

**REGIONAL MONITORING PROGRAM
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
DRAFT MINUTES
January 19, 2010**

Members Present:

Kevin Buchan, WSPA
Ellen Johnck, Bay Planning Coalition
Adam Olivieri, EOA
Tom Mumley, SFBRWQCB
Dave Tucker, City of San Jose

Via conference call:

Trish Mulvey, SFEI Board of Directors

Others Present:

Rachel Allen, SFEI
Jay Davis, SFEI
Lawrence Leung, SFEI

Due to slow driving conditions, discussions began before quorum was reached and the meeting was commenced. Tom Mumley suggested a workshop or subcommittee to help Jay Davis synthesize the various pieces of the RMP Master Plan into a cohesive plan for the Program that incorporates considerations of timing (so the Program generates needed information at the appropriate time). For example, with mercury we will be reaching a 10 year checkpoint on the TMDL, and we should generate the information needed for this. He also recommended including general budget information in the Master Plan. Trish Mulvey agreed that the Master Plan was very helpful for understanding how to deal with time conflicts, and which issues are most urgent. Though the current Master Plan resembles a giant “wish list”, Tom Mumley asked what the cumulative “can’t do without” list of projects would be.

Regarding attendance at the SC and TRC meetings, the group requested that letters be sent to Committee members to encourage their participation and the designation of alternates. The letter should point out that important planning efforts are underway and the importance of active stakeholder participation. The letter will be signed by Kevin Buchan and Tom Mumley.

Action items:

- Make recommended changes to the next draft of the RMP Master Plan.
- Send letters to Committee members encouraging participation.

1. Approval of Agenda and Minutes

See below.

2. Information: Committee Member Updates

See below.

3. Information: Technical Review Committee Summary

As discussed in the December Technical Review Committee (TRC) meeting, the RMP will be piloting fact sheets this year. Jay Davis mentioned that at the March TRC meeting, fact sheets will be discussed in broader terms, focusing on what they are trying to accomplish. Following this meeting, he will bring their recommendation to the SC meeting in April. Tom Mumley asked that the resources being spent on communication also appear in the Master Plan, and he endorsed the idea of fact sheets. Dave Tucker suggested proceeding with caution, and that a communications plan be laid out. The plan should address the purpose, audience, and updates necessary for factsheets. San Jose uses fact sheets effectively, favoring the kind that do not need updating. The communications plan should be summarized in the Master Plan, along with other administrative program areas. Adam Olivieri suggested waiting for the state Recycled Water Panel to publish their emerging contaminants report, which will come out in April or May and will focus on the most important chemicals. Adam recommended following their lead. Adam also described work being under another panel funded by the Packard Foundation that is examining EC in the coastal zone, including freshwater tributaries. Adam also mentioned the EC screening study being performed by NOAA's National Mussel Watch in California this year. Jay Davis mentioned that Susan Klosterhaus and Meg Sedlak of SFEI have been involved in all of these efforts and are keeping us apprised.

Tom Mumley suggested piloting some factsheets this year, in order to inform a broader communications strategy. Trish Mulvey agreed that it would be important to pilot a couple of fact sheets this year. Tom Mumley also commented that the emerging contaminants white paper, which is still in progress, should be kept simple, in order to generate the report efficiently and in a timely manner.

The TRC also discussed submitting non-funded RMP proposals for consideration as SEPs. Trish Mulvey noted that this topic also came up at the ASC and SFEI Board meetings. Trish is working with Athena Honore (who has replaced Carol Thornton) on this. The SC agreed that possible modifications to the SEP process should be discussed in further detail by the Water Board and BACWA. Tom Mumley clarified that while pooling penalty money is not possible, he could explore the possibilities, and Trish Mulvey offered to help – particularly regarding “mandatory minimums”.

Jay Davis briefly described the NOAA National Mussel Watch study. SFEI is assisting with the study, which is focusing on CECs. The study will screen for a wide variety of CECs in mussels and passive samplers at about 80 sites in California, 4-5 of which will be in the Bay.

Jay Davis also mentioned the TRC's discussion on Status and Trends, noting that they asked for a strategy that lays out the questions, and proposes dates for reevaluation of the design. He proposed that this effort be undertaken when Meg Sedlak returns from her sabbatical.

Action items:

- Add the communication plan and budget to the next draft of the RMP Master Plan.
- Review the EC report of the State Panel on Recycled Water and incorporate this information in our EC fact sheets.
- Proceed with the fact sheets pilot in 2010, but first develop a strategic plan for them and run it through the TRC and SC.
- A broader communications strategy should also be prepared.
- The Water Board, BACWA, and Trish Mulvey to explore modifying the SEP process so that it might help fund high priority studies identified in RMP planning.
- Meg Sedlak develop a strategy for Status and Trends when she returns from her sabbatical.

