

**REGIONAL MONITORING PROGRAM FOR TRACE SUBSTANCES  
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
January 23rd, 2006**

**Members Present:**

Dave Allen, USS POSCO Industries  
Kevin Buchan, WSPA  
David Dwinell, US Army Corps of Engineers  
Chuck Weir, East Bay Dischargers Authority  
Dyan Whyte, SFB RWQCB

**Others Present:**

Mike Connor, SFEI  
Jay Davis, SFEI  
Andy Gunther, AMS  
Rainer Hoenicke, SFEI  
Meg Sedlak, SFEI

**1. Approval of Agenda and Minutes**

Kevin Buchan opened the meeting and asked for comments on the October 2005 minutes (Item 1, Attachment). Meg Sedlak indicated that with regard to the action items from the October minutes, she had contacted Ellen Johnck to survey the level of interest in the dredging community for continued suspended sediment measurements at the Alcatraz site. Ms. Sedlak also indicated that she had contacted Beth Christian at the Water Board to determine the status of outstanding fees for 2004 (Loch Lomond) but had not heard back. A motion was made by Kevin Buchan to approve the minutes; a second was made by Dyan Whyte and the minutes were approved. Mr. Buchan requested that the SC have an opportunity to discuss appropriate candidates for the 2008 program review.

**Action item: Meg Sedlak to continue discussions with Ellen Johnck and Beth Christian and to update SC at next meeting. SC to be involved in selection of panel members for the 2008 Program Review.**

**2. Committee Member Updates**

There were no member updates.

**3. Information: Technical Review Committee (TRC) Meeting Summary**

Meg Sedlak summarized the minutes from the TRC meeting on December 13, 2005 (Item 3, Attachment). Ms. Sedlak indicated that the major items were presentations by staff on the major elements of the 2006 Detailed Workplan. Ms. Sedlak indicated that the workplan was very similar to the program plan presented to the SC in October. Ms.

Sedlak highlighted the major changes that were made to program including: elimination of a Status and Trends benthic program (the TRC recommended that SFEI hold a workshop on benthic assessments and recommended that \$10K be set aside for this task); continuation of the Mercury Deposition Network sampling; cancellation of the Winter Pilot Study for 2006; and approval of a joint CEP/RMP coring project. Ms. Sedlak indicated that several other items that were covered in the TRC meeting were on the day's agenda (e.g., proposed outline for the Pulse and a discussion of the Water Boards information needs table).

Clarification was requested on the importance of the winter pilot study and the impacts of seasonality on the RMP data. A short discussion ensued regarding the commencement of a fall phytoplankton bloom and the potential impact to water quality in the bay. In reviewing the TRC minutes, Kevin Buchan asked whether the SWAMP data management will be incorporated into the State Board's data management system, CIWQS. SWAMP will be incorporated in as an ambient monitoring module and will also be part of the State network of databases, California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN). Mike Connor indicated that the SWAMP data management staff and RMP staff were working closely together and that in some instances the RMP data management was a model for SWAMP. A committee member asked for an update on whether the Water Board would include the South Bay Salt Pond in the RMP. Mike indicated that the Board is interested in having wetland restoration projects participate in the RMP; however, at present, there is little infrastructure within the Board to manage these projects and there is little funding available in the restoration projects to fund the RMP.

**Action: Mike Connor to give an update on the status of including wetland restoration projects in the RMP at the next SC meeting.**

#### **4. Information: Budget Status**

Ms. Sedlak stated that she was in the process of closing out the 2005 books and determining potential carryover available based on RMP bank statements. Ms. Sedlak gave a brief update on 2005 budget status. Subcontracts and labor came in under budget. Ms. Sedlak indicated that several 2005 tasks had not been completed that the residual labor funds would be carried over into 2006 to complete unfinished tasks. Subcontracts were largely underbudget because approximately \$100K was set aside for episodic toxicity subcontracts. This funding was not allocated in 2005. The carryover from subcontracts will be put in the 2006 budget as additional revenue. Ms. Sedlak stated that a detailed 2005 budget summary would be presented in April.

