

**REGIONAL MONITORING PROGRAM FOR WATER QUALITY
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
January 22nd, 2007**

Members Present:

Dave Allen, USS POSCO/Industry
Kevin Buchan, WSPA/Refineries
Bob Hale, Alameda County Clean Water Agency
Adam Olivieri, EOA/Stormwater Agencies
Dan Tafolla, Vallejo Sanitation and Flood Control District/Med. POTWs
Chuck Weir, EBDA/Large POTWs
Tom Mumley, SFB RWQCB

Others Present:

Mike Connor, SFEI
Jay Davis, SFEI
Meg Sedlak, SFEI

1. Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Kevin Buchan opened the meeting and asked for comments on the October 2006 minutes. Kevin Buchan motioned that the minutes be approved; Dan Tafolla seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Meg Sedlak briefly outlined the status of several action items from the October meeting. Ms. Sedlak indicated that the Joint Powers Authority (JPA) discussion was on the Water Board meeting scheduled for January. Having the JPA would make it easier to transfer funds from the State to the RMP.

Ms. Sedlak indicated that the dredging fees are revisited on a three-year cycle and that this corresponded to the reductions in in-Bay disposal under the LTMS. Ms. Sedlak indicated that the revised fees would be discussed at the April SC meeting.

Action: Presentation of the revised dredging fee structure at the April meeting.

2. Committee Member Updates

There were no Committee member updates.

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

Meg Sedlak summarized the minutes from the TRC meeting on December 19th, 2006. The major items were: an update on the prioritization of the Status and Trends (S&T) program (redesign meeting); a discussion of bird egg monitoring; highlights of 2006/2007; and an update on the 2007 food web modeling pilot study.

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The second redesign meeting occurred on November 17th to discuss incorporation of new elements. A summary table of the existing elements and new elements was included in the TRC agenda package. At the December TRC meeting, the group discussed reducing the frequency of some of the organic analytes such as PCBs and PAHs. It was recommended that PBDEs continue to be analyzed on an annual basis as there are still substantial questions regarding loadings and fate and transport of these contaminants in the Bay.

Jay Davis summarized the bird egg monitoring that is currently being conducted under the EEPS program. Cormorant and tern eggs have been collected and analyzed. Cormorants are piscivorous birds that tend to forage regionally. As such they are good indicators of regional contamination and long term trends. Terns are also piscivorous; however, they forage in near shore areas that tend to have higher concentrations of contaminants. In addition, they tend to more sensitive to contaminant exposure than cormorants. Tern egg monitoring is also specifically called out in the mercury TMDL.

Ms. Sedlak indicated that the TRC had reviewed and approved \$20,000 for the foodweb modeling pilot study. This study will conduct a literature review and a field dietary study to develop a better understanding of food web transfer pathways. Ms. Sedlak indicated that review of this proposal by the SC is needed before it could be incorporated into the 2007 budget. Kevin Buchan motioned for approval; Adam Olivieri seconded and the motion for including this pilot study into the 2007 plan passed unanimously.

4. Action: Pulse and Annual Meeting

Jay Davis distributed an outline of the Pulse and a schedule. This year the Pulse will focus on the pollutant reduction efforts of each RMP participant sector. Dr. Davis indicated that he had firm commitments from the following RMP groups: BACWA; Refineries; Stormwater agencies; and regulators. Tom Mumley expressed some concern whether the Regional Board would be able to discuss the status of the PCB and copper TMDLs in the Pulse as it could still be under review at time of press. Adam Olivieri indicated that a general update of the TMDL would be useful. Jay Davis agreed to send out a new schedule and list of authors.

At the suggestion of the TRC, the SC discussed the idea of holding the Annual Meeting in locations other than Oakland. The SC strongly endorsed the Oakland location. Committee members thought that it is centrally located for all participants with easy freeway and BART access. The SC felt moving the meeting to San Francisco would not be convenient nor cost effective as meeting rooms/conference centers are typically three times the cost of renting space in Oakland. San Jose was deemed too far for most RMP participants.

It was suggested that SFEI staff review who did not come to the annual meeting to see if there was geographical bias.

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Action item: Review 2006 Annual Meeting attendance list to determine whether there was a geographical bias in who did not attend. Present this summary at the April SC meeting and to the TRC.

5. Information: Budget Status

Ms. Sedlak reviewed the RMP budget summary memorandum. At present, all of the RMP participants for 2007 have been invoiced. As summarized in the memorandum, approximately \$2,000,000 has been received to date; outstanding invoices total \$507,000. Ms. Sedlak indicated that several of the stormwater agencies had not paid; Adam Olivieri indicated that he would follow up on this.

Unpaid fees from 2006 are approximately \$70,000 (Caltrans). Approximately 94 percent of the labor budget was expended in 2006 (\$1,311,606 out of an approved budget of \$1,392,885). Ms. Sedlak indicated that she would like to carryover the remaining six percent of the budget (\$81,279) to complete unfinished tasks. Approximately \$1.4 million dollars of subcontracts had been written in 2006 of the 1.8 allocated. Ms. Sedlak indicated that several additional contracts need to be written (e.g., the 2006 triennial sportfish chemical analysis contract) and that at the April meeting, a request would be made to carryover the funds into 2007. Direct costs were slightly over the budgeted amount (expended \$102,391 of a total allocation of \$101,845). Any exceedance on direct costs would be deducted from the subcontract carryover proposed for the April meeting.

6. Action: Approval of the 2007 Budget

Ms. Sedlak presented the 2007 line item budget which included the 2006 labor carryover tasks and corresponding budget. She briefly outlined each of the line items, a more detailed description is presented in the the 2007 Detailed Workplan.

The SC requested that prior to the approval of the budget that the group discuss the plan for 2007 with regard to water chemistry trace metal analyses. Ms. Sedlak summarized the memorandum on Academia and the RMP that was distributed prior to the meeting. As background, Ms. Sedlak indicated that the TRC strongly valued having universities involved with the RMP. The TRC had requested that the SC consider how to incorporate universities into the RMP.

With regard to 2007, the RMP is interested in conducting an intercomparison exercise for trace metals with a commercial laboratory and the UCSC. When the RMP began, many of the trace metal analyses were only successfully being completed by specialized laboratories. In the intervening years, many of these methods have become accepted and routine such that many commercial laboratories are able to conduct these analyses. The RMP would like to redirect UCSC efforts towards understanding the processes in the Bay rather than conducting routine analyses.

For 2007, the RMP proposes to conduct an intercomparison exercise with the UCSC in which the total cost of the trace metal analyses will remain the same (approximately

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\$285,000); however, an intercalibration exercise will be conducted with a commercial lab. At the writing of these minutes, it is anticipated that the commercial lab will conduct analyses of all stations and duplicate samples will be collected and analyzed by UCSC at approximately one third of the sites. With the remaining funding, UCSC will embark on a pilot or special study of interest to the RMP. At the time of the January meeting, UCSC proposed conducting a mercury isotopes project to determine which sources of mercury were being methylated. As of March, UCSC is proposing a sample handling and analysis study. The project will be discussed at the March TRC meeting.

Kevin Buchan was interested in knowing the cost savings of using a commercial laboratory. The cost savings using a commercial laboratory will depend on the number of stations sampled but are on the order of a third of the current costs with using UCSC.

Adam Olivieri indicated that academia can provide a valuable service to the RMP in three ways: conducting research of interest to the RMP; assisting in the design of the RMP; and reviewing RMP products (e.g., data, reports, sample plans, etc.).

Tom Mumley indicated that he could go along with a noncompetitive proposal, but maybe or maybe not this one. He advocated development of a multi-year study plan for methylmercury in the RMP, and would like to see work that sets the stage for this. In future years, UCSC would have to compete for these funds.

The RMP managers agreed to have UCSC develop a proposal that addresses RMP information needs and then bring this to the TRC for approval.

Kevin Buchan motioned for approval of the 2007 budget; Adam Olivieri seconded and the 2007 budget passed contingent upon the TRC reviewing UCSC pilot study at the March TRC meeting.

7. Action: Approval of fees and budget for 2008

Ms. Sedlak distributed the 10-year plan and requested that the SC approve the fees and budget for 2008. Kevin Buchan approved; the motion was seconded and unanimously passed

8. Information: Academia and the Exposure and Effects Pilot Study

The SC reviewed the memorandum on these two topics. Tom Mumley commented that he is a strong advocate of engagement of academia in the program – the question is: how to do it? We need a process that ensures that Regional Board needs are clearly laid out and that academia is addressing those needs.

The RMP needs to be clear on the method for incorporating academia into the RMP and the funding that is set aside for this. Mike Connor suggested that the existing method of having each of the workgroups review pilot and special studies and recommend studies for incorporation into the following year seemed like a good model. Jay Davis

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commented that as an example, methyl mercury studies should be a topic of discussion for the Contaminant Fate Workgroup.

Tom Mumley commented that funding for individual pilot and special study projects tended to be relatively small (on the order of \$50,000) and the time frame was relatively short (one year). Tom Mumley wondered how we could increase the funding and fund projects for multiple years.

Adam Oliveiri indicated that there were pros and cons with the current system of soliciting PS/SSs; one disadvantage being that most academics need a longer time frame for funding.

Tom Mumley asked how much money were we considering setting aside for academia? \$100,000? Adam Olivieri suggested that maybe each workgroup would be allocated approximately \$125,000. The Committee asked to come back to the topic of allocation of funds to different workgroups at a later meeting.

The Committee agreed that academic involvement in the RMP is valuable, and directed staff to take this issue back to the TRC to come up with an approach for addressing this issue.

9. Information: Outcomes of the Second Redesign Meeting

Ms. Sedlak stated that a second redesign meeting was held on November 15th to discuss new elements that could be included in the RMP Status and Trends program. She reviewed the memo and corresponding table summarizing this meeting.

10. Information: Program Updates

Ms. Sedlak highlighted workgroup activities (a summary of workgroup activities was provided with the agenda) and reminded members that the Annual Mercury Coordination meeting would be held on February 22nd in downtown Oakland.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm. The next SC meeting will be on April 24, 2007.

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