

# CALIFORNIA CYANOBACTERIA AND HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM NETWORK (CCHAB NETWORK) CHARTER

ADOPTED ON

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the CCHAB Network is to work towards the development and maintenance of a comprehensive, coordinated program to identify and address the causes and impacts of cyanobacteria and harmful algal blooms (cyanoHABs) in California. The CCHAB Network is a workgroup of the Water Quality Monitoring Council (Monitoring Council) and includes the following organizations: federal, state and local agencies, waterbody managers, public health agencies, tribal communities, stakeholders and end-users (such as ranchers, fisherman, veterinarians, and wildlife rescue groups), scientific researchers, non-governmental organizations and all organizations within California affected by freshwater cyanoHABs.

## NEED FOR THE CCHAB NETWORK

Cyanobacteria are present in most freshwater and marine ecosystems, and perform many roles that are vital for the health of these ecosystems. Excessive growth of cyanobacteria can lead to cyanoHABs that cause a large number of water quality issues such as impairment of beneficial uses of waterbodies, reduced aesthetics, lower dissolved oxygen concentrations, and taste and odor problems in drinking water, however, the production of toxins (called cyanotoxins), is the most concerning. Cyanotoxins cause illness and mortality in humans, domestic pets, wildlife and livestock.

## BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION

The CCHAB Network, formally the Statewide Blue-Green Algae Working Group, was established in 2006 in response to record-setting toxin producing blooms on the Klamath River reservoirs. Since its establishment, the CCHAB Network has developed guidance on responding to cyanoHABs, developed suggested action levels for cyanotoxins, held trainings on cyanoHAB identification and sampling, and funded a number of grant projects. These efforts demonstrated a need for the development of a long-term vision and strategic plan for identifying and managing cyanoHABs in California. Three key objectives were identified – a prioritization of management questions, synthesis of existing data and identification of data gaps, and development of communication tools.

## OBJECTIVES

1. Developing a unified multiagency program to identify and address cyanoHABs in California's freshwater and marine ecosystems.
2. Promoting improvements in coordination of monitoring, assessment, reporting, and management of cyanoHABs in California.
3. Developing collaborative relationships among entities (e.g. federal, tribal, state, and local agencies, academic researchers, end-users and stakeholders) responsible for addressing cyanobacteria concerns and impacts on beneficial uses.
4. Making efficient use of federal, tribal, state, regional and academic resources to address cyanobacteria concerns by sharing information to avoid duplicative efforts; promoting research, monitoring and assessment, identifying technical and policy gaps, and communicating cyanobacteria concerns to the public.
5. Working collaboratively toward public awareness of the possible risks to themselves, pets, and livestock of cyanoHABs in waters where they live or recreate.

## Members and Representation

Membership in the CCHAB Network is open to any individual or organization active or interested in cyanoHABs. The CCHAB Network is made up of a diverse group of stakeholders that monitor, assess, address, or conduct research, management, and/or regulatory programs to address cyanoHABs in California. Currently, the CCHAB Network includes the following organizations: federal, state and local agencies, environmental laboratories, waterbody managers, public health agencies, tribal communities, stakeholders and end-users (such as ranchers, fisherman, veterinarians, and wildlife rescue groups), scientific researchers, non-governmental organizations affected by cyanoHABs. Agencies that have key assessment, management, monitoring, or restoration programs are encouraged to participate in the CCHAB Network and its subcommittees (see section below), as appropriate. Members are expected to not only "represent" the mandates and vision of their agencies, but to serve as liaisons between their agencies and the CCHAB Network. As such, they should promote the objectives of the CCHAB Network within their agencies.

### **Membership Responsibilities**

Members of the CCHAB Network are responsible for:

- Regularly attending the CCHAB Network meetings.
- Identifying needs and challenges related to cyanoHABs so that these can be address by the CCHAB Network.
- Assisting on subcommittees (as time permits) to help accomplish the goals of the CCHAB Network.
- Taking an active part in the discussion and decision making process during CCHAB Network meetings.

### **CCHAB Network Relationship to the Monitoring Council**

The CCHAB Network is a workgroup of the California Water Quality Monitoring Council. The Monitoring Council establishes common policies and guidelines for the workgroups and the programs they represent, acts as a clearinghouse for standards, guidelines, and collaboration, resolves key issues that affect multiple workgroups, provides support for workgroup actions, and improves visibility of workgroup efforts. The CCHAB Network will keep the Monitoring Council apprised of progress towards workgroup goals and will raise issues to the Monitoring Council that cannot be resolved within the workgroup or that may affect multiple workgroups of the Monitoring Council.

