

CALIFORNIA WATER QUALITY MONITORING COUNCIL

Monitoring Council Meeting Notes

Friday, August 18, 2017 – 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Large Conference Room
Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP)
3535 Harbor Blvd., Suite 110, Costa Mesa



Monitoring Council Members and (Alternates) in attendance:

Beth Christman (Bruce Houdesheldt)	Karen Larsen Armand Ruby	(Ken Schiff) (Shelly Walther)
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Others in attendance or (on the phone):

(Bev Anderson, State Water Resources Control Board)
Erick Burres, State Water Resources Control Board
(Gary Darling, Department of Water Resources)
(Terry Fleming, US Environmental Protection Agency—Region 9)
(Helen Fitanides, The Watershed Project)
(Rebecca Fris, Department of Fish and Wildlife)
(Faye Garber)
(Greg Gearheart, State Water Resources Control Board)
(Jack Gouge, TYLIN International)
(Tim Godwin, Department of Water Resources)
(Cristina Grosso, San Francisco Estuary Institute)
Tony Hale, San Francisco Estuary Institute
(Robert Holmes, Department of Fish and Wildlife)
Kris Jones, Water Quality Monitoring Council, Department of Water Resources
(Rafael Maestu, State Water Resources Control Board)
(Toni Marshall, State Water Resources Control Board)
(Stephen Maurano, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)
(Stephen McCord, McCord Environmental)
(Christina McCready, Department of Water Resources)
Taryn Ravazzini, Department of Water Resources
(Reynalou Reyes, Department of Water Resources)
(Hildie Spautz, Department of Fish and Wildlife)
Eric Stein, Southern California Coastal Water Research Project
(Amber Villalobos, Department of Fish and Wildlife)
(Lori Webber, State Water Resources Control Board)

ITEM:	1	Approx. Time:
Title of Topic:	INTRODUCTIONS AND HOUSEKEEPING	10 minutes
Purpose:	1) Introductions (in the room and on the phone) 2) Review draft notes from May 23, 2017 Monitoring Council meeting 3) Review agenda for today's meeting	
Desired Outcome:	a) Approve May 23, 2017 Monitoring Council meeting notes b) Preview what will be covered today and overall meeting expectations c) Adjust today's agenda, as needed	

Attachment Links:	Draft notes from May 23, 2017 Monitoring Council meeting	
Contact Person:	Kris Jones	kristopher.jones@water.ca.gov , (916) 376-9756
Decisions:	The meeting notes from the May 23, 2017 were approved with no revisions. There was general agreement that the notes for this meeting and future Council meetings will not go into the same level of detail as the notes for previous meetings. This change is being made due to limited staff time. Moving forward, the meeting notes will cover only important decisions, action items, and the overall “flavor of discussion.”	

ITEM:	2	Approx. Time:
Title of Topic:	PUBLIC FORUM	10 minutes
Purpose:	Any member of the public may address and ask questions of the Monitoring Council relating to any matter within the Council’s jurisdiction under California Senate Bill 1070 (Statutes of 2006) provided the matter is not on the agenda.	
Desired Outcome:	Information and potential agenda topics for a future meeting. No decisions can be made regarding items that have not received prior public notice.	
Attachment Link:	California Senate Bill 1070 (Statutes of 2006)	
Contact Person:	Kris Jones	kristopher.jones@water.ca.gov , (916) 376-9756
Notes:	No persons requested to address the Council.	

ITEM:	3	Approx. Time:
Title of Topic:	ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES	30 minutes
Purpose:	These are expected to be brief informational items that could be expanded into more detailed discussions at future meetings: a) Monitoring Council Position Changes (Kris Jones) b) AB 1755, Open and Transparent Water Data Act (Chris McCready) c) Data Management Workgroup and its Steering Committee (Tony Hale)	
Desired Outcome:	Information and comment	
Background:	a) Monitoring Council Position Changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public – Sara Aminzadeh resigned from the Monitoring Council in late January 2016. Sara’s alternate, Travis Pritchard, continued to serve until he left the San Diego Coastkeeper organization. An announcement for this Council Member vacancy was widely circulated in November and fifteen candidates applied. Based on criteria outlined in the Council’s Governance document, candidates were vetted with a number of environmental organizations and the field of candidates was narrowed to three. Interviews were conducted in early March, and Ray Hiemstra of the Orange County Coastkeeper was recommended by Monitoring Council Co-Chair Karen Larsen for approval by the Secretaries of CalEPA and 	

