



California Water Quality Monitoring Council



Linda S. Adams

Secretary for

Environmental Protection



John Laird

Secretary for

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Jonathan Bishop & Dale Hoffman-Floerke, Co-Chairs

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Edmund G. Brown Jr.

Governor

July 12, 2011

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Leah Walker

Dept. of Public Health

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Stormwater

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Publicly Owned Treatment Works

Parry Klassen

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Linda Sheehan

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Stephen Weisberg

Scientific Community

Sarge Green

Water Supply

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Title

Organization

Address

City, State Zip

sent via email

SUBJECT: MONITORING COUNCIL'S DATA MANAGEMENT WORKGROUP

Based on your position and expertise with water quality and aquatic ecosystem data systems, you are invited to participate in the California Water Quality Monitoring Council's Data Management Workgroup.

A brief background on the Monitoring Council and Data Management Workgroup is attached. Additional details about the Council are available at the Council website, http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/mywaterquality/monitoring_council/.

We anticipate the Data Management Workgroup will include representation from several agencies, academia, industry and non-governmental organizations that build and/or maintain relevant data systems. The workgroup will serve an important role for the structure, management and interaction among data systems relevant to the water quality and aquatic ecosystem health of the State of California. Allowing monitoring data to be brought together in new ways will enable broader and more complete assessments of the quality of the State's waters and the health of its aquatic ecosystems than were heretofore possible. These data will be turned into useable information to help decision makers and stakeholders to easily understand the status of our waters and aquatic ecosystems, public health and welfare issues related to water quality, and the effectiveness of agency programs to manage our water resources.

The workgroup will meet approximately four to six times a year at the Cal/EPA offices in Sacramento, perhaps a bit more during the start-up phase. In-person participation is preferable; however, occasional participation by WebEx is also a possibility. We would like to work out committee membership by the end of July, with a goal of scheduling our initial kick-off meeting in late August or early September.

We look forward to your participation with the Workgroup. If you are unable to do so, or believe someone else in your organization would be more appropriate, please provide Steven Steinberg with their contact information by phone at (714) 755-3260 or by email at steves@sccwrp.org.

California Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Agencies

Sincerely,



Steven J. Steinberg, Ph.D., GISP
Principal Scientist – Information Management
Southern California Coastal Water Research Project
Data Management Workgroup Facilitator
for the Monitoring Council



Karen Larsen, Deputy Director
Office of Information Management and Analysis
State Water Resources Control Board
Monitoring Council Co-Chair Alternate
Representing Cal/EPA

cc: Members of the California Water Quality Monitoring Council
Linda S. Adams, Secretary for Environmental Protection
John Laird, Secretary for Natural Resources

The California Water Quality Monitoring Council

In November 2007, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by the Secretaries of the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) and the California Natural Resources Agency to establish the [California Water Quality Monitoring Council](#) (Monitoring Council). The MOU was mandated by [CA Senate Bill 1070 \(Kehoe, 2006\)](#) and requires the boards, departments and offices within the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) and the California Natural Resources Agency to integrate and coordinate their water quality and related ecosystem monitoring, assessment, and reporting.

CA Senate Bill 1070 (Water Code Section 13181) and the MOU require that the Monitoring Council develop specific recommendations to improve the coordination and cost-effectiveness of water quality and associated ecosystem monitoring and assessment, enhance the integration of monitoring data across organizations within and outside California government, and increase public and decision maker access to monitoring data and assessment information via the Internet. While the Monitoring Council may recommend new monitoring or management initiatives, it will build on existing effort to the greatest extent possible.

As required by the legislation and MOU, the Monitoring Council has developed a [Comprehensive Monitoring Program Strategy for California](#) that proposes a new solution. The Monitoring Council believes that the best way to coordinate and enhance California's monitoring, assessment and reporting efforts is first to provide a platform for intuitive, streamlined access to water quality and associated ecosystem information that directly addresses users' questions. Theme-specific workgroups, under the overarching guidance of the Monitoring Council, evaluate existing monitoring, assessment and reporting efforts and work to enhance those efforts so as to improve the delivery of water quality and associated ecosystem health information to the user, in the form of a set of theme-based Internet portals. The My Water Quality website (www.CaWaterQuality.net) provides a single, global access point to these theme-based Internet portals.

Establishing the Data Management Workgroup

The California Water Quality Monitoring Council has identified the need for a data management workgroup. This workgroup would establish the overall approach to transform existing data management systems into a distributed system of databases, catalogs, and assessment and mapping tools that would enable users to access data, metadata, and assessment products from a single entry point, or web portal. As defined in the Council's Comprehensive Strategy, one key responsibility of the data management workgroup is to ensure that the theme-specific workgroups:

- Meticulously define their data requirements.
- Identify data requirements that cut across multiple themes and that therefore should be coordinated.
- Employ data management strategies that comply with appropriate national and state guidelines.
- Have a well-established mechanism for communicating data management issues to a body with overall responsibility for oversight and support of individual themes' data management efforts.

The goal is to achieve only that degree of standardization necessary to meet users' needs. In addition to looking inward toward the theme-specific workgroups, the Monitoring Council's data management workgroup will look outward to other partners within and outside of state government to ensure that the Monitoring Council's data management strategy aligns with State and Federal initiatives and takes advantage of opportunities to utilize useful tools and approaches developed elsewhere.