

California Wetland Monitoring Workgroup
July 17, 2008 Meeting Minutes
SWRCB, Sacramento

Attendees

Adam Fischer, RWQCB Santa Ana
Andree Greenberg, RWQCB San Francisco
Bill Kirchner, USFWS
Bill Orme, SWRCB
Bryant Chesney, NOAA Fisheries
Chad Roberts, Humboldt Bay Harbor District
Chris Potter, CA Resources Agency
Cori Farrar, USACE Los Angeles District
Craig J. Wilson, CA Dept. Fish and Game
Dan Martel, USACE San Francisco District
Derrick Adachi, CA Dept. Water Resources
Eric Gillies, CA State Lands Commission
Eric Stein, SCCWRP
Genevieve Sparks, RWQCB Central Valley
Jessica Groves, NRCS
Josh Collins, SFEI
Kevin O'Connor, Moss Landing Marine Laboratories
LB Nye, RWQCB Los Angeles
Mariah Mills, RWQCB San Diego
Martha Sutula, SCCWRP
Melissa Scianni, USEPA
Paul Jones, USEPA
Peter von Langen, RWQCB Central Coast
Ross Clark, CA Coastal Commission
Shin-Roei Lee, RWQCB San Francisco
Sydney Brown, CA Dept. Parks and Recreation
Tom Cavanaugh, USACE South Pacific Division
Valarie Connor, SWRCB

Introduction and Background

Wetland Assessment Framework (Paul Jones)

At the national level, EPA is working with States and Tribes to further monitoring, which lead to the development of the 1,2,3 Toolkit. During the last 6-7 years there have been numerous regional efforts toward advancing the development and implementation of the Toolkit in CA. There is an ever-increasing need for a committee of state, federal, and NGO representatives to share information, coordinate regional monitoring efforts, and

implement consistent monitoring. Also, the promulgation of the Compensatory Mitigation Rule presents another opportunity to ensure coordination among state and federal programs, particularly under Sections 404 and 401 of the Clean Water Act.

Review of Current Projects

Wetland Demonstration Project (Martha Sutula): Grant to initiate a statewide monitoring program using the 1,2,3 Toolkit. The tasks include: 1) Develop a statewide steering committee, 2) Update the statewide wetlands inventory, 3) Develop and polish technical tools (e.g., CRAM, Tracker) for agency use, and 4) Demonstrate the utility of the Toolkit (includes assessment of estuarine habitat and watershed assessments). This project is nearing completion and deliverables will be ready by end of 2008.

Coastal Impact Assistance Program (Chris Potter, Josh Collins): Under this federal program, for which the Resources Agency is the CA lead, money is provided to states with oil and gas extraction off of their coasts. The money is intended to mitigate for the impacts of the extraction. The Resources Agency determines how to spend the money and a proposal is currently under development. The Agency is working with the four coastal teams to develop a workplan. Work will include: 1) Fine tune Wetland Tracker for agency use, and 2) Validate and calibrate CRAM for depressional wetlands.

Prop 50 (Josh Collins): Provided for the pilot implementation of the Toolkit in the San Francisco Bay Area. The tasks included: 1) Mapping update to NWI, 2) Work with USGS to update the National Hydrography Dataset, and 3) Refinement of CRAM for riverine and Bay Area watershed assessments.

SWRCB Wetland Development Grant (Bill Orme, Shin-Roei Lee): Grant to assist CA with the development of a statewide wetland and riparian protection policy, including definitions, beneficial uses, and water quality standards. SWRCB currently examining basin amendments from RWQCB Regions 1 and 2 for statewide application. The statewide and Region 1 & 2 efforts are coordinated and happening concurrently.

SFEI Wetland Development Grant (Josh Collins): Grant to further the development of the Project Tracker data management system. The goal is to track permits and move the 401 database onto Tracker. This started as a regional effort and has expanded to the 4 coastal regions (north coast, bay-area, central coast, and south coast). This effort is being coordinated with the USACE database ORM, which tracks 404 permits.

SCCWRP Wetland Development Grant (Martha Sutula): Provides for the development of CRAM reference networks in 6 regions of the State. Tasks include: 1) Development of a white paper, 2) Set up regional CRAM audit teams, 3) Develop CRAM reference networks in the 4 coastal regions as well as the Sierras and the Central Valley, and 4) establish training sites in each of the 6 regions (part of reference network).

Other Agency/NGO Projects

Wetland Recovery Project, IWRAP (Eric Stein): Group of state and federal agencies that have signed a MOU agreeing to work together on wetland recovery in southern California. There is a board of governors (oversight), a managers group, a science panel, and county task forces. The group is developing modules and guidelines for how to implement the Toolkit in southern California.

NWI (Bill Kirchner): Digital maps currently cover about 80% of the State (see map handout). The northern forest areas represent the greatest gap in digital coverage. There is also a large area in the southeast portion of the State (Mojave Desert area) that is currently unmapped. In 2010 there will be a national wetland status and trends study (plots have already been determined). This study will not include riparian areas. This national dataset will not be at high enough resolution to determine State status and trends.

