



Safe to Eat Workgroup (STEW) Meeting Notes



Wednesday, January 18, 2023
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (Pacific)

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

Agenda Overview

Item	Topic	Lead	Time
1.	Roll Call, Agenda Review, Goals of the Meeting	Jay Davis	9:00 AM (10 min)
2.	Information: Mercury Bioaccumulation in the Hells Canyon Reservoir Complex of the Snake River Desired Outcome: Inform and update the STEW	Collin Eagles-Smith	9:10 AM (30 min)
3.	Information: Final Monitoring Plan for 2023 Desired Outcome: Inform and update the STEW	Jay Davis	9:40 AM (15 min)
4.	Information: Quick Updates Desired Outcome: Inform and update the STEW	Anna Holder	9:55 AM (20 min)
Break			10:15 AM (10 min)
5.	Information: Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program Realignment & Statewide Tribal Engagement Desired Outcome: Inform and update the STEW	Anna Holder	10:25 AM (20 min)
6.	Information: Planning for 2024 Long-term Monitoring Priorities Assessment Desired Outcome: Inform and update the STEW	Anna Holder	10:45 AM (15 min)
7.	Wrap-up and Adjourn	Anna Holder	11:00 AM (10 min)

Agenda Details

Item 1. Roll Call, Agenda Review, Goals of the Meeting

Discussion

- See slides (5-6) and [recording](#) for full discussion

Meeting

R9: Chad Loflen

Program/STEW Leads

Ali Dunn (SWAMP)
Anna Holder (SWAMP)
Jay Davis (SFEI)

State Board

OIMA/SWAMP
Devan Burke
Corey Clatterbuck
Chad Fearing
Sydney Rilum
Jennifer Salisbury

Peer Review Panel

Harry Ohlendorf (CH2M Hill)

DWQ

Amanda Blackwell

OEHHA

Huyen Tran Pham
Wesley (Wes) Smith

Other

Sarah Brower (City of San Diego Public Utilities Department)
Christine Cosby (Yurok Tribe)
T. Gill
Richard Jones
Kenneth Lee
Robert Mackie (Orange County Environmental Resources Public Works)
Gerardo Martinez
Nina Miller (California American Water)
Chi-Li Tang (Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts)
L. Williams
+ 2 unidentified participants

MLML/MPSL

Autumn Bonnema
Gary Ichikawa
Billy Jackl
Scot Lucas

Regional Boards

R1:
R2: Sami Harper, Kristina Yoshida
R3: Melissa Daugherty
R4: Emily Duncan
R5: Janaé Bonnell, Jordan Hensley, Angela Llaban, Lauren Smitherman
R6: Kelly Huck, Alanna Misico
R7:
R8: Heather Boyd

Action Items

- None

Item 2. Mercury Bioaccumulation in the Hells Canyon Reservoir Complex of the Snake River

This presentation will provide an overview of an integrated 10-year research program to investigate the biogeochemical and food web drivers of methylmercury cycling in a three-reservoir system on the Snake River, ID/OR – with a focus on 1) spatial and temporal distribution of mercury through the food web, 2) influence of food web structure on mercury bioaccumulation, and 3) linkages between the processes governing methylmercury production and bioaccumulation.

Discussion

- See slides (7) and [recording](#) for full discussion
- Item was skipped due to presenter scheduling conflict

Action Items

- Jay: Coordinate with the speaker to reschedule the presentation for an upcoming STEW Meeting

Item 3. Final Monitoring Plan for 2023

This group has been discussing the sampling plan for 2023 and beyond in some capacity since Jan 2021. The final [2023 Lakes \(Panel 5\) Monitoring Plan](#) will be presented.

