# California Wetland Monitoring Workgroup
Minutes
February 3, 2015
Cal EPA Building, Room 240, Sacramento

## Attendees

| In Attendance | By Telephone |
|---|---|
| Ana Maria Saenz, State Water Board | Tony Hale, SFEI |
| Bill Orme, State Water Board | |
| Brian Dailey, State Water Board | |
| Cristina Grosso, SFEI | |
| Eric Stein, SCCWRP | |
| Jeanie Mascia, State Water Board | |
| Jon Marshack, Monitoring Council | |
| Josh Collins, SFEI-ASC | |
| Kris Jones, Monitoring Council | |
| Lori Weber, State Water Board | |
| Melissa Scianni, USEPA | |
| Rebecca Payne, Caltrans | |
| Ross Clark, MLML | |
| Shakoora Azimi-Gaylon, Delta Cons. | |
| Tom Cavanaugh, South Pacific Div USACE | |

## Meeting Minutes
- November 2014 meeting minutes have been approved and posted to the CWMW website.
- Next CWMW meeting is May 5, 2015 at the Delta Conservancy.

## WRAMP Strategic Planning Sub-committee Updates
The Strategic Planning tables were to be finalized by the February meeting; however, sub-committees have not been able to meet this deadline. A new time line of April 23 will be set for completing these tables.

### *Outreach* (Chris Potter)
The Outreach sub-committee was not able give an update on progress at this time. It was suggested that Outreach considers incorporating the Portal more explicitly into the outreach strategy. Also, it was identified that the Water Board's Lyris list could be used to inform interested parties on CWMW meetings, agendas, and minutes. Other appropriate uses would need to be determined.  Since all WRAMP Strategic Planning subcommittees include outreach, there is need for Outreach to keep track of what other sub-committees are doing.
<u>Sub-Committee Members:</u> Chris Potter, Shakoora Azimi-Gaylon, Josh Collins, Paul Jones, Eric Stein, Jeanie Mascia.

***Institutionalizing WRAMP Tools*** (Bill Orme)
An informal meeting was held to outline the scope of work for developing a business plan for funding WRAMP tools. Currently, there is not an established agency to adopt the tools; currently, voluntary staff time and grants are being used to support the tools. An EPA wetlands grant to the State Water Board will fund a business plan to examine and evaluate the best alternatives for administrative and scientific support. Tony Hale and Jeanie Mascia will be the leads on this project.
Tony will present progress reports to the CWMW and to the Monitoring Council as the business plan is developed.
The following suggestions were made to WRAMP-Tools from CWMW:
- The business plan should include a strategy and budget to fund personnel with the expertise and qualifications to advance institutionalizing WRAMP tools in the various regulatory programs.
- The business plan should include as a rationale for institutionalizing WRAMP that WRAMP tools facilitate applying the watershed approach to permitting.
- Fine-tune WRAMP tools to fit the needs of individual agencies as well as the goals of the CWMW.
- Consider the alternative of regional support centers for the tools in the business plan in order to capitalize on regional expertise. Also, data management contracting at the regional board level should not be over looked; perhaps the regional boards should find individual funding and support for the tools.
- Investigate how RIBITs is contracted.
- Consider coordinating with other workgroups, such as the healthy streams partnership, so that business plans can support one another.
- Including state agency IT in the development of the business plan.
- Consider the State FSR process for funding of tools.

Sub-Committee Members: Bill Orme, Jeanie Mascia, Tony Hale, Josh Collins, Keven O'Connor, Melissa Scianni, Cristina Grosso, Brian Dailey, Megan Cooper and Rebecca Loeffler.

***L3 Committee Development*** (Shakoora Azimi-Gaylon)
The L3 sub-committee has met twice, in October and December of 2014 and plan on meeting again in February 2015. The two main objectives of the group are to coordinate L3 approaches and data, and to create a list of suggested L3 protocols for each CRAM module. An update will be given by Alice Lowe on their progress for developing the IEP Tidal Wetland Monitoring Protocols
The following suggestions were made by the CWMW:
- Since recent science shows that wetlands and marshes are providing salmon habitat, consider developing L3 protocols for data demonstrating this nexus.
- Consider adding managed wetlands to the list of wetland classes for the development of L3 protocols.

