

Minutes
CA Wetland Monitoring Workgroup
November 7, 2017

Meeting convened at 09:34 a.m. at the Department of Water Resources Offices, 3500 Industrial Blvd., West Sacramento, CA 95691, with Co-Chair Shakoora Azimi-Gaylon presiding.

In Attendance: Shakoora Azimi Gaylon (Delta Conservancy, State Co-Chair)
Kris Jones, (DWR, WQMC Assistant Director)
Tony Hale (SFEI)
Chris Gurney (NFWF)
Cliff Harvey, Brendan Reed (State Water Board)

By telephone: Melissa Scianni USEPA, Federal Co-Chair)
Gina Benigno (CDFW)
Tom Cavanaugh (USACE)
Kevin O'Connor (Central Coast Wetland Group, Moss Landing Marine Labs)
Karina Johnston (The Bay Foundation)

- Shakoora made one addition to agenda: setting of 2018 meeting dates. Meetings for remainder of 2018 were set for: May 1, August 7 and November 6.
- The Minutes of the August 2017 meeting were presented for approval.
- Cliff asked that this and future minutes state “the Level 2 Committee Quarterly Report is attached.” With that revision, it was moved by Kris Jones that the minutes be approved. Tony Hale seconded. With no “Nays” the minutes were approved with the proposed revision.
- For future minutes, State Water Board staff (Cliff and Ana Maria Saenz) will continue to compile meeting notes and minutes, and will attend to backlog of web postings.

ACTION ITEM: The Co-chairs will provide a list of documents for posting to add to the list compiled so far by Ana.

Note: Order of business on the original agenda was rearranged to accommodate presenters' schedules.

EcoAtlas Business Plan (Tony Hale, Josh Collins)

The EcoAtlas Business Plan is in final draft stage, and was presented to the CWMW in August.

Follow-up discussion with WQMC members Karen Larsen (State Board) and Scott Gregory (Dept. of Technology) took place after meeting.

The regional EcoAtlas concept for Russian River Regional Monitoring Program was presented to the WQMC.

The DWR has organized a state government organizing team to advise on implementation of AB 1755; the group has met twice so far. A draft strategic implementation document has been provided to the team for review. A revised version is to be released to the public in December for comment. The CWMW has provided two EcoAtlas based “use cases” to DWR for consideration as part of the plan.

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Thus CWMW may wish to review and comment on the draft plan. Comments may be due before the February meeting.

It was noted that the Resources Agency is releasing their data platform this month. It will be a data catalog site (no visualization or analysis tools). The intention is for this portal, www.data.ca.gov, and the AB1755 platform to be interoperable.

CWMW comments and discussion is summarized below:

- Agencies can't pay for publicly available data. Funding approaches that aren't centered around paying for data, but rather paying for services could be considered.
- An implementation committee is needed to develop outreach material. This material should be reviewed with CWMW as needed to coordinate with the EcoAtlas business plan.
- Governance of core tools should be done by CWMW and its associated L1, L2, and L3 committees. Regional customizations should be governed by regional partners.
- Estimated annual O&M cost is \$400,000.00.
- EcoAtlas data and tools are available to the public. No data will be put behind a pay wall. A possible strategy for funding could be: Paying entities will have access to help desk support, trainings, and maintenance of regional customizations; anyone setting up a regional page/tool must pay into annual maintenance costs.
- CWMW could identify specific agencies that use the tools most and that therefore should be the leading funding sources. Multiple agencies could pay into the tools so that they can customize the tools as needed for their programs.
- Tony will present the plan at November WQMC meeting.

Questions that CWMW will need to address going forward:

- How can we coordinate with other workgroups to fund tools for all workgroup?
- What about Status & Trends? Business Plan doesn't include any funding for monitoring efforts, such as S&T or CRAM reference sites. Would use EcoAtlas tools to implement an S&T program.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Tony will present at next Council meeting.
- Melissa will send remaining clarification comments to Tony. Tony will finalize and send out to the group.
- CWMW tentatively approves the Business Plan, pending review of final version.

Delta Environmental Data for Understanding California Estuary (DEDUCE) Project (Shakoora Azimi-Gaylon)

Shakoora provided an update on progress towards Project Tracker enhancements including performance measure reporting, with emphasis on Delta restoration projects. DWR has provided information on their projects to add to EcoAtlas. The Delta Conservancy is conducting outreach to partners to obtain information to update projects in Project Tracker. EcoRestore projects will also be added to EcoAtlas.

- All projects in EcoAtlas should be updated.
- Delta Conservancy reaching out to partners to get feedback on performance measure reporting that could be used Delta-wide.
- Plan to bring the performance measure reporting mockup to CWMW in February to get feedback.