Discussion

- See slides (8-17) and [recording](#) for full discussion
- Monitoring Priorities: Complete Bass Lakes Panel 5 and remain consistent with Panels 1-4. If budget allows, also include OEHHA add-ons and possibly other high priority additions.
 - Requests for additional water bodies are included in the final Monitoring Plan, however the tight budget makes it likely that we will not be able to sample them. The exception is Lake Hodges (Region 9) since Chad Loflen (Regional SWAMP Coordinator) noted that Region 9 staff may be able to do collections to reduce costs.
- Timeline
 - Sep. 2022 - Permit submitted
 - Nov. 4, 2022 - Discuss Plan at STEW meeting
 - Nov. 18, 2022 - STEW Plan review & comments due
 - Nov. 30, 2022 - Finalize Monitoring Plan
 - Feb 2023 - QAPP update complete & posted online
 - Feb/Mar 2023 - Kick-off meeting
 - Apr 3, 2023 - Monitoring to begin - getting an early start to accommodate new electrofishing restrictions related to water temperature.
- Discussion of hypotheses related to hydrography's impact on mercury concentrations in water bodies: mercury concentrations are elevated in wet years.
 - If the hypothesis is correct, we would expect 2021 drought conditions to correspond with lower mercury concentrations (data to be discussed at the April STEW meeting), and the wet conditions in 2023 would correspond to more elevated mercury concentrations.

Action Items

- Anna: Post revised QAPP, Feb 2023
- Anna: Schedule & coordinate Kick-off meeting for Feb/Mar 2023

Item 4. Quick Updates

- See slides (18-21) and [recording](#) for full discussion
- [2019 Bass lakes \(Panel 3\) Data Report](#) complete!
- 2020 Coast data and report
 - Data status: all data - except 3 PCBs samples sent to SGS-Axys for analysis in Mar 2022 - have been processed.
 - Report status: The [Cruise Report](#) is complete. We will be pushing the data report to 2025 after the remainder of the coast has been sampled (2024) and data processed (2025).
- 2021 Bass lakes (Panel 4) data and report
 - Data status: Metals/Other/Age data are processed; waiting on organics data from SGS-Axys.
 - Report status: The [Cruise Report](#) is complete; draft data report will be distributed and ready to discuss during the Apr. 2023 STEW Meeting.
- 2022 Monitoring data
 - Realignment (Project code: SWB_Realign_RWB9_2022):
 - Everything has been sampled except lobster. RWB9 is still planning to collect lobster samples, starting the week of Jan 23.
 - *Question:* What analyses will be conducted on lobster samples?
 - Mercury, selenium, arsenic, OC pesticides, PCBs, PFAS, possibly also PBDEs
 - *Question:* What tissue(s) are being analyzed? Just the tail or something else?
 - The effort is conducting analysis based on the priorities set by the Realignment Advisory Committee, which has prioritized tribal and subsistence communities. Therefore, analysis will be on the whole body (i.e. internal organs and the tail), except for the shell.
 - MPSL is working on final dissections; Organic samples pending shipment.
 - Rivers (Project code: SWB_FishRiv_2022):
 - Only steelhead from the Mokelumne Fish Hatchery collection and dissection remains.
 - Organic samples pending shipment.
 - Central Coast Region (RWB3) Monitoring (Project code: RWB3_SS_BOG (2022)):
 - Metals have been analyzed and submitted to SWAMP for processing; organic samples pending shipment.
- New fish consumption advisories
 - [Advisory for Fish that Migrate \(Statewide, Nov 2022\)](#)
 - Updated advisories related to fish that migrate:
 - [Central and South Delta \(Contra Costa, San Joaquin, and Sacramento Counties, Nov 2022\)](#)
 - [Lower American River \(Sacramento County, Nov 2022\)](#)
 - [Lower Cosumnes River \(Sacramento County, Nov 2022\)](#)