Sub-Committee Members: Shakoora Azimi-Gaylon, Tony Hale, Keven O'Connor, Marco Sigala, Megan Cooper, Karina Johnston, John Kleinfelter

***L1 Committee Development*** (Chris Potter)
This sub-committee met on January 9ᵗʰ to discuss membership strategy and to set priorities. Priorities considered were developing mapping consistency protocols, focusing on tool development, and moving ahead with CARI SOP which will need to encompass the specialized versions of CARI from Southern California, Lake Tahoe and the Bay Delta.

Sub-Committee Members: Chris Potter, Bill Orme, Eric Stein, Kevin O'Connor, Paul Jones, Tony Hale.

***WRAMP Science Plan*** (Josh Collins)
The sub-committee is working towards getting a better sense of what science is needed to implement WRAMP in existing programs. Two current projects that subcommittee members are involved with may help define the science needs supporting the implementation of WRAMP tools.  Work is being done with the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan to draft a monitoring plan that will be implementing WRAMP tools. Also, the Independent Science Board is considering using WRAMP tools as an adaptive management framework for wetland restoration and will be producing a white paper on adaptive management strategies in the Delta. The following suggestions were made to WRAMP Science Development from CWMW: The sub-committee should consider the use of My Water Quality Portal to highlight projects using WRAMP tools to inform agencies on how to incorporate these tools in their business operations.

**WRAMP Strategic Planning Sub-committees**
**ACTION ITEMS**:

- o Sub-committee chairs will update the strategic tables before the next meeting and send the revised draft to Melissa by April 23.
- o Sub-committees will identify where they fall on the WRAMP diagram.
- o Sub-committees will consider the "how much" category more broadly to identify current funding as well as potential funding sources for activities.
- o CWMW should draft a white paper on applying the watershed approach to permitting

**EcoAtlas Enhancement Project Update** (Cristina Grosso)
The San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) has made updates to EcoAtlas through EPA wetland grants and other sources. The landscape profile tool now has the ability to allow users to upload KML or shape files, edit created polygons, save polygons locally, and customize and print maps that include a legend of all data layers used. Also, the section headings for the landscape profiles have been expanded to include more description. Landscape profiles now also include CENSUS information so that agencies can use the tool for outreach efforts. A video/tutorial, located on the "About" page of the website, explains to users how to create and use the new features.

The eel grass survey was expanded to encompass the coast from Humboldt to San Diego Counties and includes a number of restoration projects complete with summary information.

The National Marine Fisheries Service is currently providing funding for the eel grass updates but currently there isn't a plan for long term maintenance.

The wetland project tracker was updated to include wetland mitigation and restoration projects within regional board boundaries. A project uploader tool was created to allow individual users to upload projects to EcoAtlas. Uploaded projects are stored in a temporary database until SFEI staff QAQCs the projects and then adds them to EcoAtlas. Funding for these updates was provided by the Coastal Impact Assistance Program. Additional funding is needed in order to create scripts that would perform the QAQC functions and automatically move projects from the temporary database to EcoAtlas, thereby avoiding the need for staff review.

EcoAtlas also has new training features with links to CRAM self-training sites with information packets for each site.

New projects, funded by EPA wetland grants, include the enhancement of regional capacity for tracking of new habitat restoration projects by developing data entry and editing tools; a BARI/CARI editor that will allow users to submit suggested updates; new data visualization tools; a Lahontan training program; and the expansion of data for the Delta which includes water quality monitoring and toxicity data.

**ACTION ITEMS**:
   o   The Data Management White Paper will be reviewed by CWMW; the draft will be sent to all members of each subcommittee and the chairs will compile the comments.
   o   Ross Clark and Cristina Grosso will work on language that agencies can incorporate into contracts and grants requiring that data will be uploaded to EcoAtlas.

**L2 Committee Update** (Cliff Harvey)
CWMW requested that the L2 committee re-evaluate the strategic plan table from the summer meeting before sending out nominations to scientists for the WRAMP science panel. L2 should identify the technical skills that will be needed to implement the strategic plan and then seek professionals that hold those skills. L2 will discuss this at an upcoming meeting.

CWMW and L2 will need to discuss the categorization, or binning, of CRAM scores topic further; however, it was decided that scores need to be compared to regional references as well as state wide references. Also, this will need to be addressed in the updated Technical Memo.

The L2 committee has completed the Quality Assurance Plan which addresses CRAM precision. The committee is struggling on how to make updates to CRAM based on field input, such as invasive species and canopy cover, without changing metrics to such a degree that it affects ongoing monitoring efforts and technical tools. CWMW and the L2 committee will need to address and make decisions about CRAM updates in 1-2 years.