Outstanding participant fees for 2005 totalled approximately \$60K, largely due to Caltrans (\$35K) and City of Vallejo Marina (\$21K). SFEI is working with the Vallejo Marina to obtain the fees. Meg Sedlak, Dyan Whyte, and Mike Connor will discuss opportunities to obtain the Caltrans fees.

Ms. Sedlak then gave a line item explanation of the 2006 budget. There is a zero percent increase in program fees for 2006. Ms. Sedlak passed out a handout that summarized the

agreed fee increases for 2006 through 2009. Ms. Sedlak noted that starting in 2007, the participants had agreed to a two percent increase in program fees for 2007, 2008, and 2009. There is an approximately \$8K shortfall on total program fees due to a reduction in dredging. Outstanding invoices total \$424K.

Other revenue for 2006 included interest income, set asides in 2004 and 2005 for the triennial fish monitoring to be conducted in 2006, and the unspent 2005 contingency fund. Ms. Sedlak noted that the estimated interest for 2006 was substantially higher due to an increase in interest rates. Total expected interest for 2006 is on the order of \$120K (previously was estimated to be \$35K).

With regard to expenses, labor expense for the RMP excluding pilot and special studies will be the same as 2005 (approximately \$1 million). Ms. Sedlak highlighted several line items including: the triennial sportfish monitoring (\$210K for 2006 with \$40K carryover for report writing in 2007); the Guadalupe and Mallard Island load measurements; the RMP/CEP coring study and \$10K for determining appropriate methodologies for benthic assessments. Ms. Sedlak noted that the 2006 contingency had been spent on the record high flows that were seen at the beginning of 2006. Flow at the Yolo bypass was approximately 360K cfs.

Dyan Whyte was a little puzzled as to why RMP funds were being used for obtaining buy-in on appropriate methodologies for assessing benthos in the Bay. She stated that an activity like this was typically not in the purview of the RMP. Jay Davis acknowledged that it was not a typical RMP task; however, the EEPS work group and the TRC both indicated that it was important to have the community at large support benthic assessments before the RMP begins conducting benthic assessments in the Bay. Kevin Buchan solicited comments from the rest of SC on this task. It was agreed that Bruce Thompson who is leading this task should provide a detailed workplan to the TRC and SC for approval.

Kevin Buchan and Chuck Weir asked how long MeHg monitoring has been conducted. Ms. Sedlak reported since 2003 and that this data is available on the SFEI web site.

**Action item: Meg Sedlak present a summary of 2005 budget status at the April SC meeting. Meg Sedlak to follow up with the RWQCB regarding unpaid participant fees for Loch Lomond Marina. Meg Sedlak, Dyan Whyte, and Mike Connor to meet to discuss Caltran funding. Bruce Thompson to develop a detailed workplan for determining benthic assessments (\$10K).**

## **5. Action: Approve 2007 Budget**

Ms. Sedlak presented the five-year plan and requested that the 2007 budget of \$3,125,047 be approved. Chuck Weir motioned that it be approved; David Dwinelle seconded and the SC approved the 2007 budget.

## **6. Action: Pulse Outline and Annual Meeting**

Jay Davis presented an outline of possible Pulse articles and schedule. Dr. Davis stated that he would like to line up authors by the end of January and was looking for management articles. He suggested an article on the PCB TMDL; however, several people indicated that it was too early to include this. A second suggestion was a stormwater management article coauthored by the Board and BASMAA. Two other suggestions were an article on the use of RMP data for establishment of a site-specific cyanide objective or an article on the development of a site-specific objective for copper/nickel in the north bay.

