



California Wetland Monitoring
Workgroup
(CWMW)
Meeting Minutes
9:30 – 4:00
February 2, 2016
Delta Conservancy
1450 Halyard Drive, Suite 6
West Sacramento, CA 95691



In Attendance

Paul Jones, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Kevin O'Connor, Central Coast Wetlands Group
Josh Collins, San Francisco Estuary Institute
Chris Potter, Resources Agency
Ana Maria Saenz, State Water Board
John Howe, ICF International
Jon Marshack, Monitoring Council
Becky Rozumowicz, Area West Environmental, Inc.
Bethany Soto, State Water Board
Karina Johnston, Santa Monica Bay Restoration Program
Megan Cooper, Southern California WRP
Marc Petta, State Water Board
T Church, Zone 7 Water Agency
Danny Grossman, Strategic Growth Council

Tom Cavanaugh, U.S. Army Corps
Shakoora Azimi-Gaylon, Delta Conservancy
Kris Jones, Monitoring Council
Abby Carevie, Dept of Water Resources
Melissa Scianni, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Evyan Borgnis, State Coastal Conservancy
Elaine Blok, National Wetlands Inventory
Lori Weber, State Water Board
Jessica Little, California Environmental and Energy Consulting
Rebecca Fris, Department of Fish and Wildlife
Samuel Price, Area West Environmental, Inc.
Charles McClain, H T Harvey & Associates
Rebecca Payne, CalTrans
Brian Dailey, State Water Board

Review of August Meeting Minutes:

Minutes of the November 3, 2015 meeting were approved by voice vote with no objections. The minutes will be posted to the CWMW website and distributed through the email list.

Ecosystem Health Workgroups Collaboration:

The co-chairs of CWMW, Healthy Watersheds Partnership, and the Estuaries Workgroup (Ecosystem Health Workgroup) held a meeting on November 2, 2015 to discuss working together towards common goals. A topic of interest was developing tools that would help support the permitting and monitoring needs of the workgroups. The next meeting will be held on February 12, 2016 at the Department of Water Resources' West Sacramento Location. The topic of discussion will be developing ecosystem health indicators that have broader application than just the Bay/Delta. Some ideas that were discussed were the development of a restoration tracking dashboard which could combine ideas from EcoAtlas tools and 43 North (developed for the estuary workgroup

to track monitoring data). The collaborative workgroup discussed targeting restoration efforts, such as EcoRestore and others, and providing the 1.2.3. monitoring framework, with a focus on CRAM.

Action Item: *Kris Jones will send out meeting information for the next Ecosystem Health Workgroup meeting.*

State Wetland Program Development Plan:

In March of 2014 the *State of California Five Year Coordinated Work Plan for Wetlands Conservation Program Development* (Development Plan) was revised. The Development Plan was drafted by staff of the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy, the Coastal Conservancy, and the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board). Core elements of the plan included strategies for regulation, monitoring and assessment, water quality standards, and voluntary restoration. USEPA funds these core elements with grants awarded to participating agencies for specific projects identified in the Plan.

USEPA has been reviewing the Development Plan and has expressed concerns about the progress and follow through on the commitments made by the agencies outlined in the Development Plan. This poses a problem because lack of progress and follow through by grant recipients could jeopardize future federal funding.

Currently, the Development Plan requires that the signatory agencies review and revise the Development Plan every two years; the next revision was due March 2016. USEPA suggests setting a goal to update and the Development Plan by the end of 2016 to include the following:

- Revised requirements to review the Development Plan every two years, rather than one year, since USEPA distributes grants every two years
- A refocused prioritization effort rather than a list of preferred actions
- Identification of non-government organizations (NGOs) and other state agencies that would want to participate
- Continue to work with participating state agencies and identify specific staff who will be working on priorities
- Find agencies that are not participating, but would like to
- Develop a plan to increase communication between rank and file staff, management, and executives to better facilitate Development Plan goals

USEPA will invite managers from the signatory agencies to a meeting in order to begin discussion on the suggested revisions to the Development Plan.

