Healthy Watersheds Partnership
August 10, 2021 Meeting
1:00 pm – 3:30 pm

Meeting Notes
[Link to Meeting Recording](#)
[Link to Meeting Slides](#)

Item 1: Welcome, Roll Call, Announcements & Updates (Ali Dunn)

Notes

- ~ 60 individuals in attendance
- No announcements or updates from the group

Item 2: Watershed Prioritization Tool Update (Eric Stein, Jeff Brown, SCCWRP)

Purpose

Update on the Watershed Prioritization Tool development and progress.

Background

The Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP) and the Central Coast Wetlands Group (CCWG) are leading an EPA funded effort to prioritize management actions within watersheds. Work has begun on developing the approach and a survey has been shared with HWP regarding key elements of the approach. Discussions will provide critical input from the HWP and ensure close coordination between the efforts.

Notes

- See [Presentation Slides](#) and [Meeting Recording](#)
- See [Dec. 9, 2020 Meeting](#) documents ([Recording](#)and [Slides](#)) for original presentation on the effort
- Resources shared in the chat during the presentation:
    - [EPA StreamCat Dataset and Information](#)
    - [Information on CSCI, ASCI and other similar condition indicators](#)
    - [CalEnviroScreen](#)
- Discussion topics included:
    - Analysis completed for six pilot watersheds (three watersheds on the Central Coast; three on the South Coast)
    - *Q: How have you incorporated local watershed plans into the Watershed Prioritization Tool?*

- - - Manually created a layer of priorities from local management plans and overlaid that layer with tool results.
    - Could potentially also take the [Areas of Conservation Emphasis (ACE)](#) from CDFW BIOS and overlay tool results - would want to use the aquatic layer in ACE 3.0.
  - *Q: Have you been able to incorporate an environmental justice factor to account for communities that rely on subsistence fishing or similar uses?*
    - No; not sure if there is a layer available with those specifics.
  - *Q: Have you looked into integrating your data with CDFW's [ACE 3.0 Tool](#)?*
    - Didn't incorporate that into this analysis since it was outside of the current scope. Could potentially incorporate the dataset into future work.
    - There is a plan on incorporating ACE into [HWP Assessment Dashboard](#)
  - *Q: Are you looking at the explosion of illegal marijuana grows and their impact on water sources (extreme usage and chemical waste)?*
    - No. Focus is currently on statewide, geospatial, and automated datasets. There are other programs focusing on water resource impacts of illegal and legal marijuana grows.
    - If data layers become available down the road, we can add them into the tool then.
  - *Q: I'm trying to contemplate how flood districts could incorporate this information in determining areas for greater restoration potential - not always easy in urban flood channels, but I saw you were considering that. How do you plan to incorporate that into the planning tool?*
    - Didn't incorporate that directly into this analysis since there isn't a statewide data layer for flood control infrastructure. Another example of a data layer that can be added at a later date when it becomes available.
  - Next steps for the team:
    - Want to look for opportunities to build upon the Watershed Prioritization Tool project in the future (like with the HWP Assessment Dashboard).
    - Will look at additional spatial considerations, tools, other ideas, and bring them into the analysis in the pilot watersheds.
    - Would love to work with someone on a Shiny App for a clean user interface for the Watershed Prioritization Tool.
    - Will send the final geodatabase, code, etc. to Ali and others when it is available.

Action Items

- Reach out to Eric (erics@sccwrp.org) for follow-up, additional ideas, and discussion.

Item 3: Watershed Assessment and Dashboard & TAC Update (Corey Clatterbuck, State Water Board)

Purpose

To provide an update on the progress of the HWP watershed assessment and landscape assessment dashboard.

Background

Progress is based on the landscape assessment tool work plan, literature review, conceptual model and dataset discussions since the May 2019 HWP meeting.

Notes

- See Presentation Slides and Meeting Recording
- Resources shared in the chat during the presentation:
    - 2013 CA Integrated Assessment of Watershed Health
    - California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN) Database
    - Proof of concept dashboard (Lance Le, Region 1)
- General goal of the HWP Watershed Assessment and Dashboard is to update the 2013 Assessment with updated datasets, methods, and functionality.
- HWP Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) first meeting was held on Aug 3, 2021. Notes from TAC Meeting will be posted on the HWP Meetings Page.
- Discussion topics included:
    - *Q: Is there an advantage to using R Shiny over ArcGIS or other "built" applications?*
        - We are prioritizing open source data and tools for this project, so will try to use open source software and data as much as possible over enterprise software (like ESRI ArcGIS).

Action Items

- Email Corey (corey.clatterbuck@waterboards.ca.gov), Anna (anna.holder@waterboards.ca.gov), or Ali (ali.dunn@waterboards.ca.gov) with questions or ways you would like to collaborate or contribute to the work.

Item 4: California FORESITE Project (Loretta Moreno, California Natural Resource Agency)

Purpose

Update on California Natural Resource Agency/CalEPA California FORESITE project development and progress.

