



Meeting Minutes
CA Wetland Monitoring Workgroup
November 5, 2020
Teleconference Only via Microsoft Teams



Welcome and Introductions

August meeting minutes were approved by assent with no corrections or changes.

National Wetland Condition Assessment (Melissa Scianni, Kevin O'Connor)

The National Wetlands Condition Assessment (NWCA) is part of the EPA National Aquatic Resources Surveys (others include streams and beaches). The survey is conducted every five years across the country. Sites are selected statistically from the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps and a suite of indicators, including vegetation, soils, and water quality, are assessed at each site. The next survey will be done in 2021 and the 2016 report should be available shortly.

Kevin O'Connor provided a summary of the 2021 effort for CA (see attached slides). California will have 74 sites this year. Data will be reported by region (arid west, western mountains, and coastal). The Central Coast Wetlands Groups (CCWG) will be doing the CA data collection, as they have done for every survey since 2011. CCWG has sent proposed reference sites to EPA HQ based on information available in EcoAtlas. EPA HQ will be selecting the final reference sites. If anyone has additional reference site suggestions, please send them to Kevin asap. In addition to the national indicators, CRAM will be run at each site.

ACTION ITEM: CWMW, through the L1 Committee, should work with NWI to get maps updated with CARI data, especially so Ocean Protection Council's (OPC's) effort is incorporated. Elaine Blok is the NWI contact for CA.

Level 2 Committee Update (Cliff Harvey)

See report attached to these minutes. Cliff Harvey is retiring; a new chair has not been selected yet. The group expressed their thanks for all Cliff has done for L2, CWMW, and wetland assessment in California. Cliff plans to stay engaged with L2 as a citizen.

Even though there was sufficient interest, most CRAM trainings were cancelled for 2020 due to COVID restrictions. Dates for 2021 are TBD and will depend on how COVID progresses. CRAMaganza was also cancelled for 2020. L2 plans to hold one for 2021 assuming it's possible to gather. The Water Boards may do virtual webinar this winter on CRAM.

SCVWD just performed their 10-year ambient wetland/stream survey. This will be their first resample (first assessment done in 2010). They are interested in seeing effects of wildfires. They will be moving to surveys every 15 years under the program just reauthorized by voters.

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SWAMP is again reviewing the indicators included in the Perennial Stream Assessment (PSA), including CRAM. No decisions have been made yet. CWMW should think about how we can strengthen our relationship with SWAMP and Healthy Watersheds workgroup.

ACTION ITEM: Melissa will set up meeting with the co-chairs and Cliff plus the new L2 chair before Cliff retires on 12/2.

Level 1 Committee Update (Cristina Grosso, Chris Potter)

The Ocean Protection Council (OPC) is funding a coastal wetland inventory that is also helping to fund further development of the L1 Committee. The purpose of the L1 Committee is to coordinate wetland and surface water mapping across the state. This committee will not be engaged in jurisdictional assessments for any agency or program.

One primary question is how the Committee will coordinate among individual mapping updates. The proposal is that representatives from regional and local mapping efforts would participate on the L1 Committee along with state level representatives. The group is looking for representatives from regional monitoring programs, existing mapping programs, tribes, targeted state programs, and those with technical expertise. Please send any suggestions to Cristina.

The group discussed how CWMW wants to participate in L1 Committee formation. The proposal is for CWMW to approve the L1 Committee roster, currently being developed by SFEI and OPC, and the Committee operating procedures.

FWS has a mapping technology workgroup. FWS suggests 1 or 2 key L2 members participate on that workgroup. The Committee will be working on crosswalks between state, federal, and regional classifications. CWMW Coordination with FWS NWI will happen primarily through the L1 Committee.

A primary outstanding question is who will lead the L1 Committee after OPC effort ends? OPC is developing Wetland Action Plan, which will address long-term support for mapping effort. The L1 Committee should also coordinate with the Council's data workgroup.

ACTION ITEMS: 1. Discuss L1 Committee again at Feb meeting. 2. Have a presentation on the OPC mapping effort at the Council meeting.

Strategic Planning (Melissa Scianni)

Melissa provided a summary of our discussion from the August meeting. At that meeting we decided to use the Council strategic planning tools (Asset Inventory, Project Portfolio, Strategic Portfolio) along with updated goals/objectives for our strategic plan. We also decided that the strategic plan could serve as the EPA Program Plan.

We will need dedicated staff level support to help move this forward. Which agencies can help? EPA staff can help but can't do it all. Chris Potter may be able to help, and State Water

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Board staff may be able to help some. It was suggested that we could divide up the work among several staff to reduce the workload on any one person.

Chris Potter, Evyan Sloane, Jim Falter, and Hilde Spautz may be able to participate on a subcommittee along with the co-chairs and new L2 Committee chair.

ACTION ITEM: Melissa will set up a meeting with the individuals identified above in advance of the next CWMW meeting.

Updates

a. State Board Dredge or Fill Procedures

The Procedures went into effect on 5/28/2020. As of that date all applications for 401 Certs and/or WDRs are subject to the Procedures.

b. EPA Regulation Updates

We can have a more thorough discussion of the regulation changes at a future meeting. Significant changes were made to the 401 regulations. A pre-filling meeting now required. Water Boards trying to keep 401 certs and WDR orders together but may not always be possible. Melissa will send out summary of updates.

c. EPA Wetland Grants (Melissa Scianni)

RFP expected this winter, maybe as early as January. Grants fund development of state/county/local wetland programs, including monitoring. State Universities are eligible to apply. This grant does not fund implementation of projects, unless the project uses experimental/novel methods.

Announcements. No Other Announcements were voiced by the group.

2021 Meeting Dates

First Thursday of the month quarterly- Feb 4, May 6, Aug 5, Nov 4.

February Agenda Items

Strategic Planning

L1 Committee

Streamflow Duration Assessment Method

Legal landscape/federal Rule revisions and implications for CA state agencies

Water Board/Corps coordination on 401 changes

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CWMW Meeting Attendees – November 5, 2020

Co-Chairs Present

Paul Hann, State Co-Chair, State Water Board

Melissa Scianni, Federal Co-Chair, USEPA

Josh Collins, NGO Co-Chair, SFEI

Attendees (alphabetical by first name)

Attendee list not recorded.