- [Lower Feather River \(Butte, Sutter, and Yuba Counties, Nov 2022\)](#)
 - [Lower Mokelumne River \(Sacramento and San Joaquin Counties, Nov 2022\)](#)
 - [Mokelumne River at Lodi Lake \(San Joaquin County, Nov 2022\)](#)
 - [Sacramento River and Northern Delta \(Shasta, Tehama, Butte, Glenn, Colusa, Yuba, Sutter, Yolo, Sacramento, Solano, and Contra Costa Counties, Nov 2022\)](#)
 - [San Joaquin River from Friant Dam to the Port of Stockton \(Fresno, Madera, Merced, Stanislaus, and San Joaquin, Nov 2022\)](#)
- *Coming soon:* updates on San Francisco Bay (last updated in [2011](#)), Pyramid Lake (last updated in [2013](#)), Castaic Lake (last updated in [2017](#)), and Castaic Lagoon (last updated in [2017](#))
 - *Question:* For the San Francisco Bay advisory, which analytes are the most likely to limit consumption?
 - PCBs in bait fish (e.g., anchovies, top smelt), mercury; updates mostly involve adding species to the advisory rather than adding analytes/contaminants.
- Potential future agenda item: Presentation from OEHHA regarding fish consumption advisory development plans and priorities for the next year or so, with opportunity for STEW input
- Updates on TMDLs
 - Anna is working on building relationships with the [Statewide Mercury Control Program for Reservoirs](#) and other TMDL programs.
 - Central Valley Regional Board staff are still working on reviewing the [Delta Methylmercury TMDL](#); will have a draft staff report go through scientific peer review and initial public review by the spring.
 - Central Valley Regional Board staff are also working on Central Valley mercury strategy and scoping out Rivers TMDL development, and will use data from the 2022 Rivers monitoring effort.
 - *Note from the chat:* The TMDL unit is also working on putting tissue data in CEDEN
- Monitoring Council Updates
 - [Next meeting](#): Feb. 23, 2023; focus on PFAS
 - [Equity Workgroup](#) has planned on having quarterly meetings in 2023, although no details are provided on their website yet.
- Other updates from the group
 - In Feb/Mar 2023 The U.S. EPA, Office of Water, will hold a virtual National Forum on Contaminants in Fish to bring together interested groups to discuss the many issues related to human health and contaminants in fish. The 2023 National Fish Forum will be held: Feb 28, Mar 2, Mar 7 and Mar 9, 2023 (9 AM - 2:30 PM PT / 12:00 PM - 5:30 PM ET) | [Registration Link](#)
 - Wes Smith (OEHHA) will have a poster related to oil spills
 - The San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) is partnering with a community-based organization, [All Positives Possible](#), and will receive funding from US EPA (San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund) to conduct fish monitoring in the Vallejo area in the summer of 2023. Fish monitoring will include two components: (1) [San Francisco Bay Regional Monitoring Program](#) style monitoring, and (2) community

member collection of fish. All samples will be analyzed for mercury, PCBs, and PFAS.

- Potential future agenda item: Presentation from SFEI and All Positives Possible on the project, lessons, results, and potential next steps.

Action Items

- Anna: Follow-up with OEHHA to schedule presentation on advisory development plans and priorities for the next year or so
- Ali D.: Follow-up with STEW contacts to organize presentation on PFAS work for the Feb Council Meeting
- Jay: Follow-up with All Positives Possible to see if there is interest in presenting at a future STEW meeting.

Item 5. Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program Realignment & Statewide Tribal Engagement

The implementation of the [Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program Realignment](#) and [Tribal Engagement Plan](#) is underway.

The San Francisco Region has been selected for the 2024-2026 Realignment Cycle! Please see the [Realignment Plan Update](#) for more context, our decision criteria, and our planned next steps, which will include continuing our Tribal Engagement efforts into 2023.

This agenda item will include an update on progress and next steps.

Discussion

- See slides (23-31) and [recording](#) for full discussion
- Anna provided a brief update on the progress and status of the Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program Realignment in both the San Diego Region (2021-2023) and San Francisco Region (2024-2026), as well as Statewide Tribal Engagement efforts (2022, 2023)
- All products related to these efforts can be found at: <https://bit.ly/BioaccumulationRealignProducts>
- San Diego Realignment (2021-2023) Update
 - Products & Accomplishments: 2021-2022
 - Advisory Committee Meetings
 - Developed and conducted monitored according to priorities identified in the [2022 Monitoring and Analysis Workplan](#)
 - Developed a [Summary of Long-term Committee Recommendations](#)
 - Drafted a Communication and Outreach Plan
 - Goals: 2023
 - Finalize and publish Communication and Outreach Plan
 - Determine what partnership looks like outside of Realignment Process
- Program Engagement with Regional Boards (2022)
 - Meetings with Regional Coordinators took place in Jan-Feb & Oct-Nov

- Focus was on relationship building, information sharing, and getting an understanding of each region's interest and readiness to participate in a future Realignment cycle.
- Statewide Tribal Engagement Update (2022)
 - Meetings with tribes took place between Mar-Nov
 - Focus was on relationship building, information sharing, and getting an understanding of each tribe's interest and readiness to participate in a future Realignment cycle.
- San Francisco Realignment (2024-2026) Update
 - Preparation: 2023
 - Tribal engagement and outreach
 - Community-based organization engagement and outreach
 - Preparation meetings with Regional Board Coordinators
 - Select first 2024 meeting date, location
 - Realignment Cycle: 2024-2026