	<p>the Natural Resources Agency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen Monitoring Groups – On June 1, 2017, Beth Christman named Helen Fitanides (The Watershed Project) as her alternate on the Monitoring Council representing Citizen Monitoring Groups. <p>b) AB 1755, Open and Transparent Water Data Act – In September 2016, the Open and Transparent Water Data Act (AB 1755) was signed into law, requiring the Department of Water Resources (DWR), in consultation with the Monitoring Council, the State Water Resources Control Board, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, to create, operate, and maintain a statewide integrated water data platform; to develop protocols for data sharing, documentation, quality control, public access; to facilitate the use of decision support tools related to water data; and to submit a report to the Legislature on these activities. DWR seeks to work with the Monitoring Council, its other partners, and interested stakeholders to meet statutory requirements of AB 1755. DWR is gathering information in the form of data-driven-decision “use cases” through a series of workshops to inform the technical and functional requirements of the data platform and protocols required by the legislation. The Monitoring Council’s Data Management Steering Committee has instructed the Data Management Workgroup to begin developing relevant information to assist DWR in its efforts relating to AB 1755 implementation.</p> <p>c) Data Management Workgroup and its Steering Committee – The DMWG’s Steering Committee was authorized by the Water Quality Monitoring Council in February 2016 with the mission of optimizing the coordinating work of the DMWG and ensuring that its activities were well resourced. Soon after the first meeting of the Steering Committee, which enjoyed broad representation from all of the named consultative organizations that would be named in the legislation, AB 1755 was signed into law by the governor, thereby focusing the immediate goals of the Steering Committee around the coordination of required discussions and challenging issues. Since then, the Steering Committee has sought to contribute to the successful implementation of the legislation as much as possible, and to look beyond the deliverables to related matters that must be tackled just beyond the horizon.</p>	
Attachment Links:	<p>a) Letter to Agency Secretaries recommending Ray Hiemstra to fill the vacant Public Member position on the Monitoring Council</p> <p>b) AB 1755, The Open and Transparent Water Data Act, chaptered September 23, 2016</p>	
Contact Persons:	Kris Jones	kristopher.jones@water.ca.gov , (916) 376-9756
Notes:	<p>a) Monitoring Council staff reached out to the Agency Secretaries regarding Ray Hiemstra’s recommendation for the Council Member vacancy but his confirmation has not yet been received. Karen Larsen has a meeting with the Agency Secretary the first week of September. She will use the meeting to address any concerns the Secretary might have about the recommendation.</p> <p>b) Chris McCready of the Department of Water Resources is leading the implementation efforts relating to AB 1755. The deadline for the Strategic Plan, protocols, and legislative report on protocols is January 1, 2018. The first deadline for making state-held water and ecological data available on a statewide integrated data platform is September 1, 2019. Two parallel efforts will help inform implementation: 1) a white paper on ‘Data for Water Decision Making’ is being written to characterize decision makers’ data needs, and 2) a document on ‘Open Water Information Architecture (OWIA) System</p>	

