



California Wetland Monitoring
Workgroup
(CWMW)
Strategic Planning Meeting
Minutes
9:30 – 4:00
August 2, 2016
Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area
Headquarters
45211 County Road 32B
Davis, CA 95618



In Attendance

Paul Jones, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Kevin O'Connor, Central Coast Wetlands Group
Josh Collins, San Francisco Estuary Institute
Chris Potter, Resources Agency
Ana Maria Saenz, State Water Board
Leana Rosetti, U.S. EPA
Jon Marshack, Monitoring Council
Becky Rozumowicz, Area West Environmental, Inc.
Bill Orme, State Water Board
Tony Hale, San Francisco Estuary Institute
Maggie Christen, Delta Science Program
Hildie Spautz, Department of Fish and Wildlife

Tom Cavanaugh, U.S. Army Corps
Megan Cooper, Southern California WRP
Melissa Scianni, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Elaine Blok, National Wetlands Inventory
Cliff Harvey, State Water Board
Rebecca Fris, Department of Fish and Wildlife
Chris Potter, Resources Agency
Ana Maria Saenz, State Water Board
Ross Clark, Central Coast Wetlands Group
Karina Johnston, Santa Monica Bay Restoration Program
Vicky Stanton, Delta Conservancy
Rebecca Payne, CalTrans

Background

In July of 2014 and 2015, members of the California Monitoring Workgroup (CWMW) held a strategic planning session in order to identify key elements of WRAMP that need to be worked on in order to advance CWMW goals. Key actions and subcommittees were identified as well as plans for implementation of key actions.

Status of the California Wetland Monitoring Workgroup

The purpose of the Strategic Planning meeting was to identify an effective strategy to move forward with the workgroup's overall goals as outlined in the CWMW Charter. The [Charter](#), adopted August 5, 2014, states that the "CWMW will provide recommendations on comprehensive, watershed-based, and cross-programmatic monitoring, assessment, and reporting with associated linkages to resource management and regulatory programs involving wetlands and riparian areas." The charter lists focused objectives developed to help guide the mission of the CWMW.

The CWMW discussed selecting a few major priorities for the CWMW to work on as a whole and reducing the number of priority actions for each subcommittee to allow sufficient time to accomplish the major goals. The

CWMW discussed focusing on outreach as a priority activity. CWMW should serve as a source of information for agencies and encourage the use of EcoAtlas tools for regional applications. The CWMW could work through managers, the public, and applicants, to voluntarily proposed WRAMP monitoring as part of their project proposals to satisfy regulatory conditions.

Status of Committees and Priority Actions

Outreach Strategy

Status Summary

There were no formal meetings of this work group in the last year. There is a need to regroup and discuss goals for moving forward. There have been a number of accomplishments. Since the establishment of the committee a [WRAMP poster](#) has been developed as well as fact sheets for CRAM and [EcoAtlas](#). The [WRAMP "How To" website](#) was developed for Proposition 1 grant applicants. A strategy document for outreach implementation was drafted, but never finalized.

The group discussed the need to reach out to various agencies and non-governmental organizations and make presentations to share the tools available through WRAMP and provide case studies in video format that would also be available to the public.

Priority Actions

- The committee will continue efforts to reach out to groups to discuss the use of EcoAtlas tools
 - Create a PowerPoint Presentation showing WRAMP Tools and Successes
 - All CWMW members that conduct outreach activities should provide a monthly summary to the Workgroup of their activities
- Develop an outreach strategy for those proposing grants under Proposition 1
- Consolidate the committee and establish who will be assigned to specific tasks. Keven O'Connor will organize members including Paul Jones, Ross Clark, Chris Potter, Becky, Hildie Spautz and Josh Collins

Institutionalizing WRAMP Tools

Status Summary

The overall goal of this committee is to secure funding and agency commitments for ongoing implementation of EcoAtlas tools. The focus to date has been on regulatory agencies, such as CDFW, Water Boards, and the Corps. However, there were no formal meetings of this committee in the last year. Work in 2016 focused on the tasks in the State Board's wetland grant from EPA, including development of a CRAM survey to query how CRAM is used in the regulated community. This survey will aid in the revision of the Technical Memo, which may be presented at the next CWMW meeting.

Priority Actions

- Put together a funding plan for implementation of EcoAtlas tools
- Update CRAM Technical Bulletin

Formulate L3 Committee/Standardize L3 Guidelines

Status Summary

Initial focus was on inviting various groups to present to the L3 committee on projects that involve collecting data. These included the IEP Wetlands Monitoring Project and Sierra Wet Meadows Monitoring Techniques. The groups presented on their models and indicators used.

The committee then set goals for developing a standardized Quality Assurance Quality Control (QAQC) Plan for L3 monitoring based on the U.S. EPA's model. It is a challenge to formulate consistent QAQC methods for various projects that may require different forms of QAQC. The committee has discussed developing a QAQC grading process, rather than overarching standards, that would be tied to the degree and type of QAQC performed on L3 data sets. This would allow for more confidence and wouldn't exclude data sets with the understanding that they could be used on a higher level.

The committee chair departed this summer and a new chair will need to be selected. The CWMW discussed continuing with the current structure and will ask the Data Management Workgroup to aid in efforts or designate a CWMW liaison to communicate L3 needs to the Data Management Workgroup.