The California Coastal Commission has funded the development of eCRAM for bar built estuaries and additional CRAM trainings have been posted on the website.

**<u>Draft WRAMP Budget Proposal</u>** (Bill Orme)
The L2 committee developed cost estimates for L2 tools which cover administrative and scientific support. These cost estimates assume that a specific agency would undertake the administrative tasks by approving a PY in order to administer the CRAM program by coordinating CRAM trainings, tracking CRAM trainers and their status, participating in field reviews and facilitating the development of CRAM with sister agencies. Additionally, this administrator would offer scientific support by evaluating the weaknesses of CRAM through statistical verification or CRAM performances over time, developing a network, QAQC issues, and assisting with field applications beyond the depth of expertise of a usual trainer.

The budget proposal should be refined by identifying other alternatives; the committee should make a recommendation in the final budget proposal. The budget proposal will be incorporated by the WRAMP Tools Committee when writing the business plan.

The L1 and L2 cost estimates should be developed separately. The L1 committee has already developed a draft budget plan specifically for Status and Trends implementation, not for the other aspects of L1 development and implementation. The L1 committee will provide a cost estimate before the next CWMW meeting. The L1 budget proposal should broadly discuss data management systems to evaluate different alternatives for the WRAMP tools business plan.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

- o The L1 committee will provide updated budget estimates to CWMW with estimates for all L1 tools, in addition to the Status and Trends Program.
- o The concerns and changes discussed at this meeting will be incorporated into the cost estimate document and then will be incorporated into the business plan.

**<u>Updates and Announcements</u>**
- <u>Annual report to Monitoring Council (Jon Marshack)</u>
  The CWMW will no longer be providing the 2014 Annual Report to the Monitoring Council because the Triennial Audit Report was just released and an annual report was not needed. The Monitoring Council instead asks for continued development of the business plan.
- <u>S&T Funding:</u> (Chris Potter)
  The University of North Carolina's Environmental Finance Center has available EPA funds that are used to assist in the development of state wetland programs. The State Board and the California Natural Resources Agency applied for the grant to aid in the

development of the S&T program. The grant process is extremely competitive and the proposal was not funded this round. Some hope was offered that additional funding may be allocated by EPA to fund our request. Funding for the S&T pilot is almost up; a draft report on the pilot is expected in a few months and then it will be time for implementation. There is hope the report will spark more funding interest. Also, Eric Stein made a presentation on the S&T program to Monitoring Council at their February 23 meeting and received positive feedback.

- Managed Wetland Coordination:
  Managed wetlands in the Central Valley need to be in compliance with the Irrigated Lands Program requirements. Managed wetlands, that characteristically have poorer water quality than surface waters, often fail to meet water quality standards at the point of discharge into receiving waters. The Regional Water Board is looking into ways to regulate these wetlands and the Managed Wetlands Workgroup is also working on these issues. The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board will be holding a meeting in April to discuss the topic. Also, inquiry has been made as to the relationship between the Managed Wetlands Workgroup and CWMW.

- EPA Wetland Grants:
  The Request for Proposal (RFP) for EPA grants is expected in a few months. The EPA R9 is moving to a two year grant cycle, so there will be no RFP in 2016.

- Caltrans Advanced Mitigation:
  There has been an increased focus on advanced mitigation at Caltrans and a pilot mitigation project is now being funded to demonstrate advanced mitigation. WRAMP tools could help with the planning efforts, decide where to focus advanced mitigation efforts, and help Caltrans demonstrate that advanced mitigation planning is practical and cost-effective.

**Potential Topics for Future Meetings**
Standing Action Item: Reports from Strategic Planning Sub-Committees

- Completion, finalization, and approval of Strategic Planning Tables
- Reference Network- Fact Sheet, use in setting performance standards
- Delta Restoration Commission WRAMP (Delta RMP)
- National Wetland Condition Assessment draft report
- Santa Rosa Plain landscape profile report
- National Wetlands Inventory use of CARI maps
- L2-Roles and Responsibilities document approval
- National Parks Service Discussion
- L2 recommendations on how to bin CRAM scores
- L2 report on performance curves for streams tidal marsh restoration projects
- Report on S&T Pilot effort and T-sheet analysis (August)

- Performance Curves
- Updates on WRAMP Pilot efforts
- USACOE presentation on Monitoring Guidelines and other SOPs

**<u>Next Meeting:</u>**
May 5, 2015