

California Wetland Monitoring Workgroup
January 13, 2009 Meeting Minutes
SFEI, Oakland
Melissa Scianni, US EPA & Cliff Harvey, State Water Board

Attendees:

In attendance:

Chad Dibble – CDFG
Craig Wilson, Chair – CDFG
Letitia Rainier - SFEI
Andree Greenberg – SF Bay RWQCB
Shin Roei Lee – SF Bay RWQCB
Meredith Williams – SFEI
Josh Collins – SFEI
Tom Cavanaugh - USACE, Sacramento
Paul Jones – USEPA
Melissa Scianni - USEPA
Eric Raffini – USEPA R9
Jon Marchak – State Water Board
Cliff Harvey – State Water Board
Bill Orme – State Water Board
Robert Soleki – Central Valley RWQCB

On phone:

Dave Castanon – USACE, Los Angeles
LB Nye – LA RWQCB
Chad Roberts – Humboldt Bay Harbor
Dist.
Martha Sutula - SCCWRP
Bruce Posthumus - San Diego RWQCB
Ross Clark – Calif. Coastal Commission
Eric Stein – SCCWRP
Genevive Sparks – RWQCB Central
Valley

Meeting Minutes from 11/10/2008 (Craig Wilson)

One change in minutes was recorded: Chris Potter did not present the State of the State's Wetlands Report recommendations to the SB 1070 Council. Minutes were approved with that one change.

Reaction to State of the State's Wetlands Report (Paul Jones)

- A draft report has been provided to Paul Jones for comment
- Chris Potter will send the draft to the Resources Agency for comment. It will be sent the SB 1070 Council for comment
- The final report must be to EPA by 3/31/09 to close out the grant. The document will be sent for public comment by 3/31.
- Paul will talk to Chris regarding the timeline for CWMW review

Action Items:

- CWMW will review the draft report and focus on how well the body of the report supports the recommendations. CWMW requests at least one week to review the draft report.
- CWMW reviewed the recommendations and CWMW comments have been incorporated. We not should revisit these.

- We need to review the report in terms of how it supports our goals/programs. Also needs to be reviewed for technical accuracy. Key areas to look for: Missing information and items within reviewers' interests or special knowledge.

Policy and Technical Updates

Wetland Tracker Update (Meredith Williams, SFEI)

- Meredith Williams gave a Wetland Tracker demonstration.
- Can view planned, in progress, and completed projects
- Can view CRAM scores and some basic info on the project
- Can look at map based or tabular (e.g. permit info, monitoring reports) project info.
- Can generate summary reports for regions, counties, etc.
- Wetland Tracker is an excellent tool for storing and presenting wetland-related data and information.
- RB 2 is currently requiring project information be uploaded for all substantial 401/WDR permits. They are working towards having online forms applicants fill out that will automatically be uploaded. Right now paper forms are filled out and sent to SFEI for uploading.
- Development of Wetland Tracker is ongoing and it would be helpful if ongoing development of Tracker is coordinated with CWMW and SB 1070 monitoring Council.

Action Item: A wetlands IT group should be established. IT group should work closely with CWMW to coordinate monitoring program development and data portal design.

State Wetland Policy (Bill Orme)

- The first phase (which covers dredge/fill permitting, wetland assessment policy and wetland definition) is scheduled to be completed this year
- SWRCB currently drafting a concept paper on the policy, which will include:
 - State wetland definition
 - regulatory program based on 404 (b)(1) Guidelines for dredge and fill activities in wetlands and other waters of the state
 - Assessment and monitoring program
- Role of external committees to policy, i.e. interagency coordination among regulatory agencies, was discussed, along with mention of external stakeholder outreach, comment data base development.
- Bill noted that "artificial wetlands (e.g., maintained wetlands) are one of the thornier problems that policy team has to deal with.

Action Item: CWMW will provide feedback on the policy, especially the monitoring program.

State Wetland Definition (Josh Collins)

- The definition CWMW reviewed in November has been reviewed subsequently by several policy-oriented committees. Only minor changes were made and the glossary was expanded.
- SFEI is working on a technical report that will be given to SWRCB along with the definition. A ppt will also be developed.

- CWMW can review the report before it goes to the State Board. The report will likely be finalized by the end of February.
- CWMW requested an opportunity to provide scientific review and input on the definition and monitoring plan as they proceed through the Water Board's adoption process
- Josh will take draft definition report (penultimate version) of TAT to Assn. of Wetland Scientists for their review, outside of policy process.

Action Item: CWMW requests to State Water Board Wetland Policy Development Team (WPDT) to consider involvement of CWMW in continued scientific review of wetland definition and wetland monitoring program elements of new state policy.

Vernal Pool Forum (Paul Jones)

- Will take place January 29
- Paul will be proposing a unified vernal pool monitoring strategy/approach.
- Paul will have a straw proposal ready for presentation at the 1/29 forum, which will include CRAM.
- Bob Holland, vernal pool expert, will be presenting at the forum, with recent update of his maps. Dr. M. Barber from UC Davis has done a vernal pool vegetation classification system.
- Paul will send out information on the forum.

EPA Review of Compensatory Mitigation in CA (Eric Raffini, EPA)

- EPA completed a review of 404 mitigation in CA. The review focused on mitigation banks, but ILF and permittee-responsible sites were also visited. Eric Raffini provided a presentation on the findings.
- Group discusses assessment - monitoring standards for mit. Banks.
 - LA Corps is interested in the SCCWRP proposal to develop performance trajectories based on CRAM and standard IWRAP monitoring protocols for restoration/mitigation projects in the SoCal region to help inform the development of more condition and/or function-based performance criteria.
 - Need to think about how the CRAM reference network can be related to mitigation reference sites; i.e., Vernal Pool mitigation reference sites could simultaneously be CRAM reference sties.
- CWMW could prioritize wetland types to look at for developing standards.

Action Item: CWMW should develop recommendations for wording of 104 grant proposal to USEPA for developing standards for compensatory mitigation.

CWMW 2009 Action Plan (Eric Stein)

- There was a discussion about whether we should have a defined work plan or continue to be opportunistic/ad hoc.
 - It was decided that we need to start being proactive about what we discuss, rather than taking up topics ad hoc. However, we should be able to focus on more than one topic at a time (i.e. don't need to be linear).

Action Item: It was agreed that CWMW will focus future meetings on the following topics:

1. Development of Wetland Monitoring Strategy for CA- including monitoring methods, performance criteria, and funding strategy.
2. Support the activities of the SB 1070 Monitoring Council by developing the wetland-related data portal and data management system.
3. Continue discussions of policy issues, including wetland classification, riparian definition, reference sites, and other technical issues as they arise.

Future Meeting

Next Meeting will be on Thursday March 12 from 9 am – 4 pm in Sacramento, specific location TBA (probably DFG or State Water Board).

Items to cover at the March meeting:

- Monitoring Strategy (Josh/Eric)
 - Outline of strategy (Eric and Martha)
- Data Portal (Eric/Martha)
 - Portal content (Eric and Martha)
 - Portal technical design (Oram)
 - Funding (Orme)
- Wetland Classification (Chad Roberts/Josh)

Potential Agenda Items for Future Meetings

Update on the Riparian Definition work of the TAT

Examination of CRAM peer review

Review of CIAP Workplan

Develop recommendations for wording of 104 grant proposal for developing monitoring standards.