	<p>Requirements' is being developed by UC San Diego to focus on an inter-operable catalogue of data. The OWIA System Requirements Document (SRD) is available for review through September 1, 2017. Those interested in providing feedback on the functional requirements are encouraged to submit their comments. A technical requirements counterpart document is expected to follow. A template for submitting data use cases is now available. The next stakeholder meeting will be held in the fall to: (1) introduce, discuss, and invite feedback on OWIA and the decision-driven data approach; (2) foster collaboration with data providers and data consumers on AB 1755 implementation; and (3) discuss forward-looking plans and opportunities, including and beyond AB 1755. The draft Strategic Plan will be available for public review in the fall.</p> <p>c) The three co-chairs of the Steering Committee for Data Management are now: Greg Gearheart (SWRCB), Christina McCready (DWR), and Karen Miner (DFW). The Steering Committee of the Data Management Workgroup operated a forum to facilitate communication about AB 1755 among different agencies. Members of the Steering Committee and Data Management Workgroup also participated in prior AB 1755 workshops. The Committee is working with the Data Management Workgroup to create data management plan templates and a guidance document for developing an Open Data Handbook. The Data Management Workgroup produced a draft guidance document on open data and received good feedback. Next steps include finalizing the Open Data Handbook guidance document, conducting outreach, supporting the implementation of AB 1755 where possible, finalizing the charter for the Steering Committee, and redeveloping the charter of the Workgroup.</p> <p>Karen Larsen informed the group Monitoring Council Director vacancy was announced in May but that only a few applications were submitted. The Water Board management plans to re-advertise the position but this has not been officially announced yet.</p>
Action Item:	b) Kris Jones will work with Gary Darling to send the OWIA SRD to the Monitoring Council and Workgroup lyrics lists.

ITEM:	4	Approx. Time:
Title of Topic:	ECOATLAS BUSINESS PLAN	70 minutes
Purpose:	Tony Hale of the San Francisco Estuary Institute presented on the California Wetland Monitoring Workgroup's (CWMW) draft EcoAtlas Business Plan.	
Desired Outcome:	Provide input on the direction of the Business Plan, identify funding avenues not yet considered, and endorse the concept of a multi-agency steering committee for EcoAtlas.	
Background:	<p>EcoAtlas is the toolset of the Wetland and Riparian Area Monitoring Plan (WRAMP) developed by CWMW for monitoring wetlands, streams, and other surface waters. The toolset includes the CA Rapid Assessment Method (CRAM), Project Tracker, and the CA Aquatic Resources Inventory (CARI), among others. The toolset is currently being used by a broad set of regulatory and non-regulatory agencies in CA, including the State and Regional Waterboards, the Coastal Conservancy, the Delta Conservancy, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, USEPA, and USACE.</p> <p>To date, funding for the development and maintenance of these tools has been</p>	

	<p>achieved through grants and project-specific funding. Recognizing the instability of this funding stream, the Monitoring Council asked CWMW to develop a business plan for the EcoAtlas toolset. CWMW has spent the last couple of years researching funding options and developing a draft plan, which we now bring to the Council for input.</p>	
Attachment Link:	<p>EcoAtlas Toolset Business Plan (Executive Summary) EcoAtlas Business Plan – presentation by Tony Hale</p>	
Contact Person:	Tony Hale	tonyh@sfei.org , (510) 746-7381
Notes:	<p>The hybrid funding model, proposed by the Council’s Wetland Monitoring Workgroup (CWMW), breaks down the cost of the toolset into core infrastructure and periphery. The Core infrastructure covers data management, help desk support, special training, facilitating uploads and regular maintenance. Periphery covers any services or products related to governance, coordination, and tool customization/enhancement. The proposed funding model relies on participant fees to cover the common core costs. The more participants there are, the lower the fee for each participant.</p> <p>A suggested next step for the CWMW was to identify the specific agencies/programs that they would want to approach for funding, and begin discussions with those programs. The Council expressed a need for long-term funding for toolsets such as EcoAtlas. Kris Jones mentioned that there had been prior attempts to find an agency home for the EcoAtlas toolset, however, none were fruitful. He recommended that the Council engage GovOps in a broader conversation regarding approaches for how to sustain those IT projects developed outside of state government. He indicated that the sustainability issue has come up in other workgroups of the Council (e.g., the portal and toolsets developed by the Estuary Monitoring Workgroup). Kris suggested that there should be a future agenda item to discuss how the Council can help identify and overcome obstacles to sustainable funding for these IT projects, and potentially invite a representative from GovOps to take part in those discussions.</p>	
Decisions:	<p>The Council approved the Business Plans’ general approach. They did not express any concerns regarding the proposed governance or funding vehicles; however, the Council members decided not to provide a formal endorsement at this meeting. Instead, the Council requested that the CWMW bring a more finalized plan to a future meeting.</p>	