### **CCHAB Network Co-Chairs**

The CCHAB Network will be led by three Co-Chairs, selected by the members of the CCHAB Network. The Co-chairs should represent the various interests, including management, monitoring, policy, communication, and scientific research as well as the diversity of organizations involved with cyanoHABs (e.g. tribe, state, federal or local agency, and non-governmental organizations). The current CCHAB Network Co-Chairs represent a state government agency, a native American tribe, and a science support organization. No more than one individual from each organization may serve concurrently as Co-Chair. The Co-Chairs should have a direct managerial role or conduct research on cyanoHAB issues in California. Staff support for the Co-Chairs will come from either their representative organizations or from a partner agency.

The Co-Chair tenure will be for a period of two years, with the possibility of serving consecutive or non-consecutive tenures without limit. When the time arrives to select a new Co-Chair, any member of the CCHAB Network may nominate another member of the CCHAB Network to be considered for one of the Co-Chairs during a CCHAB Network meeting. The nomination will be considered and agreed upon on by all CCHAB Network members present at the meeting after all nominations have been submitted. If consensus cannot be reached, selection of the new Co-Chair will be decided by formal majority (see section on Decision Making).

### **Co-Chair Responsibilities**

The Co-Chairs work cooperatively to ensure that the CCHAB Network continues to make progress toward the mission and objectives of the CCHAB Network. The Co-Chairs are specifically responsible for:

- Ensuring the CCHAB Network meets on a regular basis, at the frequency as specified in this charter.
- Facilitating the CCHAB Network meetings (create agendas and lead the meetings).
- Overseeing the various subcommittees to ensure that the subcommittees continue to make progress in achieving the goals for which they are established.
- Bringing issues to the Monitoring Council when there is a lack of consensus among the CCHAB Network.

- Reporting to the Monitoring Council on CCHAB Network progress at least annually.
- Advocating with identified organizations when their specific action is needed to further CCHAB Network objectives.
- Maintaining the diversity of the CCHAB Network through outreach to organizations identified as important to CCHAB Network efforts.

### **Subcommittees**

The CCHAB Network may form standing or ad hoc subcommittees to focus on specific technical or programmatic areas with approval of the Co-Chairs. Subcommittees will be formed on an as need basis to address a specific technical or programmatic need. The subcommittees will provide a mechanism for more detailed and intensive participation and discussion. Each subcommittee shall select a leader who will serve as a liaison and report to the Co-Chairs. Each subcommittee leader shall report to the CCHAB Network on progress and recommendations. Individuals/organizations with relevant expertise may serve on the subcommittees.

- Each subcommittee shall define objectives and goals which they will bring to the Co-Chairs for approval.
- Each goal shall have a timeframe in order to define and scope the process.
- Recommendations and work products shall be approved by the Co-Chairs and presented to the CCHAB Network upon approval.
- Subcommittees are encouraged to reach out beyond the CCHAB Network for any resources that relate to the subcommittee topic.
- Subcommittees are encouraged to have diversity of participants, e.g. tribes, state agencies, scientific researchers, local government, that directly relate to subcommittee objectives.

### **Subcommittee Leader Responsibilities**

Each subcommittee will have a leader appointed by that subcommittee. The subcommittee leader will:

- Ensure that the subcommittee meets often to work toward completing the goal for which they are responsible
- Facilitate subcommittee meetings
- Report back to the Co-Chairs regularly and to the CCHAB Network at regularly scheduled meetings. These brief reports should include: (1) the progress and accomplishments of the subcommittee and (2) action items that the subcommittee is working on, and (3) any challenges or issues the subcommittee faces.

## CCHAB NETWORK MEETING LOGISTICS

Meetings will be held quarterly in Sacramento on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of January, April, July, and October. The CCHAB Network may hold meetings in other locations at their discretion, to help facilitate broader regional participation.

Agendas will be posted on the CCHAB Network website at least one week before the next meeting.

A standing agenda item will be listed in the agenda to identify or suggest agenda items for future meetings, and this list will be the basis for the draft agenda. Any member requesting to add or revise an agenda topic may do so by sending an email to the Co-Chairs. Final agenda content, order of presentation, and speakers or presenters will be determined by the Co-Chairs.

### **Meeting Procedures**

One of the Co-Chairs will facilitate the meeting according to the agenda, including presentations, discussions, and decision-making. Meeting notes will be transcribed by support staff and distributed to CCHAB Network members in draft form with action items within a month after a scheduled meeting. Meeting notes will be finalized at the next CCHAB Network meeting by vote of the membership.

