta to statewide environmental data. The Open Data Summit will follow in early 2015 led by the CA Water Atlas group. Both the EcoAtlas and Estuary Portal will be presented at the Environmental Data Summit. Nancy Miller, Dave Osti and Tony Hale are on the organizing committee. The DMWG could use the Data Summit's white paper as the basis for recommendations to the Council.

VI. Next meeting date: June 18, 2014, CalEPA Building, Sacramento

Potential topics:
- DMWG goals for the next year
- Communication options for workgroup webpage
- Identification of potential group members
- Debrief from the Data Summit
- Discussion of new co-chair
- Estuary portal (34North)
- BIOS presentation (CA DFW)