ITEM:	5	Approx. Time:
Title of Topic:	MONITORING COUNCIL SUPPORT FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL FLOW WORKGROUP	60 minutes
Purpose:	<p>Eric Stein of the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project led a follow up discussion from the last Council meeting on efforts to develop a framework for establishing statewide environmental instream flow recommendations and an open data portal to be coordinated through a new proposed Environmental Flows Workgroup.</p>	
Desired Outcome:	<p>Discussion between the speaker and Monitoring Council members to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify whether environmental flows fall within the scope of the Monitoring 	

	<p>Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek approval to establish a new Monitoring Council workgroup focused on improved coordination and collaboration among efforts relating to environmental instream flows, as well as sharing of relevant data through use of the State Open Data Portal and the Council's My Water Quality website.
<p>Background:</p>	<p>Managing environmental instream flows in a state as diverse as California requires interdisciplinary and multifaceted technical approaches that are both scientifically rigorous and flexible enough to address the broad range of needs across the state. Currently, numerous state agencies and programs are engaged in developing environmental flow recommendations with little coordination or data sharing. A team of technical experts representing academia, agencies, and non-governmental organizations has begun working on a tiered framework for establishing statewide environmental instream flows. The framework recognizes that a single approach to managing environmental instream flows is not practical considering this complexity and variability of water management needs in California. The tiered framework is organized around a statewide stream classification based on dominant hydrologic processes. Screening level flow targets are developed for each stream class based on similarity of functional flow elements to unaltered conditions for that stream class. More detailed watershed-specific flow recommendations can be derived based on methods and flow metrics that account for location specific physical and biological considerations, local management needs and constraints. The framework is intended to provide a way to facilitate coordination and information sharing on development and implementation of environmental instream flows across agencies and programs in California. The proposed environmental flows workgroup would facilitate coordination among agencies in developing details of the implementation framework. An environmental flow portal would provide a way to improve data and information sharing among the participating agencies.</p> <p>At the Monitoring Council meeting on May 23, Eric Stein of the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project gave a presentation regarding the development of a tiered framework for establishing environmental flows in California streams (see notes; Item 4), and the possibility of creating a new workgroup under the Monitoring Council. During the meeting, the Council members requested that Eric return with additional details regarding the proposed workgroup, including: 1) who would be involved in an Environmental Flows Workgroup; 2) the workgroup's objectives (e.g., what would they work towards and produce); and 3) the needs of the agencies the workgroup would address and support. As a part of this discussion, the Monitoring Council members wanted to also discuss more broadly whether environmental flows fall within the scope of the Monitoring Council.</p>
<p>Attachment Links:</p>	<p>Draft notes from May 23, 2017 Monitoring Council meeting (see Item 4) Monitoring Council Support for an Environmental Flows Workgroup – presentation by Eric Stein</p>
<p>Contact Person:</p>	<p>Eric Stein eric@sccwrp.org, (714) 755-3233</p>
<p>Notes:</p>	<p>The proposed workgroup would help bring in agency participation and aid implementation efforts. Participation in the workgroup would be open to all, including local groups. The technical work will continue even if the workgroup is not approved to join the Monitoring Council; however, coordination efforts with</p>

	<p>other groups and agencies would be hindered and less integrated.</p> <p>There was a discussion about whether flow would be better integrated into the existing portal focused on the health of streams and rivers (developed by the Healthy Watersheds Partnership). It was stated that merging workgroup efforts would not be ideal because both efforts have different priorities and focuses. However, the Council members indicated that if the workgroup was approved, it seemed appropriate to consider combining the information and data on a common portal.</p> <p>Multiple Council members and meeting participants expressed support for the formation of the workgroup. However, given the ongoing discussions regarding the Council's strategy, and planned discussions with agency heads, the Council members decided to postpone the decision to create an Environmental Flows workgroup.</p>
Decision:	The Council decided to delay the vote on the formation of an Environmental Flow Workgroup until the November 28th Council meeting.
Action Item:	Kris Jones will work with Eric Stein to develop a fact sheet for the proposed Environmental Flows Workgroup, in preparation for an upcoming meeting with the Undersecretary for Natural Resources. Ken Schiff suggested working with Bruce Houdesheldt to solicit feedback from local agencies and other stakeholders.