Final meeting minutes, agendas, and pertinent products and presentations will be promptly posted on the CCHAB Network website ([http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring\\_council/CyanoHAB\\_Network](http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring_council/CyanoHAB_Network)).

CCHAB Network members are encouraged to attend meetings in person, but if that is not possible, then attendance by web conference is appreciated. In cases where members are unavailable, alternates are welcome as to maintain full representation by all member organizations and agencies at meetings.

## COMMUNICATION

### **Ongoing communication among group**

CCHAB Network members are encouraged to communicate regularly on subjects of interest or work assignments that might arise and are encouraged to reach out to other CCHAB Network members and colleagues in other organizations, local agencies and authorities, potential affected parties, and possible partners.

### **Communication to the Monitoring Council**

All communications of the CCHAB Network with the Monitoring Council will be by the Co-Chairs.

### **Communication to the Public**

With respect to discussing the activities of the CCHAB Network at other forums, only Co-Chairs may formally represent the CCHAB Network, unless decided otherwise by the Network. However, any member may report on activities in a factual manner. Representation of the CCHAB Network and contact with the media should remain within the purview of the Co-Chairs.

Co-Chairs contact information shall remain active and current on the CCHAB website during the duration of the Co-Chair's tenure.

## DECISION MAKING

The CCHAB Network and each subcommittee shall seek consensus on all issues and recommendations. The members of the CCHAB Network intend that their meetings foster new ideas, open dialogue, and constructive debate. When consensus is not reached, CCHAB may vote on issues and recommendations. Each member organization/division/region shall cast one vote. CCHAB Network members should recuse themselves from "voting" or deliberating on issues for which they may have a perceived or actual conflict of interest.

Members will represent their agencies and organizations in good faith, ensuring that important issues, documents, products, or positions are taken back to managers and colleagues at their respective agencies/organizations for dissemination and, in appropriate cases, feedback. This "information loop" is expected to be an important function of the CCHAB Network and will facilitate consistent information sharing so that policies and procedures related to cyanoHAB monitoring, assessment, reporting, mitigation and management are consistent among member agencies to the extent practicable.

### **Decision Making Process**

**Consensus-Based Decision-Making Process:** CCHAB Network members will seek to reach agreement on a course of action to address an issue or set of related issues through consensus, thereby working together to find mutually acceptable solutions.

### **Successful consensus processes will follow these guiding principles:**

- Consensus Decision-Making – Participants make decisions by agreement rather than by majority vote.
- Flexibility – Participants design a process and address the issues in a manner they determine most suitable to the situation.
- Shared Control/Ground Rules – Participants share with the facilitator responsibility for setting and maintaining the ground rules for a process and for creating outcomes.
- Commitment to Implementation – All stakeholders commit to carrying out their agreement.

### **Stakeholders follow these elements of a Consensus Based Decision:**

- All parties agree with the proposed decision and are willing to carry it out;
- No one will block or obstruct the decision or its implementation; and
- Everyone will support the decision.

### **Possible Levels of Consensus**

Consensus can take a number of forms by individual members, including the following:

- I can say an unqualified "yes"!
- I can accept the decision.
- I can live with the decision.
- I do not fully agree with the decision, however, I will not block it and will support its implementation.

When consensus cannot be achieved by the Network or a subcommittee, the organization will respect divergent views, seek technical guidance, and move to majority vote.

### **Voting Process**

The CCHAB Network has agreed on the following guidelines for decision making when a consensus is not met. One representative from each organization/division/region will participate in:

- Discussion of the item: The item is discussed with the goal of identifying opinions and information on the topic at hand. The general direction of the group and potential proposals for action are often identified during the discussion.
- Identification and addressing concerns: If consensus is not achieved, each dissenter presents his or her concerns on the proposal, potentially starting another round of discussion to address or clarify the concern. The dissenting party/parties may supply an alternative proposal or a process for generating one, so any unique or shared concerns proceeding with the agreement can be addressed. To allow time for resolution of the concern, a vote will be sought at the next meeting of the CCHAB Network.
- Call for a vote: The facilitator of the decision-making body (i.e., Co-Chairs or subcommittee lead) calls for a vote on the proposal, which is reflected in the meeting agenda. At the meeting, each member of the group states their agreement or disagreement with the proposal. A majority of the votes cast determines the outcome.

### **WEB INFORMATION**

- CCHAB Website  
[http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring\\_council/CyanoHAB\\_Network/index.html](http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring_council/CyanoHAB_Network/index.html)
- CCHAB list serve  
[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email\\_subscriptions/swrcb\\_subscribe.shtml#cwqmc](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/swrcb_subscribe.shtml#cwqmc)