4. Information: Budget Status

Lawrence Leung outlined the status of the 2009 and 2010 budgets. Fiscal year 2009 was under budget. Outstanding revenue remains to be received from Paradise Cay, which is currently coming in monthly in \$500 increment checks, and from Caltrans. Dave Tucker expressed concern about the amount of carryover tasks and budget. The amount of carryover seems to have increased from year to year. He asked if more staff are needed to finish these projects. He also asked that the carryover labor in the current year budget be presented. He questioned whether certain tasks are still priorities if they have been dragging on for multiple years. Jay Davis agree to do an analysis of the carryover tasks and to bring this back to the SC at the next meeting. Adam Olivieri asked that the budget memorandum be distributed electronically to the SC. Jay Davis noted that the SC meeting handouts would be posted on the RMP website. Lawrence Leung outlined the RMP budget from 2009 and 2010. Adam Olivieri asked that the term “surplus” be better described as “unencumbered funds”. Dave Tucker commented on the term “revenue surplus”, and asked that “revenue adjustment” replace it, and be incorporated into the terminology. A discussion ensued regarding terminology and accounting in the budget scorecard, and Ellen Johnck made a motion to recommend that SFEI ask their bookkeepers to review terms in the RMP budget, which Kevin Buchan seconded.

Lawrence Leung clarified that the “dredger surplus” in the budget was due to a new dredger, whose funds had not been expected.

Dave Tucker motioned to approve the 2010 budget, and Tom Mumley seconded it, and the motion was approved.

Action items:

- Perform an analysis of carryover tasks and budget, including the priority of these tasks, the need to hire to get these tasks finished, and recommendations to minimize carryover in the future.
- Send out budget memorandum electronically.
- Have SFEI bookkeepers review the terminology in the RMP budget.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Because some members were late in arriving, approval of the minutes was put off until quorum was reached. Dave Tucker made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, Adam Olivieri seconded it, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Committee Member Updates

No committee members had updates.

5. RMP Fees for 2011

Jay Davis discussed the memo in the agenda package regarding fee increases. In recent years, RMP fee increases have been held constant at 2.0%. Jay noted an error in the memo initially included in the agenda package, which stated the fee increase was 0.1% - the increase was actually 2%. A corrected version of the memo is posted on the web site. The usable budget for RMP has been shrinking due to SFEI salary and laboratory fee increases. The Committee asked Jay to include the budget overview in the Master Plan, and update the 10 year plan spreadsheet.

Trish Mulvey noted that the SFEI Board has directed Rainer Hoenicke to bring staff wages to levels comparable with similar agencies, such as the Water Board, EPA, and SCCWRP. Salaries for junior staff in particular are lower than for comparable levels at partner agencies.

Dave Tucker strongly encouraged deferment of subcontractor fee increases, as the contributing agencies are experiencing extremely tight budgets with pay cuts and layoffs. Adam Olivieri noted that he put in a request to BASMAA for a 2% increase in 2011 and they responded that the rates should remain at 2010 levels. Ellen Johnck suggested covering salary increases with the RMP "surplus". Dave Tucker thought that increases in fees may be feasible based on a rationale that high priority additional work needs to be done. Many agencies have frozen or declining salaries so a rationale based on salaries is a hard sell right now. Adam Olivieri agreed that a rationale based on additional work has a better chance of success. A discussion of the need for additional revenue based on information needs could occur after the Master Plan is in a more complete form. Adam recommended a closer look at carryover tasks. Tom Mumley noted that about 15% of the 2010 labor is carryover from 2009, and asked for a plan that describes how we are going to catch up. Adam Olivieri proposed holding participant fees constant for 2011, and deferring the discussion of fees for subsequent years. Dave Tucker recommended that the RMP tell contractors that we can not pay increased fees for the next year or two. Adam Olivieri stated that the Program needs to make sure that SFEI staff are paid properly. Adam pointed out that another way to deal with tight budgets is to stretch projects over longer time periods. Kevin Buchan stated a preference to not take operating expenses out of the "surplus", and noted that WSPA is cutting its budget by \$600,000 this year.

Dave Tucker requested a joint meeting with Rainer Hoenicke, the admin/fiscal committee of SFEI, and the SC to talk about the gap between SFEI compensation and compensation at partner agencies. Kevin Buchan requested that the impact of the SFEI salary gap on the RMP budget also be explored. Kevin Buchan and Dave Tucker agreed that RMP fee increases should be

revisited in 2011, and that for the time being, the rates should be held flat. Trish Mulvey suggested that Rainer Hoenicke and the SFEI treasurer, Chuck Weir, be included in the next SC meeting. Trish Mulvey noted that a clear invitation should go to the Admin and Fiscal Committee. Adam Olivieri requested a breakdown of salaries, subcontractor fees, and operating costs.

Action items:

- Update the 10 year plan spreadsheet and include budget discussion in the Master Plan.
- Inform subcontractors that we cannot pay fee increases in 2010.
- Invite SFEI administration/fiscal committee members (including Chuck Weir, the SFEI treasurer) to the next SC meeting, and have Rainer Hoenicke describe the disparity between SFEI compensation and compensation at partner organizations.

