

**REGIONAL MONITORING PROGRAM  
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING  
DRAFT MINUTES  
October 26, 2009**

**Members Present:**

Dave Allen, USS POSCO  
Kevin Buchan, WPSA  
Ellen Johnck, Bay Planning Coalition  
Adam Olivieri, EOA  
Tom Mumley, SFBRWQCB  
Dan Tafolla, Vallejo Sanitation and Flood Control District  
Dave Tucker, City of San Jose

**Others Present:**

Rachel Allen, SFEI  
Jay Davis, SFEI  
Lawrence Leung, SFEI  
Meg Sedlak, SFEI  
Donald Yee, SFEI

**1. Approval of Agenda and Minutes**

Kevin Buchan opened the meeting, and asked for comments on the August 2009 minutes. Dave Tucker motioned that the minutes be approved, and Dan Tafolla seconded.

Ellen Johnck and Dave Tucker asked that RMP staff follow up with Steering Committee (SC) members who had not attended a meeting in over a year to see if an alternate could be identified.

**Action item:** Send letter to SC and Technical Review Committee (TRC) members who haven't attended the last few meetings.

**2. Committee Member Updates**

There were no updates.

**3. TRC Meeting Summary**

Ms. Sedlak indicated that major items discussed at the TRC meeting were the subject of today's meeting.

**4. Financial audit and RMP funds and Budget Status**

Lawrence Leung indicated that the Institute and the RMP had been audited in July and no significant issues were found. Meg Sedlak added that the audit originally stated that there was no procedure for spending reserve money; however, as the Committee members are aware, the funds are set aside for specific activities such as the triennial sport fish sampling. In addition, the SC is informed of the status of the reserve each quarter. This information was articulated in the

response back to the auditor. Adam Olivieri asked that a copy of the audit letter and the SFEI response to it to be distributed to SC members.

Dave Tucker asked that the “additional revenue” on the budget summary be called “revenue adjustments” to more accurately reflect the source of the money.

A discussion ensued regarding the procedure for receiving the 2005-2007 payments from Caltrans. Meg Sedlak stated that the contract had been signed, and that the payments were now on hold due to additional forms that need to be completed. She noted that the system does not permit the billing of back fees, and that the RMP must list the money being spent on current and future projects. Ms. Sedlak indicated that Dyan Whyte and Tom Mumley were working very hard with her to ensure that the money would eventually be paid. Adam Olivieri, Dave Tucker, and Kevin Buchan were concerned about not being able to bill for work that had already been done and benefitted Caltrans. Tom Mumley then arrived, and explained that the process was caught up in bureaucracy, but the RMP will receive the funds. Because of the current intense scrutiny of state expenditures, the Regional Board cannot bill for past work, and can only distribute funds to future work. The RMP can accommodate this by charging normal RMP work to Caltrans, thereby receiving the money it is owed. Tom Mumley stated that there would be no use in trying to get State Water Board members involved, as the process should be straightforward. Meg Sedlak explained that the problem will not occur in the future, since Caltrans has a contract set up with the Aquatic Science Center for 2008 and 2009, with a 5 year contract forthcoming. Adam Olivieri suggested that the RMP bill money from Caltrans first, to ensure that it is received and spent. Tom Mumley cautioned that it may not be resolved by the end of 2009, but that even if this attempt does collapse, Caltrans knows that it is not “off the hook”, and still needs to meet its financial obligation to the RMP.

Ellen Johnck offered to work with Lawrence Leung to obtain the outstanding funds from Paradise Cay.

**Action items:** Distribute audit letter and SFEI response to SC. Ellen Johnck and Lawrence Leung will work together to obtain the outstanding Paradise Cay funds. To increase the probability that money from Caltrans is received, ensure that it is spent rather than allocated to reserve. Update the RMP Budget summary to reflect SC member comments.

##### **5. 2010 Pilot and Special Studies**

Meg Sedlak stated that the TRC had reviewed and discussed which Pilot and Special Studies (PS/SS) should be funded as requested by the SC. A spreadsheet with the recommended 2010 studies was included as part of the agenda package. Tom Mumley pointed out that the TRC came to consensus regarding all of the studies, and that no voting was required to determine which studies to fund.

Tom Mumley asked that some of the PS/SS study titles be adjusted to more clearly represent the proposed work (e.g., the “spreadsheet model” be clarified to explain the study objectives).