ITEM:	6	Approx. Time:
Title of Topic:	LESSONS LEARNED FROM USE OF THE MONITORING COUNCIL'S PORTALS AND MYWATERQUALITY.CA.GOV	40 minutes
Purpose:	Greg Gearheart presented an update regarding the public use of the My Water Quality website and portals, and will lead a discussion regarding lessons learned and potential next steps.	
Desired Outcome:	Information and comment	
Background:	<p>Between July 2009 and August 2017, the Monitoring Council and its theme-specific workgroups have released seven internet portals to present water quality and associated ecosystem data and assessment information to decision makers and the public. All seven portals are available through a single point of entry, the My Water Quality website (www.MyWaterQuality.ca.gov). Statistics on public use of the My Water Quality website and each of the portals were presented in the Council's first Triennial Audit report (Appendix III).</p> <p>Since the Triennial Audit, the Council's website and portals have undergone updates, which were intended to increase their use and functionality. These updates were presented at the June 2016 Monitoring Council meeting (see notes; Item 3). Because My Water Quality has its own web domain and because all portions of My Water Quality are interconnected and share navigation, the State Water Board's Web Unit decided that the most efficient way to implement the template change was to migrate the entire My Water Quality website and all of the portals to the new template. During Spring 2016, the State Water Board's web developers migrated every page to the new template, adjusted page content, and implemented a new navigation system. The updated My Water Quality has a number of beneficial features, as compared with the earlier</p>	

	<p>version:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced clutter and improved readability; • Enlarged content area on each page; • Automatic adjustment of page content when viewed on tablets and smartphones; • Improved drop-down menu navigation for easy access to each of the portals and to pages within each portal, workgroup web pages, and Monitoring Council information; • Portal-specific formatting, including customized banners and menus; and • Image carousel for the My Water Quality home page and, potentially for the home page of each portal, to highlight new content and announcements. <p>Since these updates were made in Spring 2016, no efforts have been made to review the public use of the My Water Quality website and portals—or to evaluate whether these updates were effective in increasing portal usage.</p>		
Attachment Links:	<p>Notes from June 1, 2016 Monitoring Council Meeting (see item 3)</p> <p>Increasing Efficiency and Effectiveness Through Collaboration: First Triennial Audit Report (see Appendix III)</p> <p>Lessons Learned from Use of the Monitoring Council's Portals and MyWaterQuality.ca.gov – presentation by Greg Gearheart</p>		
Contact Person:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="423 911 727 961">Greg Gearheart</td> <td data-bbox="727 911 1484 961">greg.gearheart@waterboards.ca.gov, (916) 341-5892</td> </tr> </table>	Greg Gearheart	greg.gearheart@waterboards.ca.gov , (916) 341-5892
Greg Gearheart	greg.gearheart@waterboards.ca.gov , (916) 341-5892		
Notes:	<p>The data analysis featured in Greg Gearheart’s presentation showed that there was a sharp drop off in web traffic for the entire My Water Quality website around June 2016. This coincides with the time period when the website was revamped using the new web template. The three most visited portals - based on data from the past year - are Harmful Algal Blooms, Safe to Swim, and Safe to Eat. Greg suggested that they are more popular than the other portals because they have data available for download. This gives visitors an incentive to check back for updates. Terry Fleming suggested that a similar web traffic analysis be done for the CEDEN website. This might provide insight into whether people are more interested in the data or the data stories.</p> <p>During the open discussion, there was a suggestion to revisit the portal and review how information is being presented. Can new data storytelling and visualization methods be used on the portal? What more can be done in terms of outreach?</p>		
Action Items:	<p>Greg Gearheart will work with his staff to further evaluate the Google analytics, to better understand the observed patterns and to help inform the Council’s next steps regarding its portals.</p>		

ITEM:	7	Approx. Time:
Title of Topic:	PLANNING THE MONITORING COUNCIL’S FUTURE	70 minutes
Purpose:	<p>Kris Jones led a discussion regarding the Monitoring Council’s future direction, drawing from feedback received during May 23rd Council meeting and recommendations received during the Council Subcommittee meeting on July 14.</p>	