Priority Actions

- Develop a core L3 team consisting of Tony Hale, Keven O'Connor and Hildie Spautz,
- Develop a QAQC Grading Process for L3 monitoring, possibly with the Data Management Workgroup

Formulate L1 Committee and Strategy

Status Summary

Although a formal CWMW committee has yet to be formed, advances have been made in L1 efforts. The [National Wetlands Inventory](#) (NWI) has recently released a v2 [Wetlands Mapper](#) which incorporates linear features transferred from paper maps. The v2 Wetlands Mapper includes a standard 2.5 meter buffer on each side of the linear feature. The Association of State Wetland Managers has provided information on the [National Wetlands Inventory Version 2 – Surface Waters and Wetlands](#), presented by Mitch Bergeson, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Also, after it was identified that the [National Hydrography Dataset](#) (NHD) is not very accurate for California, a BCP was approved to create a position for a steward for the NHD at the Department of Water Resources. This will allow for updates for California's Water Data Library to the national system more easily. Efforts will need to be made to ensure that NHD efforts are not overlapping with NWI efforts.

Priority Actions

- Continue efforts to improve consistency between CARI, NHD, and NWI
- Facilitate a meeting between Elaine Blok (NWI), Cristina Grosso (SFEI), and Greg Smith (DWR) to talk about possible relationships

WRAMP Science Plan and Support of Ongoing Research

Status Summary

This committee has yet to be established, partly because the group has not yet been able to set clear priority actions. The original goal for this committee was to develop and prioritize technical needs for the growth of WRAMP. This could include establishing support for CRAM by validating completed work, further developing modules, refining metrics, and/or investigating scale issues between metrics and attributes. Other goals could include developing targeted studies such as the relationship between L1, L2 and L3 monitoring.

An objective external group that could provide feedback on various projects has yet to be identified. It has not been determined what projects would be taken to this external group, what would be asked of them, and how often. The CWMW needs to decide what level of scientific oversight is needed to support WRAMP tools.

The CWMW discussed looking into the State Water Board's [Bioaccumulation Oversight Group](#) (BOG) that provides oversight of SWAMP's statewide bioaccumulation monitoring program as a model for developing a WRAMP science plan.

Priority Actions

- Develop strategy for moving forward

Other Efforts of WRAMP Implementation

HCP/NCCP Adoption of WRAMP Tools

Various HCPs/NCCPs have incorporated the use of WRAMP tools. These plans include the Santa Clara River, Santa Clara Valley and the Truckee River. There is also interest in the Russian River. WRAMP tools would be used in mitigation planning.

Establishment of a Bay Monitoring System

The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority "Clean and Healthy Bay" Parcel Tax, Measure AA was approved by voters on the June 7, 2016 ballot. The approved measure established a parcel tax of \$12 per year throughout nine counties surrounding the San Francisco Bay. This parcel tax will allocate \$500 million over a 20 year period reserved to restore wetlands near and in the San Francisco Bay. There is a vision to restore an estimated 45,000 acres of wetlands and there is an opportunity to incorporate WRAMP tools in the overall project through a comprehensive CEQA/NEPA environmental review. The project would also involve building a regional monitoring program for the San Francisco Bay. There is a plan to develop a collaborative regulatory effort between agencies, including the State and Regional Water Boards, San Francisco Bay Conservation and

Development Commission, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department Fish and Wildlife, and the Restoration Authority of the San Francisco Bay. The goal is to reach out to all agencies by September.

Original talks about the project included a delta monitoring program with the bay monitoring system; however, establishing a bay monitoring system would be a complicated start without incorporating the delta; therefore, those efforts have been postponed at this time.

401 Monitoring Fees

State Water Board staff investigated the possibility of using a portion of the ambient water quality monitoring surcharge collected from dischargers for regulated projects to support WRAMP tools including CRAM and EcoAtlas. The fees collected go into a fund that is allocated to Water Board monitoring programs. However, management has allocated these funds to support Water Board programs that do not collect fees (i.e., that are not supported from a general fund).

Wetland Program Plan

The [Five Year Coordinated Work Plan for Wetlands Conservation Program Development](#) (March 2014) (Work Plan) is due to be updated by the end of the year. The Work Plan serves to identify state priorities for funding under the U.S. EPA wetlands grant program and the goal is to re-write the Work Plan with a focus on interagency priorities and collaboration opportunities. How WRAMP tools are to be used should be identified in the Workplan to meet regional needs and help with regional efforts. The Work Plan could include watershed planning by developing watershed profiles and/or a plan to provide EcoAtlas and CRAM training for agencies. Both of these strategies would aid in compliance with the State Water Board's Proposed Procedures for Dredged of Fill Discharges to Waters of the State, if adopted. A state agency must develop the Work Plan and staff at the State Water Board has volunteered to develop a first draft with partner agencies (CDFW, Coastal Conservancy and Delta Conservancy).

Succession Planning

After the departure of the state representative CWMW co-chair, there is need to fill the position. The state co-chair seat will remain vacant through the next meeting. Melissa Scianni and Josh Collins will continue as co-chairs until the next meeting. At that time, the CWMW will nominate a new state co-chair or identify an acting representative.

Action Items

Elaine Blok	Circulate information on the NWI v2 Mapper (Complete)
Jon Marshack	Investigate the BOG peer review process to aid in the development of the WRAMP Science Plan
Bill Orme	Develop first draft of the Wetland Program Plan