

CALIFORNIA WATER QUALITY MONITORING COUNCIL

Subcommittee Meeting Notes

Friday, July 14, 2017 – 9:00 to 11:00am

Conference Call



Monitoring Council Members and (Alternates) in attendance:

(Greg Gearheart) Armand Ruby
Karen Larsen

Others in attendance or (on the phone):

(Kris Jones, Water Quality Monitoring Council, Department of Water Resources)

ITEM:	1
Title of Topic:	INTRODUCTIONS AND HOUSEKEEPING
Purpose:	1) Introductions 2) Goals of the meeting and desired outcome
Desired Outcome:	Preview what will be covered today and overall meeting expectations

ITEM:	2
Title of Topic:	PLANNING THE MONITORING COUNCIL'S FUTURE DIRECTION
Purpose:	Kris Jones and the subcommittee members reflected on the discussions from the May 23 rd Monitoring Council meeting, during which the Council heard a retrospective of its accomplishments as well as its challenges to date. The subcommittee also discussed the feedback and perspectives of the meeting attendees, which included a variety of current and potential collaborators and clients.
Desired Outcome:	Provide direction to Council staff and fellow Council Members as to potential adjustments in approach and initiatives to enhance the Council's success.
Background:	During the May 23, 2017, the Monitoring Council heard a presentation by Jon Marshack regarding the Council's accomplishments thus far and potential options for the Council's moving forward. Following Jon's presentation, Council members and guests had an open discussion regarding the Council's future direction. A subcommittee was formed to evaluate the comments received on May 23, and to develop recommendations for the full Council to consider at its next meeting.
Attachment Links:	Notes from May 23, 2017 Monitoring Council Meeting Planning the Monitoring Council's Future – presentation by Jon Marshack

Notes:

During the discussion, Kris Jones summarized some of the key points and questions introduced during the May 23rd Monitoring Council meeting. He then asked the subcommittee members for their general thoughts and reflections on the discussions from May 23. Armand Ruby indicated that based on the feedback received during the meeting, it was apparent that there was strong support for the Monitoring Council and its mission. Most notably from organizations, such as the Interagency Ecological Program, Department of Pesticide Regulation, and Department of Water Resources.

Armand added that it was helpful to receive feedback from organizations such as the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR), who indicated that the Council has value in bringing agency stakeholders together for coordination and collaboration—to fill needed gaps. However, Armand added that it was also helpful to hear that the Council may not add value for organizations that are already making their data available to the public. In those instances, there simply isn't a huge benefit for those organizations to get involved (which isn't a fault of the Council). Armand also added that there was general support for the Council to support emerging issues, as it has done with Harmful Algal Blooms, and that there is great value for the Council to continue down that path.

Greg Gearheart's comments mirrored those of Armand's, adding that the recent passage of AB 1755 appeared to contribute to increased interest in the Council's efforts. However, he expressed some concerns regarding multiple parallel efforts currently underway, and how best to engage and coordinate those efforts.

Karen Larsen shared similar thoughts regarding the discussions on May 23. She added that it has benefited the Council to be more opportunistic and thought it is important that the Council take that approach moving forward. Karen also indicated that the State Water Resources Control Board has benefited from the Council's convening power. She added that a way to improve this could be to rethink the composition of the Council. For example, she suggested that Council could serve as a credible body where the legislature and other decision makers could go for information. Karen added that rethinking the Council's composition and membership might add greater value to its purpose.

When asked about how best to accomplish a change in membership, Karen suggested that we identify the organizations that we feel should be more actively engaged and conduct targeted outreach. She also suggested that we develop a coordinated approach for communicating our mission and strategy. Karen also suggested that the Council explore ways to better address one of the goals of the Council's enabling legislation ([SB 1070](#)), which is to ensure that those water quality improvement projects financed by the state provide specific information necessary to track project effectiveness with regard to achieving clean water and healthy ecosystems. Kris Jones agreed that this was a worthwhile goal, and indicated that he and Ken Schiff (Member Alternate, representing the Scientific Community) are working together to address this goal in relation to Proposition 1 funding; he added that he plans to present on this effort at an upcoming Council meeting.

Armand suggested that there is still a need for the Council to grapple with its reason to be. He added that the Council's Strategy is out of date, and needs to be revisited and updated. He indicated that rethinking the Council's strategy could be useful in helping identify how best to modify the Council's membership. Greg Gearheart suggested that the Council hire a consultant to develop an updated strategy for the Monitoring Council. Everyone agreed that this was a worthwhile approach. Karen Larsen suggested that we move forward with

	membership, building on the momentum from the last meeting. She thought it would be worth reaching out to key representatives from the May 23 Council meeting (e.g., Kamyar Guivetchi, DWR; Steve Culberson, IEP; Brian Leahy, DPR). Greg mentioned evaluating the google analytics for the Council's portals, and suggested using those details to reevaluate the Council's approach in terms of data access (e.g., via MyWaterQuality.ca.gov and the portals).
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ITEM:	3
Title of Topic:	SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS
Purpose:	Summarize main recommendations to share with the full Monitoring Council
Notes:	<p>The subcommittee suggested that the Monitoring Council should review and update its strategy, and hire a facilitator to help with this effort. Armand added that as the Council revisits its strategy, it should consider who it serves (e.g., the public or agency decision makers). He also felt that an updated strategy should emphasize the Council's role in supporting emerging issues. The subcommittee also recommended that the Council should discuss and address how to modify its membership, to better engage key organizations within the Natural Resources Agency and CalEPA.</p> <p>Kris Jones contacted Bruce Houdesheldt and Steve Weisberg—those subcommittee members who were unable to take part on the July 14 conference call—to ask for their feedback regarding the May 23 meeting and the Council's future direction. Bruce agreed with the recommendations of the subcommittee, but emphasized that an updated strategy should rethink the Council's audience (who they serve) and address how the Council can better serve those groups. Steve Weisberg also agreed with the recommendations of the Subcommittee; however, he provided more specifics regarding how to approach the Council's membership. He indicated that the Council would greatly benefit from having representatives that are at a high enough level within their organizations to implement change. Since the Council reports to the Agency Secretaries, he suggested that they reach out to the Secretaries for CalEPA and Natural Resources to seek their recommendations for three individuals within their organizations (each), with which they have close connections. He indicated that the Council would benefit from having members that are connected with the Agency Secretaries and who could serve as conduits for communication—better enabling the Council to stay connected and support the needs within CalEPA and the Natural Resources Agency. He indicated that this might require that the Council rethink its categories for membership. Steve added that he felt that the discussions with Agency Secretaries should come before the Strategy is updated—he suggested that this would allow the Agency Secretaries to have a part in reshaping the Council in a way that better serves their needs.</p>
Action Items:	Kris Jones will summarize the main recommendations from the subcommittee meeting to discuss with the full Monitoring Council on August 18.