Action Items

- Anna + Region 9 Coordinators: Finish San Diego Realignment Cycle
- Anna + Region 2 Coordinators: Prepare for San Francisco Realignment Cycle (including Tribal & community engagement)
- Anna: Continue Statewide Tribal Engagement
- Anna: Follow-up with Regional Coordinators and Tribes in 2024/2025

Item 6. Planning for 2024 Long-term Monitoring Priorities Assessment

This group has been discussing the long-term monitoring priorities assessment planned for 2024 in some capacity since Jan 2021. During the Oct 2022 meeting, the STEW requested more specific prompts that Regional coordinators can use to prepare for discussions in 2024. A draft of these prompts will be discussed, and an update on the more solidified meeting and discussion plan will be presented.

Discussion

- See slides (32-35) and [recording](#) for full discussion
- Anna provided a brief update on the vision for the 2024 Long-term Monitoring Priorities Assessment, including proposed meeting plans, and prompts that Regions and other partners might be able to use to prepare for those conversations.
- Proposed Meeting Presenters & Schedule
 - Each meeting will be 2-4 hours, depending on the agenda; agenda would be made of presentations from STEW partners who would share their needs and priorities moving forward
 - Quarter 1 (Jan-Mar): Water Boards (e.g. Regional & State Board Programs)
 - Quarter 2 (Apr-Jun): Agency Partners & other monitoring programs (e.g. OEHHA, Bay RMP, Bight RMP)

- Quarter 3 (Jul-Sep): Tribal Partners (e.g. Tribal monitoring programs)
- Quarter 4 (Oct-Nov): Reflection, synthesis, and priority setting
- Regional Update Prompts
 - Key Contacts
 - Recent monitoring projects (FY 20/21 - FY 24/25)
 - Regional Priorities (Top 3 Triennial Review Priorities)
 - Tribal Beneficial Use Process Timeline
 - Regional SWAMP Monitoring Program Vision
 - Anticipated monitoring projects (FY 25/26 - FY 29/30)
 - Bioaccumulation Monitoring Wish List
 - Bioaccumulation Monitoring Sticking Points
 - Additional Information
- Discussion about other prompts or resources that will be helpful as we prepare for our conversations in 2024?
 - In the Regional Update Prompts document, add space for an update on TMDLs
 - Develop a prompt document for non-Water Board partners so their presentations can be consistent with other presenters.
 - Vision would be for Regions and partners to use the Prompts document(s) as their presentation tool (i.e. share a PDF of the document with meeting attendees and discuss during presentation slot)
- Recommendations for other panthers that should be included in the 2024 conversations
 - [Southern California Bight Regional Monitoring Program](#) (Bight RMP) plans
 - California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Marine Life Protection Act/ [Marine Protected Areas Management Program](#) and the nexus of the [2022 Decadal Management Review](#) and the importance of pollutant impacts to populations and fisheries
- Discussion about other topics people would like to see discussed in 2024
 - Bioaccumulative effects on fish and wildlife
 - Proper data loading procedures and the importance of including metadata in submissions (potentially discuss before 2024)

Action Items

- Anna: Send Regional Coordinators Prompt Template
- Anna: Send STEW generalized Prompt Template for non-Water Boards partners
- All: Begin thinking about (and documenting!) long-term needs and priorities and be ready to discuss in 2024
- Anna: work the Jennifer S. to coordinate a presentation about proper data loading procedures and the importance of including metadata in submissions

Item 7. Wrap-up and Adjourn

- Review action items
- Review items for next meeting
- We were made aware of regular scheduling conflicts for our original 2023 meetings. We shifted our 2023 meetings to the *third Wednesday* of the month in Jan, Apr, Jul, Oct. Meetings are scheduled in the mornings on Jan 18, Apr 19, Jul 19, and Oct 18, 2023.
- Next meeting: Apr 19, 2023, 9:30 am - 12:30 pm

Discussion

- See slides (36-41) and [recording](#) for full discussion

Action Items

- Anna: Post meeting notes, presentation, and recording on the Meetings page, send email to STEW once complete
- All: Email anna.holder@waterboards.ca.gov with future STEW meeting speaker/topic recommendations