<u>Background</u>

California FORESITE is being jointly developed by CNRA and CalEPA as directed under [AB 2551](#) (Wood, 2018; PRC 71365), to help the state address vulnerabilities to our forested ecosystems by:

- Developing a consistent, scalable, and open-source spatial analysis workflow to characterize current ecosystem asset conditions, current potentials within the given climatic and biophysical limits, and potential future climate risks

- Building a prioritization planning tool to aid in directing state and federal finance toward more strategic and targeted forest health and fuel reduction project locations to provide multiple co-benefits and enhance coordinated investment across agencies and projects

    FORESITE is strategically linked to [AB 1492](#) which directs the development of ecological performance measures to quantify changes in natural resource conditions in response to forest management and timber harvest. FORESITE will therefore help establish key indicators and metrics that can be used by CNRA and CalEPA in statewide integrated forest ecosystem monitoring and assessment.

<u>Notes</u>

- See [Meeting Recording](#)
- Resources shared in the chat during the presentation:
    - [CA FORESITE Website](#)
- Discussion topics included:
    - *Q: Is the area only focused on the 7 million acres shown in the slides or will the process be applied to other headwater areas in the state as well?*
        - The subject focus is based on the legislation that the effort is responding to (7 million acres in headwater watersheds), but the goal is to have the work (analyses, code, datasets, etc.) that will scale statewide.
    - *Q: What is the relationship between the US Forest Service watershed assessments ([2011 Watershed Condition Frameworks Assessment](#)) and FORESITE?*
        - There is another effort at the USFS Pacific Southwest Research Station that is looking at assessing current conditions in forest service lands (ACCELL Project). FORESITE and the USFS partners will be working over the coming months to align efforts and develop joint approaches.
    - *Q: It would be great to have components to the tools that show areas that have been denuded that could contribute to sediment loads in streams.*
        - Agreed. Components of analysis will be picking up on disturbance factors and including them as indicators.
    - *Q: What is the FORESITE Timeline?*

- - AB 2551 requires everything to be completed by Jan 2023. The CNRA FORESITE Teams will likely be doing more analytics beyond deadline.
  - *Q: Will future availability of state to local recycled water supplies (eventually?) be considered in any of these models and if so, could these models ever lead to study recommendations for Equity, Forestry, and STORAGE (BMP siting)?*
    - The scope of work is focused on forested systems and headwater areas, but this is a potential question for future work. We may need to find additional datasets to be able to fully answer the question.
    - Part of this question is quantifying water supply benefits/effects of treatment, etc.
    - Other efforts might be trying to answer some aspects of the question: Forest Service Research Station - ACCELL; Yuba County Water Agency and Placer County Water Agency - quantifying quantity benefits.

Action Items

- Reach out to Loretta (Loretta.Moreno@resources.ca.gov) for follow-up, questions, and further discussion.

Item 5: Brainstorm Future Meeting Ideas (Anna Holder)

Purpose

Brainstorm topics and speakers the HWP would like to hear about or discuss during future HWP meetings.

Background

Topics discussed during the Feb 2021 meeting include:

- US Forest Service watershed assessment report cards
- CDFW California Monitoring and Assessment Program Presentation
- Social/Racial/Environmental Justice datasets & nexus with HWP

Notes

- Future meeting ideas shared included:
  - Hearing more about how fuel management/fire resiliency goals are balanced with salmon recovery and other ecological functions.
  - Nexus of HWP work and homelessness. Maybe invite folks from the Homeless Encampments Subcommittee of the Trash Monitoring Workgroup to talk about how the impacts are watershed wide.

- - Discuss and compare efforts statewide to downscale datasets (e.g. climate projections) to better incorporate and consider local scale environmental changes (e.g., in temperature and precipitation)
    - Where does downscaled data exist?
    - Can it be shared in a centralized location?
    - What downscaling efforts are underway?
  - USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works with agricultural producers; would like to discuss how Federal and State priorities can be aligned, and how non point sources on working lands can be prioritized and addressed jointly with federal Farm Bill programs and state programs (Contact Wendy Rash, NRCS)
  - E-Flows Workgroup met and talked about reduced water flows associated with drought, which is likely to become a more chronic condition that may affect watershed health
  - Interest in seeing integration of groundwater elevation data into these dashboard tools, specifically to inform surface water - groundwater interaction issues. Groundwater plays a vital role in maintaining watershed health, especially throughout the dryer months when it provides baseflow. These groundwater elevation datasets should become more readily available within the Bulletin 118 defined groundwater basins due to SGMA. Not sure what kind of groundwater elevation data could be available in more upland watersheds?
  - It would also be good to have presentations by the Integrated Report units especially as they explore policy changes; there could be a lot gained from a conversation with them.

Action Items

- Contact Anna Holder (anna.holder@waterboards.ca.gov) or Ali Dunn (ali.dunn@waterboards.ca.gov) with any future agenda item or meeting topic ideas.

Item 6: Wrap up (Ali Dunn)

Purpose

Review action items, next steps.

Notes & Action Items

None

Item 7: Adjourn

Adjourned at 2:50 pm