Desired Outcome:	Provide direction to Council staff and fellow Council Members as to potential adjustments in approach and initiatives to enhance the Council's success.		
Background:	<p>During the May 23, 2017, the Monitoring Council heard a presentation by Jon Marshack regarding the Council's accomplishments thus far and potential options for the Council's moving forward. Following Jon's presentation, Council members and guests had an open discussion regarding the Council's future direction (see notes; Item 5). During the meeting, a subcommittee was formed to evaluate the comments received and to develop recommendations for the full Council's consideration.</p> <p>The subcommittee suggested that the Monitoring Council should review and update its strategy and hire a facilitator to help with this effort (see Subcommittee notes; Items 2 and 3). As it revisits its strategy, the subcommittee recommended that the Council should consider who it serves (e.g., the public or agency decision makers), and felt that the strategy should emphasize the Council's role in supporting emerging issues (e.g., harmful algal blooms). The subcommittee also recommended that the Council should discuss and address how to modify its membership, to better engage key organizations within the Natural Resources Agency and CalEPA as well as their respective Agency Secretaries.</p>		
Attachment Link:	<p>Notes from July 14, 2017 Council Subcommittee meeting</p> <p>Notes from May 23, 2017 Monitoring Council Meeting (see Item 5)</p> <p>Planning the Monitoring Council's Future – presentation by Kris Jones</p>		
Contact Person:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Kris Jones</td> <td>kristopher.jones@water.ca.gov, (916) 376-9756</td> </tr> </table>	Kris Jones	kristopher.jones@water.ca.gov , (916) 376-9756
Kris Jones	kristopher.jones@water.ca.gov , (916) 376-9756		
Notes:	<p>There was an open discussion about the direction of the Council and the roles of the Director and Assistant Director. Armand Ruby suggested that the Council should do more than just post information on a website. While tracking web traffic on the My Water Quality website is important, it is not as important as collaboration and cultivating partnerships. Armand also expressed support for directing more resources to emerging issues like HABs. Terry Fleming agreed that the Council should focus on collaboration and bringing people together.</p> <p>There was widespread support for holding a 1-2 day facilitated discussion on this topic of the Monitoring Council's future. It was suggested that the Council invite more high level representatives to serve on the Council. Bruce Houdesheldt suggested that it might be more appropriate to have representatives from California Department of Food and Agriculture serve on the Council in his place.</p> <p>This meeting could also use the help of a facilitator to frame the discussion and to develop an updated strategy for the Council. During these discussions, it was suggested that the composition of the Council should be revisited, and that the Council should solicit input from the Agency Secretaries regarding how best to move forward.</p>		
Action Item:	Karen Larsen will reach out to the Agency Secretaries, department heads, and other key representatives to solicit feedback on the Council's strategy and its membership.		

ITEM:	8	Approx. Time:
Title of Topic:	NEXT MEETING AGENDA	10 minutes

Purpose:	<p>Plan agenda for November 28, 2017 Monitoring Council meeting in Sacramento. Potential items include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Continued Monitoring Council strategic planning b) Estuary portal enhancements – living resources and D-1641 water quality report (Estuary Monitoring Workgroup) c) STORMs Monitoring Coordination Framework (Matthew Freese) d) Interagency Ecological Program governance model – fostering ad hoc teams for specific tasks (Greg Erickson and Sakura Evans of CDFW) e) Data management, quality, sharing, and visualization – related to AB 1755, initiatives of the Council’s Data Management Steering Committed and Workgroup, the State Water Board and other departments and organizations, SWAMP (Greg Gearheart, Tony Hale, Melissa Morris, others) f) State stewardship for the National Hydrography Dataset by the Department of Water Resources (Greg Smith, DWR) g) Possibility of holding a Monitoring Council annual conference 	
Desired Outcome:	Develop agenda ideas for the November 28, 2017 meeting.	
Contact Person:	Kris Jones	kristopher.jones@water.ca.gov , (916) 376-9756
Notes:	<p>The Council members expressed an interest in continuing the conversation regarding the Council’s strategy and membership, but suggested having those discussions first thing in the morning. Another discussion regarding the Environmental Flows workgroup was requested. Kris Jones also indicated that the Estuary Workgroup was also ready to share its new portal (b).</p>	

August 18, 2017
Approved November 28, 2017