6. RMP Planning Update

Jay Davis discussed the draft Master Plan. He stated the document is a work in progress and has pieces missing. He envisions it being printed up in an attractive and readable format like the Pulse. It should be useful for committee members and for stakeholders to use in reporting back to their constituents. He suggested that two forms could be prepared, with one more distilled for outsiders. He also asked for help and comments on the work as it currently stands. Dr. Davis mentioned that a statement of information needs from the dredgers is still missing, which Ellen Johnck will help with. Tom Mumley suggested that the information needs statements are not appropriate in the Master Plan, as they go into too much detail. He recommended putting them in an appendix. Kevin Buchan also suggested that if the document is made public, it should not include the stakeholder information needs. He suggested that missing pieces include the overview of the budget, budget trends, and the distribution of funds among different program elements. The Committee also asked that the Plan add up everything and discuss whether a shortfall exists. Dave Tucker said that the Plan should show how bits and pieces come together to answer high priority questions. The Plan should describe how we define success. Mercury is an example of a long-term problem where success may take many decades. Other pollutants may be more tractable. Tom Mumley commented that synthesis is needed to help determine whether information needs can be addressed with the existing budget, or whether augmentation is needed. Adam Olivieri recommended that the Plan show leveraging of funds, including grant funds and partnerships.

Dave Tucker suggested that the Master Plan is in fact a “wish list”, which has not yet had management oversight. He asked that it include some additional tasks, such as the website and data management, which are still a large piece of RMP activities. Tom Mumley requested that the Master Plan be written to satisfy the SC, before it is adjusted to be distributed to the public. Tom commented that the Water Board will be developing a robust plan for addressing emerging contaminants (a “strategy” in a broader sense). To him the summary of EC activities indicates that the Program is not doing enough on this topic.

Since there are so many information needs and opportunities for management input in the Master Plan, such as Emerging Contaminants, and overall budget prioritizing, it was suggested that the document not be constrained to a specific length.

Trish Mulvey noted that the 5 year program review, which is currently overdue, could be tailored to the RMP needs, and could help with the Master Plan. Trish thought that facilitated discussions and joint meetings may be needed to develop a road map that everyone likes. Kevin Buchan suggested that a program review was not needed for the time being. Tom Mumley proposed that a workshop to make general decisions about the Master Plan be scheduled, for the near future – perhaps jointly with the SC and TRC. Since Jay Davis should be able to have a working document by March or April 2010, it was suggested for April of 2010, outside of a normal SC or TRC meeting. This meeting will also be helpful in developing a 2011 budget and workplan.

Kevin Buchan suggested that the SC and TRC be polled for a date for this workshop in April 2010. The next regular SC meeting date was set for April 20th, 2010.

As the scheduled time for the meeting ended, the group agreed to follow up on remaining items via email. Items include:

- Progress on the Pulse.
- Annual Meeting data, venue, and possible keynote speakers.
- Joint TRC/CTAG Meeting.
- Deliverables scorecard.

Action items:

- Ellen Johnck will help determine dredger information needs.
- Schedule a workshop for making general decisions about the Master Plan and future directions for the RMP in April 2010.
- Distribute a revised Master Plan in advance of the April workshop.
- Follow up on remaining items via email:
 - Progress on the Pulse.
 - Annual Meeting data, venue, and possible keynote speakers.
 - Joint TRC/CTAG Meeting.
 - Deliverables scorecard.

Action Item	Who? When?	Status
Make changes recommended by the SC to the next draft of the RMP Master Plan	Jay Davis, before April workshop	
Send letters to Committee members encouraging participation	Jay Davis, Kevin Buchan, Tom Mumley, Jen Hunt	
Prepare a communications plan for the fact sheets that addresses the purpose, audience, and updates necessary for factsheets	Jay Davis, March TRC meeting	
Review the EC report of the State Panel on Recycled Water and incorporate this information in our EC fact sheets.	Susan Klosterhaus, when the report is available	
Proceed with the fact sheets pilot in 2010	Jay Davis, staff	
Explore modifying the SEP process so that it might help fund high priority studies identified in RMP planning	Tom Mumley, BACWA, and Trish Mulvey	
Develop a Strategy for Status and Trends	Meg Sedlak, Fall 2010	
Perform an analysis of carryover tasks and budget, including the priority of these tasks, the need to hire to get these tasks finished, and recommendations to minimize carryover in the future	Jay Davis, staff, April 2010	
Send out budget memorandum electronically	Lawrence Leung	Done
Have SFEI bookkeepers review the terminology in the RMP budget	Lawrence Leung	
Update the 10 year plan spreadsheet	Jay Davis	
Tell contractors that due to budget constraints we are holding fees flat for the next two years	Jay Davis, Lawrence Leung, Jen Hunt	
Invite SFEI administration/fiscal committee members (including the SFEI treasurer) to the next SC meeting	Rainer Hoenicke	
Describe the disparity between SFEI compensation and compensation at partner organizations	Rainer Hoenicke	
Provide statement from dredgers on information needs	Ellen Johnck	
Schedule a workshop for making general decisions about the Master Plan and future directions for the RMP in April 2010.	Jay Davis	
Follow up on remaining items via email:		
Progress on the Pulse	Jay Davis	Done
Annual Meeting date, venue, and possible keynote speakers.	Jay Davis	
Joint TRC/CTAG Meeting.	Jay Davis	
Deliverables scorecard.	Jay Davis, Jen Hunt	