ACTION ITEM: Delta Conservancy/SFEI will make presentation at February meeting.

CRAM Validation Studies (Cara Clark, Central Coast Wetlands Group, Moss Landing Marine Laboratories)

Cara presented a summary of changes to the Vernal Pool, Depressional, and Slope modules. Findings from the validation studies for these three modules were presented at the August meeting. Cara and Sarah Pearce also recently presented this work to, and were well received by, audiences at the annual California Bioassessment Workgroup Meeting and the 2017 Riparian Summit, both held in October at UC Davis. Key points of the presentation:

- *Vernal Pool Module* – Validation work revealed that the number of pools to assess for each system can be reduced to 3 from 6 with no significant loss of confidence in the scores. Some small changes made to scoring bins for physical and biotic metrics were also proposed, and some definitions were clarified.
- *Slope*- Need for a fifth slope wetland subtype was identified. In addition, re-binning of some metrics, wording and definition clarifications, a revised worksheet, and modified patch types were developed. The topographic complexity metric was separated into 2 metrics. The encroachment groups sub-metric was removed, and new life forms were added to the biotic structure attribute.
- An eCRAM funding source is not identified yet for updates. L2 recommends releasing the modules now with the hope that eCRAM can be updated quickly.

ACTION ITEMS: Shakoora will schedule a call with the CWMW chairs to discuss whether release of the updated modules should be delayed until eCRAM is updated. Put an update item on the February agenda.

CRAM Technical Bulletin (Melissa Scianni)

EPA has identified contract money to update the Tech Bulletin. The contract will be through SCCWRP and they will subcontract with others. The need for outreach to the Corps, State Water Board and Regional Water Boards staff and others was noted; Water Boards staff will participate in editing the document.

CWMW will conduct outreach to DFW, USFWS, Coastal Commission, and others to see if they want to engage in the update. The ongoing EcoAtlas outreach may be an opportunity to engage the agencies on CRAM and Tech Bulletin update.

ACTION ITEMS: Have item to discuss Tech Bulletin on agendas in 2018. Melissa will discuss outreach opportunities with Shakoora and Josh once the EPA contract is in place.

State Board CRAM Survey Results (Brendan Reed)

Brendan reports that the survey data have been collected. While some preliminary analysis has been conducted, no results can yet be reported with confidence. Final analysis will be produced after in-depth personal interviews with selected respondents are concluded.

State Wetland Dredge or Fill Procedures (Bill Orme & Ana Maria Saenz)

Adoption of State Wetland Definition & Procedures for Discharges of Dredged or Fill Material (formerly called Wetland Policy) has been pushed further out on the calendar to allow for more detailed response to formal public comments. These responses seek to clarify procedures elements that interested parties' comments are have identified.

Updates

104(b)(3) RFP (Melissa Scianni) Melissa reports that \$3 million for current round has been awarded for a 2-year grant cycle. A list of grants awarded was distributed to CWMW by Melissa and is now available from the USEPA. Grants included:

- Shakoora reported that one of the new 104 grants went to the Delta Conservancy, in association with the Aquatic Science Center and the Delta Science Program. This grant will support multi-partner GIS mapping of the Delta.
- SCCWRP received a grant to validate the episodic stream module. This grant will also support migration of the episodic module to Arizona, along with some Level 1 maps of episodic streams and development of biotic indicators for ephemeral and intermittent streams in California and Arizona.
- SCCWRP received a grant for Level 3 assessment via environmental DNA (eDNA).
- Sonoma County received a grant to develop GIS and LIDAR maps to support zoning and planning work.
- The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and SFEI were awarded a grant to work on a wetland regional monitoring strategy for the nine bay area counties. The project will address regulatory roadblocks for large restoration projects.

L2 Committee (Cliff Harvey) – see attached L2 Quarterly Report

Future Agenda Items

For February, 2018

- EcoAtlas business plan (Josh/Tony)
- Tech Bulletin Update (Melissa)
- Performance Measure Reporting in EcoAtlas (Shakoora)
- Release of updated slope, depression, and vernal pool CRAM modules (Kevin/Cliff)

For future meetings:

- WRAMP training approach (Josh/Kevin)
- Delta CARI (Josh)
- State of the State's Wetlands Report (Chris)
- CRAM Survey Results (Brendan)
- Bay Area RMP/Permitting Program Update (Josh/Jen/Melissa)
- L1 Committee formulation (Hilde, Josh)
- DEDUCE (Shakoora)
- State Board Dredge and Fill update (Cliff and Bill)

Meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.