Action Item: *Paul Jones will facilitate a meeting with the leads of the signatory agencies to begin discussion about revisions to the Development Plan.*

State Water Board CRAM Questionnaire

State Water Board staff has prepared and will be conducting a survey of CRAM. The purpose of this survey is to evaluate how CRAM is currently used in regulatory and management programs, how it might be used in the

future, and how its usefulness might be improved. Data collected is intended to explore, identify and classify needs, practices and perceptions within the CRAM community that may provide helpful insight to regulatory managers and scientists involved in assessment design and refinement. The survey results will be available to all participants and to the public through a published report.

The survey will be conducted via two methods: (1) an online questionnaire consisting of both open and closed ended questions; and (2) in-person interviews. The potential survey participants will be comprised of all trained CRAM practitioners and trainers as posted on the [CRAM website](#), private environmental consultants, and staff at various agencies involved in wetland and surface water permitting. Initial data analysis from the online questionnaire will be used to refine the in-person interview questions.

A draft survey will be presented to the L2 committee for comment and refinement before finalization and distribution.

Action Item: *Brian Dailey will provide an update to the CWMW at the next meeting about possible initial results.*

Action Item: *Brian Dailey, Ana Maria Saenz, and Jon Marshack will work together on sending the survey out to the email lists for the various Ecosystem Health Workgroups.*

Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project and CWMW

The Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project (Southern California WRP) is comprised of 18 state and federal agencies that aim to work together to restore Southern California's aquatic resources. The Southern California WRP requested feedback from CWMW on how to increase collaboration between the groups. The Southern California WRP suggested organizing a Southern California meeting, or subgroup, because it is difficult for many people who would like to participate to travel to Sacramento for meetings. It was suggested that meetings could be rotated between regions, as they were before there was restrictions on travel for state agencies. Or, the workgroup could set up video conferencing technology to better facilitate the participation between different geographic locations. In addition, the co-chairs of the CWMW could facilitate agenda items from our Southern California counterparts to ensure that everyone's ideas are represented at the quarterly meetings. This discussion also is a reminder that other regions could have a larger presence with the CWMW, such as Lake Tahoe and the North Coast Regions.

The CWMW made the suggestion to have Southern California WRP list specific interests and/or specific agenda items to contribute to quarterly CWMW meetings. This would help CWMW focus on key areas and implementing WRAMP tools in these efforts.

Action Item: *Kris Jones will look into hosting the next CWMW at the Department of Water Resources, Sacramento Office, to take advantage of video conferencing technology.*

Action Item: *Shakoora Azimi-Gaylon will coordinate with Southern California WRP to ensure that agenda item needs are met.*

CRAM/SWAMP Data Correlation Results

Keven O'Connor, from the Central Coast Wetlands Group, presented CRAM results ([Perennial Stream Condition in California](#)) from the Perennial Stream Assessment (PSA), Reference Condition Monitoring Program (RCMP),

and the SoCal Stormwater Monitoring Condition (SMC) monitoring programs to show the correlation between CRAM and bioassessment monitoring. All Riverine CRAM data was downloaded from EcoAtlas and all assessments from PSA, RCMP and SMC were extracted. Cumulative Frequency Distributions were generated for all groups with 20 or more assessments. The presentation included summary statistics from each of the three monitoring programs and displayed the cumulative frequency distribution for each. Average CRAM index scores as well as buffer and landscape, hydrology, physical structure, and biotic structure attributes were compared to the percent of streams surveyed. Results were further broken down by ecoregion, for those that enough data was available. The data showed that ambient conditions of streams vary significantly by ecoregion, with the Bay/Delta and Sac Valley at the lower end, Sierra, Modoc and North Coast at the higher end, and the South Coast has the highest range of scores. However, reference condition is consistent throughout the state. Next steps include generating ecoregional curves for each attribute in order to provide valuable information for stream restoration planning and implementation as well as for regulatory requirements. Data analysis will be explored in relation to existing level 1 and 3 data sets. It was suggested that additional data is collected to allow for cumulative frequency distribution for each region.