The discussion of the PS/SS focused on questions that SC members had regarding specific studies.

- Study 14: Monitoring of Small Fish for PCBs
  - Dave Tucker asked if the PCB study would only look at 40 PCBs, and if that was enough. Meg Sedlak stated that the PCB study would consider looking at an expanded list of PCBs.
- Study 7: SQO Development for San Francisco Bay
  - Dave Tucker asked if the Water Board was following progress on the SQO work in the RMP and weighing in on the issues that arose. Meg Sedlak replied that Karen Taberski was an active participant in the Exposure and Effects Workgroup and the SQO assessments. One of the objectives of this pilot study is to develop indices appropriate for the Bay Area.
  - Tom Mumley asked the rhetorical question of what the SQOs will mean for the POTWs, and he also asked if the RMP is actually able to implement SQOs. Ms. Sedlak stated that the RMP is currently collecting sediment chemistry, toxicity, and benthic assessment to enable the program to conduct SQO assessments. Dr. Mumley pointed out that the expertise to conduct the benthic taxonomy is limited to a few groups and wondered about how feasible it will be for a broader group to do SQO assessments. Meg Sedlak agreed that there are not a lot of labs capable of conducting specific regional benthic taxonomic analysis.
- Study 4: Impact of Copper on the Olfactory System of Juvenile Salmon
  - Ellen Johnck advocated coordination with NOAA, and asked if NOAA had recommended this study. Meg Sedlak responded that while NOAA had not recommended the study, the RMP has made a substantial effort to engage with NOAA on a number of RMP activities. NOAA now participates in the Exposure and Effects meetings; the RMP is currently funding a study by NOAA scientists evaluating the effects of PAHs on juvenile flatfish; the RMP assisted in the NOAA evaluation of the mothball fleet; and last week SFEI hosted a meeting of the NOAA Mussel Watch program. Tom Mumley clarified that as part of the copper site-specific objective, permit holders are required to develop a study addressing the effect of copper on salmonids. Currently there are data for freshwater effects but not saltwater.
  - Ellen Johnck was interested in making sure the NOAA concerns are addressed, but Tom Mumley pointed out that the proposed copper study had a freshwater focus, and that there is fair probability that the study will show that increased concern for copper is unnecessary. He agrees with the TRC that the study needs to be done, but is not urgent.
- Study 11: POC Loads Monitoring in Representative Watersheds – Reconnaissance
- Study 10: Develop and Update Spreadsheet Model
- Study 13: Conceptual Model for Bioaccumulation
- Study 9: POC Loads Monitoring – Scoping Needs for “Land Use” Specific Monitoring
  - No questions or comments on these studies.
- Study 12: Proposal to Develop 3D Model of the South Bay
  - Kevin Buchan pointed out that a lot of RMP money will be spent on this model. Meg Sedlak clarified that this is the core of the modeling strategy, and that the TRC agreed to fund this study, but it is contingent upon a workplan that addresses

- a number of concerns, including check-in points and milestones. John Oram will develop this workplan for the December TRC meeting.
- Adam Olivieri asked who will review the workplan, and Jay Davis noted that the modeling strategy team, the CFWG, and the TRC will all review it. He also pointed out that John Oram is collaborating on this project with Ed Gross (consultant), Rusty Halloman (UC- Berkeley) and Mark Stacey (UC-Berkeley).
  - Tom Mumley noted that since this project is a collaboration, the return for the amount of money that the RMP is putting into the project is very large.
  - Dave Tucker's concerns with the modeling project were that 1) this is just one among many models of the Bay, and that with too many it becomes difficult to use them in management decisions, 2) the project depends on Mark Stacey and his funding, and if he leaves, the model may no longer be supported, and 3) it lacks a long-term plan. Tom Mumley pointed out that there is a modeling strategy that lays out a long-term plan, and Meg Sedlak will distribute it to SC members. Tom Mumley also added that there are many other participants in this project, so it is not entirely dependent on one person.
  - Jay Davis mentioned that the concerns would be addressed in the workplan, which will be presented to the TRC in December. He also added that there is \$5,000 set aside to organize a forum among modelers to ensure that work is not being duplicated.
- Dioxin Strategy Study: Monitoring of Loads from the Guadalupe River, Zone 4, and the Delta
    - Meg Sedlak stated that this item had been approved by the SC via e-mail. This approval was very timely as the wet weather sampling team had already collected first flush samples which have been sent to the respective laboratories for analyses.
  - Study 3: Estimation of PBDE Thresholds in Common Terns
    - Adam Olivieri pointed out that Mike Connor had asked about existing efforts to develop PBDE thresholds at the national scale. Meg Sedlak said that based on a web search and discussion with avian toxicologists, there are no efforts to develop thresholds, and that Mr. Connor's concern was about using the RMP to do national work. The PBDE study is designed to give a context for the data being found in the Bay.
    - Dave Tucker asked if the egg injection method reflects natural maternal sources of PBDEs. Jay Davis clarified that in fact it doesn't, but it is far less expensive and can still serve as an indicator of the relative sensitivity of different species. Ellen Johnck asked that the study be renamed to appropriately address its sensitivity goal, rather than a numerical threshold.
  - Study 16: Screening of Biological Matrices for Pollutants
    - Jay Davis noted that the NOAA Mussel Watch program is performing a pilot study on Emerging Contaminants in California, and that they are very interested in this screening method. Meg Sedlak added that they have set aside \$400,000 for this California study, and that in future years they may be able to provide money or work on similar projects.
  - SPLWG Study: Monitoring and Modeling Contributions of Atmospheric Deposition to Watershed Mercury Loads

- Meg Sedlak pointed out that there is \$10,000 set aside to develop an atmospheric deposition strategy. This study proposal will be revised to be consistent with the new strategy.

Tom Mumley asked which studies were multiyear studies that would be candidates for projects in the following year as well. Meg Sedlak replied that study 16 (screening of biological matrices for emerging contaminants) is a two-year study, and that the modeling work will continue for many years. She also noted that the monitoring of small fish for PCBs study is in the last year of a three-year project.

Meg Sedlak mentioned that the National Institute of Standards and Technology had offered to provide long-term archiving for RMP samples.

Dave Tucker made a motion to approve the recommendations from the TRC for funding for 2010 Pilot and Special Studies, and Ellen Johnck seconded it.

**Action items:** Distribute the modeling strategy to the SC and address issues raised regarding the modeling work in the Modeling Workplan. Rename the PBDE study to reflect its purpose (sensitivity rather than threshold).

## 6. 2010 Draft Program Plan

Tom Mumley asked if the Program Plan was written solely for the SC. He noted that its overview focuses more on the special studies rather than the annual elements, that there was no budget for the annual elements only the special studies, and that it needs to include dollar values in the various items. Dr. Mumley suggested that the Program Plan be made readable and accessible to the general public. Ellen Johnck supported this suggestion, noting that the Program Plan, along with the Pulse, would be the best products to pass on to dredgers from the RMP. Dr. Mumley also asked if future Status and Trends sampling sites could be made as accessible as past sites are, as an illustration or similar format. He also asked if section 4.4 of the Program Plan could receive a more descriptive title.

Meg Sedlak indicated that the sampling design could be placed on the web; prior years with lat/longs are on the web and it would be relatively easy to put the current year's station on the web prior to the cruise. Tom Mumley asked for clarification on the analytes to be analyzed for this year and Meg Sedlak indicated that per the redesign, legacy organics such as PAHs, PCBs, and pesticides would not be analyzed this year only PBDEs for which we do not have very many years of data. Tom Mumley and Dave Tucker asked that the design of the S&T element be revisited annually by the TRC.

Dave Tucker made a motion to approve the 2010 Program Plan, pending changes based on Committee member comments. Kevin Buchan seconded.

**Action items:** Update the program plan to reflect SC member comments. Make future sample sites available on the web query tool (or similarly accessible form). Revisit the S&T redesign annually in the December TRC meeting.

## **7. Annual Meeting and Pulse**

Meg Sedlak noted that attendance was down and no-shows increased at the 2009 Annual Meeting. Dave Tucker pointed out that this should not be surprising – it seems to be a nationwide trend due to the recession. Regarding the site, SC members will talk with their constituents to develop a recommendation.

Jay Davis stated that he would like to advance the 2010 Pulse schedule to mitigate late nights and substantial stress on staff to meet the deadline of the Annual Meeting. He wanted to set the table of contents at this meeting. He proposed Stormwater as the theme for 2010, and Emerging Contaminants as the theme for 2011. Adam Olivieri mentioned that there may be timing problems with a Pulse focused on stormwater, due to the fact that the best people to write the management articles may be very busy in the months to come with the MRP. He also cautioned that focusing on Low Impact Development (LID) may overshadow more long term local projects.

Dave Tucker suggested a broader themed Pulse, with Water Management or Pollutant Management as a whole. Jay Davis thought that this might be too broad for one Pulse, and that earlier Pulses already covered some of it. Adam Olivieri will discuss the possibility with BASMAA of a stormwater theme for the Pulse, and will determine how feasible it might be for 2010.

**Action items:** SC members talk to their constituents and RMP annual meeting attendees to determine if the Scottish Rite Center was a better location. Adam Olivieri to discuss the possibility of writing stormwater management articles for the 2010 Pulse with BASMAA.

## **8. Program Update**

Meg Sedlak noted that there is a financial memo which notes \$6,000 coming from reserve money to be spent on a project to expand the PCB list from 40 to all 209 congeners. The analysis costs \$200 more per sample, and would enable the RMP to correlate the 40 already studied with the full spectrum. Dave Tucker noted that he gets all 209 congeners analyzed at the lower price, and asked that Meg Sedlak follow up on getting a lower price for the analysis. Jay Davis pointed out that the samples already collected would be particularly useful to analyze for the full spectrum.

Jay Davis also mentioned that it would be possible to also analyze for coplanar PCBs.

Dr. Davis suggested that Meg Sedlak look into getting the full 209 congener analysis at a lower price, including shipping costs. Kevin Buchan suggested that the SC have further discussions on coplanar PCBs before the study is funded.

To make sure analysis rates are competitive, Dave Tucker also suggested putting the sample work out to bid.

Meg Sedlak asked for SC member input on the draft meeting agenda for the Annual Mercury Meeting, and will send it out electronically.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:10, and the next SC meeting will be on Jan 19, 2010. Dave Tucker stressed the importance of ending the meeting on time.

**Action items:** Check price of analysis of all 209 PCB congeners with AXYS, check shipping costs. If AXYS does not lower its price for analysis of all 209 PCBs, send out an email to the SC with budget and strategy for the 209 congener study. Investigate costs and send proposal on coplanar PCBs to the SC for resolution via email. Send out draft of Hg Annual Meeting to SC members.

Action Item	Who?	Status
Contact SC and TRC members that haven't attended the last few meetings. Ellen Johck indicated that she would talk to Rob Lawrence	Meg Sedlak /Ellen Johnck	
Ellen Johnck to work with Lawrence Leung to obtain outstanding Paradise Cay funds	Ellen Johnck and Lawrence Leung	A payment of \$500 has been received.
Address issues raised regarding the modeling work in the Modeling Workplan	John Oram	John Oram to present at December TRC meeting
Update the 2010 Program Plan to reflect SC member comments	Meg Sedlak, Rachel Allen	Comments incorporated, revised version posted to web
Make future sample sites available on the web query tool (or similarly accessible form)	Meg Sedlak	Data management team posted 2010 stations to web
Revisit the S&T redesign in the annual December TRC meeting	Meg Sedlak, TRC	On agenda for December TRC meeting
SC members talk to their constituents and RMP annual meeting attendees to determine if the Scottish Rite Center was a better location	SC members	
Discuss the possibility of writing stormwater management articles for the 2010 Pulse with BASMAA	Adam Olivieri	
Check price of analysis of all	Meg Sedlak	Discussed prices with Richard

209 PCB congeners with AXYS. Send a note out to SC on status and a strategy for addressing 209 congeners in tributaries.		Grace of AXYS, and will send out a note regarding costs
Investigate costs and send proposal on coplanar PCBs to the SC for resolution via email	Donald Yee, Jay Davis	
Send out draft of Hg Annual Meeting to SC members	Jay Davis	To be sent out by Dec 10th
Each sector review their respective information needs tables for the Master Plan	SC representatives	
Lester McKee to keep the TRC informed of the progress of the nutrient endpoint project.	Meg Sedlak	
Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the RMP and RMP staff with regards to San Leandro Bay CAF proposal	Jay Davis	
Develop a list of short term and longer term projects to be funded through SEP using the existing RMP strategies. TRC to review and comment on list.	Meg Sedlak and Jay Davis	