NRCS Programs (Jessica Groves): One program is the Wetland Reserve Program, which is funded through the Farm Bill and currently has ~100,000 acres in CA. The Conservation Effects Assessment program is ongoing and evaluates restoration projects funded under the Farm Bill. CRAM will likely be used as part of this assessment next year. A second element of the NRCS wetland work involving monitoring pertains to wetland determinations under Swampbuster for agricultural conversions. The greatest limitation right now is functional assessment of wetlands on agricultural lands and there is a need for better tools. NRCS has a GIS layer of the location of wetland easements under WRP and there may be a way to add this information to Tracker. Central Valley Joint Venture has done a lot of mapping in the central valley and we should consider working with them.

RIBITS (Tom Cavanaugh): This is a USACE national database that tracks mitigation banks, which are the focus of the new Federal Mitigation Rule. FWS is looking to also use this database.

Water Quality Monitoring Council (SB 1070) (Val Connor)

Ten months ago SB 1070 was signed by the Governor. The bill requires that CA agencies improve coordination of monitoring efforts and improve accessibility of data to the public. The Bill calls for the formation of a Monitoring Council co-chaired by the Resources Agency (Joe Grindstaff) and CalEPA (John Bishop). By December 1, 2008, the Council needs to produce an inventory of current monitoring efforts in CA, recommendations for comprehensive wetland monitoring, and a web-based portal to make data more available to the public. The Council is made up of high-level managers representing various stakeholders (e.g., stormwater, treatment plants, public health officials) and there is a need to establish subcommittees to advise the Council. The Council would like this group to be a subcommittee to provide input on wetland assessment and monitoring including recommendations on what is necessary to comprehensively monitor wetlands in CA. The comprehensive plan to be developed should be based on the EPA's "10 Elements of a Water Quality Monitoring Program".

Structure of this workgroup

There was a discussion about whether or not to form as a subcommittee of the Council and what being a subcommittee would entail. Topics included the need for a consistent wetland definition, how wetlands are mapped, and whether this group would discuss regulatory requirements or just technical aspects of monitoring and assessment.

The group decided to form and to be a subcommittee of the SB 1070 Monitoring Council. "California Wetland Monitoring Workgroup" was chosen as a name.

The group would be facilitated by three co-chairs, including a Federal agency, State agency, and NGO/local agency:

- Federal: TBD
- State: Craig Wilson, CDFG
- NGO: Eric Stein, SCCWRP

SWRCB is hiring someone to staff the SB 1070 Council. This person could also provide staff support for this workgroup. Eric Stein was nominated to be the liaison to the SB1070 Council.

The old NPS Tracking and Monitoring Council had a charter and governance structure (copies handed out). The group agreed to use that document as a strawman starting point and modify for application to the CWMW.

Goals and Objectives

There was a discussion of what the goals of this group should be. Topics included whether or not to include riparian habitats, the new Federal Mitigation Rule, the need for watershed plans, and what "comprehensive" means. It was proposed that the group start with the two tasks before the SB1070 Council: 1) develop an inventory of current wetland monitoring programs; and 2) write a plan for comprehensive wetland monitoring of the extent and condition of wetlands in CA. This group could provide recommendations to the SB1070 Monitoring Council on these topics for the December 2008 report. Additional goals/objectives were discussed and added to the list:

- Inventory of wetland monitoring activities;
- Plan to comprehensively monitor status and trends of extent and condition of wetlands in CA. Monitor wetland change due to natural change, agriculture, mitigation, restoration, permitted impacts;
- Provide advice on the technical elements of wetland policies;
- Develop a strategy to coordinate mitigation monitoring requirements across agencies;
- Evaluate monitoring tools; and
- Evaluate long-term funding options

Next Steps / Future Meetings

Next meeting will be on Aug 25th 9:30-3:00 at SCCWRP. (Please see information at the end of these minutes regarding SCCWRP and travel to their offices.)

Val Connor will provide SB1070 language and a preliminary inventory of monitoring programs.

Val Connor will forward the name of the SB1070 staff scientists once they are hired and will report to the group following the meeting on Aug 17th or 18th of the SB1070 Monitoring Council.

EPA will update the mission statement document and provide a straw document in advance of the next meeting for discussion at the meeting.

EPA will provide Ambrose paper and link to 10 Elements Letter.

Tentative Topics for Next Meeting

What are the essential attributes of a monitoring plan, the indicators, data management and QA? Where are we now, and what are the priorities for future work?

Updated NPS council charter.

Presentation by Corps on new mitigation rule.

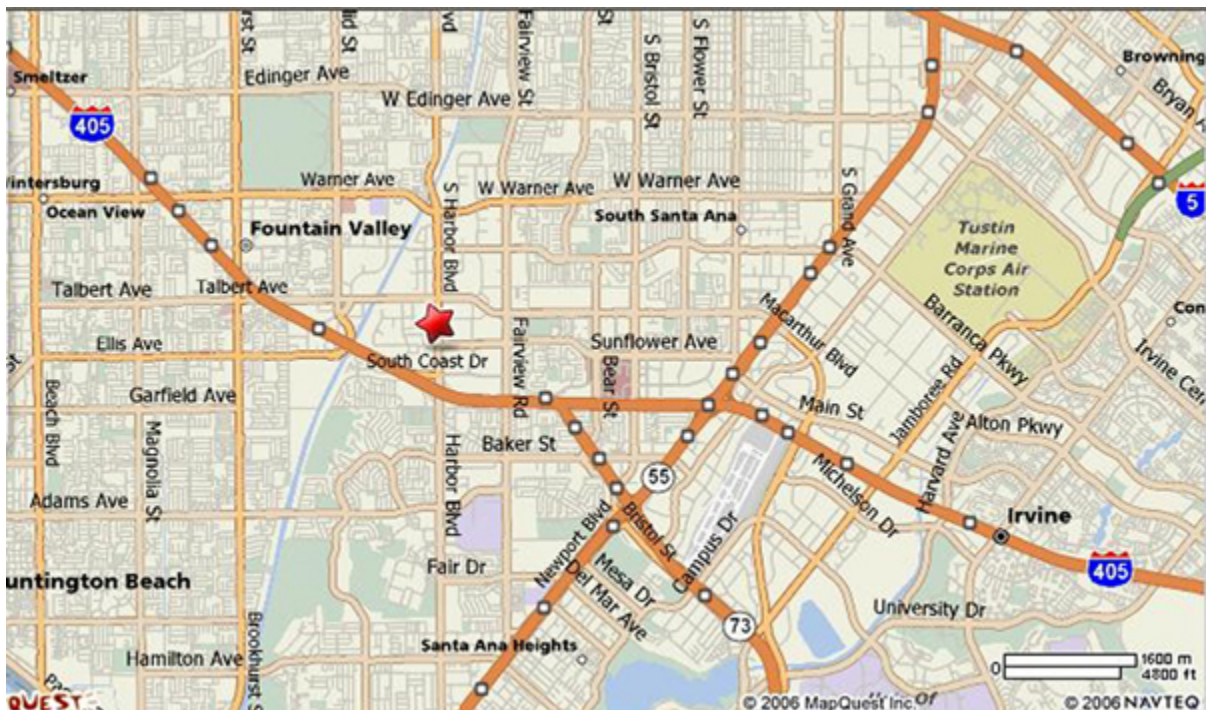
Presentation of tools and results of the WDP project.

For online information on SCCWRP, visit www.sccwrp.org.

For directions (which are copied below) visit <http://www.sccwrp.org/contact/map.htm>.

DIRECTIONS to SCCWRP

**Southern California Coastal Water Research Project
3535 Harbor Blvd., Suite 110
Costa Mesa, CA 92626**



Directions from Orange County/John Wayne Airport (SNA):

Proceed north on the 405 Freeway

Exit at the South Coast Rd./Fairview Rd./Harbor Blvd. offramp

Follow the ramp (in the left lane) to the Harbor Blvd. exit
(third exit)

Exit the freeway, turning right onto Harbor Blvd. Take Harbor Blvd. to Sunflower Ave.
(third stoplight)

CWMW
7/17/2008 Meeting Minutes

Turn left onto Sunflower Ave.

Turn right into the first driveway

Proceed past the first stop sign

SCCWRP is in the building immediately to the left

* * * * *

**Surface Street Directions from Orange County/John Wayne Airport (SNA) -
Recommend from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.:**

Proceed north on MacArthur Blvd. to Harbor Blvd.

Turn left onto Harbor Blvd.

Continue on Harbor Blvd. past one stoplight (Scenic Ave.)

Turn right into the first driveway past Scenic Ave.

Turn left at the first stop sign

SCCWRP is in the building immediately to the right

Directions from Los Angeles International Airport (LAX):

Proceed south on the 405 Freeway

Exit at Harbor Blvd., turning left onto Harbor

Take Harbor Blvd. to Sunflower Ave.
(fourth stoplight)

Turn left onto Sunflower Ave.

Turn right into the first driveway

Proceed past the first stop sign

SCCWRP is in the building immediately to the left

CWMW

7/17/2008 Meeting Minutes

Directions from Ontario International Airport (ONT):

Proceed west on the 10 Freeway to the 57 Freeway south

Take the 57 Freeway south to the 5 Freeway south

Take the 5 Freeway south to the 55 Freeway south

Exit at MacArthur Blvd., turning right onto MacArthur

Take MacArthur Blvd. to Harbor Blvd.

Turn left onto Harbor Blvd.

Continue on Harbor Blvd. past one stoplight (Scenic Ave.)

Turn right into the first driveway past Scenic Ave.

Turn left at the first stop sign

SCCWRP is in the building immediately to the right