

**REGIONAL MONITORING PROGRAM FOR WATER QUALITY  
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**Members Present:**

Dave Allen, USS POSCO/Industry  
Kevin Buchan, WSPA/Refineries  
Adam Olivieri, EOA/Stormwater Agencies  
Chuck Weir, EBDA/Large POTWs  
Karen Taberski, SFB RWQCB

**Others Present:**

Jay Davis, SFEI  
Meg Sedlak, SFEI

**By telephone:**

Rob Lawrence, US Army Corps of Engineers

**1. Approval of Agenda and Minutes**

Kevin Buchan opened the meeting and asked for comments on the April 2007 minutes. Kevin Buchan motioned that the minutes be approved; Adam Olivieri seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously.

With regard to prior action items, Ms. Sedlak stated that Andy Cohen was in the process of coordinating an advisory panel for the invasive oyster project; any SC or TRC member interested in participating should contact Andy Cohen at [Acohen@sfei.org](mailto:Acohen@sfei.org).

**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 July 10th, 2007. The major items were: an update on progress of a benthic assessment of San Francisco Bay; development of an RMP five-year plan and planning for a five-year review; ranking of 2008 P&SS; and updates on the multi-box model, the pharmaceutical pilot study, and the National Water Quality Monitoring Network.

The benthic assessments conducted by SCCWRP using the sediment triad approach (i.e., benthic assemblages, sediment chemistry and sediment toxicity) indicates that much of the Bay is listed as possibly impacted. This conclusion was based on the fact that much of the WEMAP sediment samples for 2000 were found to be toxic (~ 80 percent). Interestingly, for areas of similar concentrations the SF Bay sediments were two to three times more toxic than other sites throughout the state. The reason for the increased

toxicity is not understood. This triad approach will be used for the sediment quality objectives that are scheduled to be promulgated by the State Board in November.

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

Ms. Sedlak reviewed the RMP budget summary memorandum. Ms. Sedlak gave an update on the status of the reserve and reminded the group that the goal for the reserve is \$200,000. As part of the financial audit in the second quarter, contract liability was reviewed and a number of contracts were closed out with a balance remaining. Ms. Sedlak explained that there were a number of reasons why there is a balance of residual funds. Several contracts have a contingency built in the budget in the event of inclement weather or illness of key personnel (e.g., captain of the ship). A balance may be incurred if it is not physically possible to collect all samples due to unforeseen site logistics or lack of samples at the sampling site (e.g., no fish are present at the site at time of collection). Ms. Sedlak stated that approximately \$360,000 were available and that approximately \$160,000 could be used to for other purposes such as the Program review or supplementing 2008 pilot and special studies.

A discussion ensued as to whether there was sufficient funding for the Program review. To date, \$75,000 has been set aside for the review (\$25,000 per year since 2005). The Program review will occur in late 2008, beginning 2009, at that time \$125,000 will be available. Chuck Weir indicated that \$125,000 would be appropriate for the review. Therefore, \$160,000 remains available for pilot and special studies.

Ms. Sedlak reviewed the 2007 budget summary. At present, unpaid fees from 2007 are approximately \$300,000. Approximately \$17,000 of the fees was written off.

Approximately 46% of the labor budget has been expended (i.e., \$650,000). Approximately \$1.4 million of subcontracts have been written (\$1,649,384). