



California Wetland Monitoring
Workgroup
(CWMW)
Meeting Minutes
9:30 – 3:30
November 3, 2015
Delta Conservancy
1450 Halyard Drive, Suite 6
West Sacramento, CA 95691



In Attendance

Paul Jones, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Kevin O'Connor, Central Coast Wetlands Group
Bill Orme, State Water Board
Chris Potter (on phone), Resources Agency
Ana Maria Saenz, State Water Board
Tony Hale (on phone), San Francisco Estuary Institute
Jon Marshack, Monitoring Council
Cliff Harvey, State Water Board

Tom Cavanaugh, U.S. Army Corps
Shakoora Azimi-Gaylon, Delta Conservancy
Josh Collins, San Francisco Estuary Institute
Abby Carevie, Dept of Water Resources
Kris Jones, Monitoring Council
Evyann, Borgnis, State Coastal Conservancy
Elaine Blok, National Wetlands Inventory

Review of August Meeting Minutes:

Minutes of the August 4, 2015 meeting were approved by voice vote with no objections. The minutes will be posted to the CWMW website and distributed through the email list.

WRAMP Strategic Planning Sub-committee Updates:

Outreach Sub-committee

The Outreach sub-committee was formed during the July 2014 Strategic Planning session. The sub-committee is still in the process of refining their specific mission and objectives; the subcommittee was not able to give an update at this time. The CWMW discussed implementing some outreach by utilizing the workgroups Lyris list to distribute information about workgroup activities to interested parties. It was the group consensus that this would be a good way to distribute the final Workgroup products and meeting notice to the public. It was agreed that final meeting information (announcements, agendas, and approved minutes) and other Workgroup products would be sent to the distribution list via Lyris.

Action Item: *Jon Marshack will request that Ana Maria Saenz gain authorization to distribute meeting information over the Lyris List.*

Action Item: *Ana Maria Saenz will add the distribution of finalized meeting announcements, agendas, and approved minutes to her CWMW duties.*

Institutionalizing WRAMP Tools Sub-committee

The Department of General Services is working with the San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) and the State Water Board on the 104(b)(3) Wetlands Program Development Grant. The Department of General Services has

requested specific information and the State Water Board and SFEI are working to get their questions answered. The grant has been in progress since 2014.

L3 Sub-committee

The L3 Subcommittee met on October 27, 2015. This was a joint meeting between the L3 and the Data Visualization Workgroup. The meeting agenda included the discussion of the new WRAMP website and a presentation on Sierra wet meadow L3 Protocols. The Subcommittee discussed the new information on the website and opportunities to share their L3 protocols and procedures with others via the new website. Dave Weixlman from Forest Services presented the Sierra Wet meadow L3 Protocols. The Subcommittee discussed how some of the products that Dave developed can be shared with other resources managers in California through the website.

The L3 Subcommittee will develop a framework for L3 data QA protocols over the next 12 months.

L1 Sub-committee

The L1 Sub-committee has been working on two specific tasks delegated from strategic planning sessions. The first is the development of CARI Standards and finalizing the CARI SOPs. The second is implementing the Status and Trends Program (S&T Program). The sub-committee has compiled a list of interested agencies that may be interested in implementing or partnering in the S&T Program. The L1 sub-committee will work with the outreach sub-committee to contact these agencies. It was suggested that a separate meeting be held to work on the specific expectations of the sub-committee. In this regard, the CWMW discussed the possibility of drafting a list of questions for L1 to distribute to interested agencies to gain a better understanding of specific L1 needs. Furthermore, the group discussed if CARI procedures would be developed to reflect changes to aquatic resources due to development fill impacts, mitigation and non-mitigation restoration projects. These procedures still need to be developed.

It was further discussed that the L2 Committee might be formed around the upcoming SFEI project to build an L1 tool for citing mitigation projects in the watershed context. That project requires forming a TAC which could involve selected members of the CARI and S&T TACs, plus selected lead staff from the CDFW 1600 program, NCCP, and HCP.

Proposition 1 Update:

WRAMP Website Update and Ongoing Maintenance

In response to the need to provide guidance and assistance to Proposition 1 grant applicants and planners the CWMW created the "[Elements of Wetland and Riparian Area Monitoring Plan \(WRAMP\)](#)" website. This website includes the tools and resources needed for grant applicants and planners who are preparing to apply for grants from administrating agencies that may require the use WRAMP tools. The workgroup discussed the launch of this website and potential maintenance activities. It was agreed that there is a lot of information on the website and it would perhaps be easier to use if it contained more navigational tools, such as a table of contents and/or short cuts to specific areas of interest. Additionally, the workgroup discussed the possibility about providing a discussion board for those who are using the WRAMP tools to communicate to each other about how they implemented, or plan to implement, WRAMP in their projects. It was determined that a moderator would need to be assigned to the forum if it were to be implemented in the off chance that there was inappropriate posts from the public.

Action Item: Jon Marshack will look into the Water Boards capabilities of providing a discussion board on the WRAMP tools website for public use.

Proposition 1 Monitoring Proposals

Pajaro River Watershed Assessment to Support Coordinated Project Selection, location, and Effectiveness

Monitoring: The Central Coast Wetlands workgroup has applied for a grant for a proposed project that would create a comprehensive, interactive watershed information resource that racks stream ecosystem conditions to help the agencies and organizations in the Pajaro River Watershed make informed watershed and assessment decisions. This new information would integrate and enhance stewardship and restoration actions and organizes and integrates information on stream and wetland conditions, evaluates flood and infiltration capacity and identifies priority streams and wand watersheds for restoration.

Monitoring Council Meeting Update of August 2015

The Water Quality Monitoring Council is in the process of reevaluating its structure and mission, in light of the first Triennial Audit of the efforts on Monitoring Council's and its workgroups. Meetings have been held with the Cal/EPA Secretary and Undersecretary, who expressed uncertainty as to whether the Monitoring Council is the right organization to be pursuing coordination of monitoring, assessment, and reporting. Acquiring dedicated funding for Monitoring Council-related activities is unlikely, unless the Council can tie its efforts to one or more projects that are high priority for the administration, for example the Delta (EcoRestore and Water Fix). The State Water Board made a proposal to do just that and sent it to Cal/EPA for review. The proposal is currently being reviewed by the Department of Finance, who is asking that various questions be addressed. The proposal did include the Wetlands Status and Trends Project. David Okita of the EcoRestore at the Natural Resources Agency sent a letter of support.

As part of the Monitoring Council's internal review, a Planning Subcommittee of the Monitoring Council is scheduled to meet November 16, from 9:00 12:00, to address a number of questions and to make recommendations for the full Monitoring Council, which will meet December 11. Questions include:

- Should the Monitoring Council Membership and organizational structure remain the same or should it be modified?
- What structure and membership would improve chances for success?
- Should statewide focus be maintained, or should a more opportunistic focus be adopted that better addresses regional monitoring efforts and issues as they arise?
- Should monitoring, assessment, and reporting improvement efforts continue to be divided into theme areas by beneficial uses and water body types?
- Should the Council's efforts be expanded to include water supply information?
- Should portal development continue to be the Council's driver to improve monitoring, assessment, and reporting?
- Is new legislation needed to refine and bolster the Monitoring Council effort?

Undersecretary Gordon Burns plans to attend and provide the Cal/EPA perspective. The agenda for the Novmeber 16 Subcommittee meeting is on the Councils website at http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring_council/meetings/index.shtml. Anyone is welcome to attend.

Ecosystem Workgroup Meeting Update

The co-chairs of the CWMW, Healthy Watersheds Partnership, and the Estuaries Workgroup met to discuss common needs, identify overlap in goals and objectives, and discuss how they could help each other meet those common goals. The co-chairs decided that a merge of the workgroups was not the best approach, but that there is a definite need for a higher level of collaboration. They discussed the idea of focusing on a specific area or region, rather than a state wide approach. If this approach is taken, the San Francisco Bay Delta Estuary would be a good candidate. They provided ideas on how to assist and support each other. It was agreed that the co-chairs would continue to meet, perhaps on a quarterly basis with the idea of focusing on some targeted collaborations. There was a suggestion to include the Data Management Workgroup so that the discussion on how to best address data needs for all the various workgroups could be discussed.

Additional Information: The Healthy Watersheds Workgroup has been working on the development of new products, including sources of funding. Plans include the creation of “report cards” that could provide information on the health of a watershed in advance of management decisions, such as NPDES, stormwater, and other permitting information. This information could support permit making decisions by providing information on ongoing activities in the watershed. Currently, there are report card efforts going on at the Central Coast and San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Boards.

2011 National Wetland Condition Assessment Results from the Public Report and 2016 Field Season Update

At the August 2015 CWMW quarterly meeting an update was given on emerging findings of the first nationwide survey of wetlands. Cara Clark and Kevin O’Connor have since submitted a report of the findings on California’s participation in the [2011 National Wetland Condition Assessment](#) to the EPA. This document, and a simplified article based on information in the submitted report, is available for a 30 day review and comment period. Kevin O’Connor and Cara Clark have begun site selection to begin work on the 2016 National Wetland Condition Assessment.

L2 Committee Update

An episodic stream module has been developed, (primarily by SCCWRP with substantial assistance from Moss Landing Marine Labs Central Coast Wetlands Group). This module focuses on episodic streams on arid land channels in Southern California. These streams generally flow during and after storm events. The L2 Committee is reviewing the module and will provide comments at the next quarterly meeting. The committee also reports that the module can be used in its current form as has been the review procedure with all CRAM modules before they were fully validated. However, practitioners should err on the side of caution when using this module outside of the geographic areas in which it has been tested. The committee recommends that the module be subject to the same developmental process that was applied to all other modules that are being developed or that are currently in use.

In addition, the L2 Committee has drafted a quarterly report that is currently being reviewed by members. This report will be submitted to the CWMW upon finalization.

Updates

S & T Funding

The State Board has put together a proposal to help the State Water Board gain resources for Bay/Delta Monitoring. A request to obtain staff for the S&T Program was included in this high priority project. This would provide the resources needed to acquire data needed to implement the S&T Program. David Okita, of the EcoRestore at the Natural Resources Agency, sent a letter of support outlining the importance and need for the S&T Program to Tom Howard. It is understood that the proposal has been cleared by CalEPA and has been sent to the next level for approval. In addition, the State Water Board 401 Program has offered to free up staff time to contribute work towards finding additional funding for the S & T Program.

Announcements

- ❖ Abby Carevie, Dept. of Water Resources, is hoping to present information about California Water Plan Water Portfolios at the next CWMW meeting.
- ❖ The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency are providing training for use of the landscape profile tool that was developed for the Tahoe area. Invitations for the training were sent to over 300 people.
- ❖ The Tahoe Aquatic Resource Inventory, a Mapping Standards and Methodology for Channels, Wetlands, and Riparian Areas in the Tahoe Basin will be added to the California Aquatic Resources Inventory.
- ❖ The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board is sponsoring a workshop for regional and/or watershed based permitting.

Future Agenda Items

- ❖ Review the State Wetlands Conservation Program Development Plan and add to the February agenda
- ❖ Presentation on Ca Water Plan Portfolios from the Dept. of Water Resources
- ❖ Discuss the CWMW efforts with Danny Grossman and invite him to attend the CWMW meetings
- ❖ Collaborative opportunities with other ecosystem health workgroups
- ❖ CRAM/SWAMP data correlation summary presentation
- ❖ L1 to report back to the workgroup regarding results or agency outreach on how to proceed on L1 committee efforts

2016 CWMW Meeting Schedule

- ❖ February 2nd
- ❖ May 3rd
- ❖ August 2nd
- ❖ November 1st