Other potential topics included selenium and biological impacts; pyrethroids; and PCBs from point sources (such as the Eddie Street site). Chuck Wier indicated that the uses of pyrethroids have exploded; it is incorporated in clothing, pest applications, and many other areas that the USEPA did not anticipate. A suggestion was made for a side bar on this issue. A suggestion was also made for a management sidebar on the sediment quality objectives and that this be linked to Bruce Thompson's article. Several individuals thought it was premature to conduct an article on the Pelagic Organism Decline. Dyan Whyte indicated that Region 2 was inventorying the number Hg mines and that this might be a possible article.

**Action: Jay Davis to send out a revised Pulse Outline.**

## **7. Action: 2003 Review Panel Recommendations**

The 2003 Review Panel recommended that the RMP develop a policy on how to resolve conflict when consensus cannot be achieved. After several meetings, the Chair of SC and other recommended that this policy not be developed. Kevin Buchan motioned that the recommendation not to prepare a policy (how to resolve conflict when consensus cannot be achieved) be approved. David Dwinelle seconded and the group unanimously approved this recommendation.

## **8. Information: Regional Board Information Needs**

The Regional Board recently developed a table outlining the Water Boards information needs and priorities. This effort was led by Karen Taberski with input from the following Water Board staff: Dyan Whyte, Tom Mumley, Tong Vin, Richard Looker, Fred Hetzel, and Beth Christian. Dyan Whyte briefly summarized the table for the SC. A copy of this table is included with these minutes.

Kevin Buchan asked how the RMP data are used to satisfy the data needs for the individual discharger's permit. Dyan Whyte explained that the RMP data are not a substitute for end of pipe monitoring but rather are used to evaluate the Bay as a whole.

The data is used to determine whether the Bay is meeting all of its beneficial uses, to develop TMDLs and 303 (d) listings.

Several individuals asked about the methyl mercury data available from the RMP. Dyan Whyte noted that it was likely that some dischargers would need to monitor their effluent for methyl mercury.

**9. Action: RMP Name Change**

Jay Davis requested that the RMP be changed from the “Regional Monitoring Program for Trace Substances in the San Francisco Estuary” to “the Regional Monitoring Program for Water Quality in the San Francisco Estuary.” Kevin Buchan motioned for approval; Chuck Weir seconded and the motion was approved.

**10. Information: SWAMP Update and Solicitation of Input**

Rainer Hoenicke presented a brief overview on SWAMP, which is currently undergoing external review. At present, SWAMP is soliciting participation in helping set priorities and improving linkages to existing programs such as the RMP. Rainer highlighted some of the current problems with SWAMP including a shortage of sufficient funding and inconsistent assessment of water quality throughout the State. He indicated that there would be a State Board hearing in mid-March.

Several of the SC members commented that it appeared that they were being asked to fund a regional monitoring program and a state monitoring program that would be implemented elsewhere in the State. Several members felt that the monitoring should be conducted at a regional level and not a state level.

**Action: SC members requested the date of the State Board workshop meeting.**

**11. Information: CEP Redesign**

Andy Gunther briefly discussed his understanding of the status of the CEP redesign process. The CEP is a collaboration of BACWA, BASMAA, and Water Board. Fees to the CEP are voluntary; BASMAA is meeting this week to decide what the 2006/2007 fees will be. It has been successful in developing a cyanide site-specific objective as well as copper/nickel objectives. As evident from the remand of the mercury TMDL, it has had limited success reaching out to NGOs. The memorandum of understanding for the CEP will expire in September 2006.

The Executive Management Board is re-evaluating the goals and responsibilities of the CEP. Most recently, the EMB decided to eliminate its technical committee and focus exclusively on the administrative process of approving TMDLs.

Andy indicated that this was an evolving process and that he would like to discuss changes to the CEP at the April SC meeting.

**Action: Andy Gunther to present at the April SC meeting.**

**12. Information: Program Update**

Meg Sedlak handed out the Scorecard and noted that a major deliverable this quarter had been completion of SPLWG reports. The date for the next SC meeting was tentatively scheduled for April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 pm.