Action Item: *Keven O'Connor will look into presenting results at the SWAMP roundtable and the Healthy Watershed Partnership Workgroup meeting.*

L2 Committee Update

The L2 committee provided their [quarterly report](#) to the CWMW for the quarter ending February 2, 2016. Information on the Episodic Stream Module was included. This module has been reviewed by the L2 committee which recommends that CWMW adopt and endorse the new module and that it be made available for use by all trained practitioners. In addition, the L2 committee recommends that the Episodic Stream Module be subject to the same developmental process that has been applied to all other modules in current development or use. Additional testing and validation studies are needed to fully support this module, especially when applying the module to a wider geographic area, and development of an eCRAM module is also needed. Study designs and funding requests will be developed to support these needs.

Additionally, 2016 CRAM trainings have been set and more information on dates and locations can be found at the [CRAM website](#).

Action Item: *A representative from the L2 committee will give a presentation on the Episodic CRAM module at the next CWMW meeting at which the workgroup will consider endorsement.*

Action Item: *The CWMW requests that the L2 Committee discuss a training program for CRAM trainers.*

Action Item: *Parties interested in participating in the development of the Riparian Rapid Assessment Method should contact Cliff Harvey.*

Action Item: *The L2 Quarterly Report was finalized and Ana Maria Saenz will post it to the CWMW website for future reference.*

Updates

California Strategic Growth Council

Danny Grossman, of the California Strategic Growth Council, shared their assessment of current regional planning and advanced mitigation planning. The council developed a framework of how regional conservation planning could perhaps be better structured. Their goal is to look at each ecoregion in the state and develop conservation goals, strategies and targets for those ecoregions. The council is seeking input from the CWMW on how to best determine how wetlands should be considered during the planning process.

WRAMP Outreach

Follow up on WRAMP outreach strategies that were discussed at the last CWMW meeting was provided. Jon Marshack investigated the possibility of adding a blog/feedback feature on the WRAMP website in order to help facilitate discussion between different user groups. IT had some additional questions that would need to be addressed before providing initial feedback on this possibility. There is further discussion needed by the subcommittee to develop a WRAMP outreach strategy and framework.

Action Item: CWMW Co-Chairs will revisit the idea/need for a blog/feedback feature on the WRAMP webpage.

Action Item: Jon Marshack will send the specific IT questions that would need to be answered before confirming IT's ability to facilitate this type of service.

Action Item: Josh Collins, Bill Orme, and Chris Potter will work together to prepare a WRAMP Outreach framework outline to help facilitate discussion at the next CWMW meeting.

L3 Committee

The L3 Committee is moving forward with previously identified goals. They are working on bringing various scientists together to develop a Quality Assurance and Quality Control template. The next L3 Committee meeting is scheduled in March of 2016.

L1 Committee

There is still a need to establish this committee in order to move priorities forward. Also, an additional funding strategy for S&T needs to be addressed.

Announcements

- ❖ Chris Potter: Efforts of pursuing a joint BCP was approved to take four existing positions to help steward the National Hydrology Data (NHD) set to improve resolution, etc (email Chris for more details) Greg Smith (Agency?) will oversee this group and the CWMW will ask for an update concerning these efforts.
- ❖ Shakoora Azimi-Gaylon discussed CRAM training opportunities for watershed managers and practitioners. Shakoora mentioned that several watersheds are interested in taking the CRAM training class but cost has been prohibitive thus far. Shakoora asked if "group training" similar to the training that Coastal Conservancy organized this year can be offered to the watershed managers if non-profits and local government watershed managers can form a group. Shakoora will be working with Kevin O'Connor to determine the cost for group training and will coordinate with the non-profit watershed groups
- ❖ The California Water Monitoring Council held a meeting on February 23, at the CalEPA building. [Agenda](#) items include SWAMP-California Freshwater Harmful Algal Blooms Assessment and Support Strategy and California CyaboHAB Network-Update to Voluntary Guidance for Recreational Waters. Updates will be given on the Monitoring Council's refocusing strategy as well as an update from the Data

Management Workgroup progress on recommendations published in the Delta Stewardship Council's white paper, [Enhancing the Vision for Managing California's Environmental Information](#).

Future Agenda Items

- ❖ Update on CRAM survey results
- ❖ L2 Presentation on Episodic Stream Module
- ❖ Outreach Approach
- ❖ Strategy and Workplan for L1 Committee
- ❖ L1 Committee Development
- ❖ Water Quality Control Policy for Statewide Wetland Definition and Procedures for Regulation of Discharges of Dredged and Fill Material to Waters of the State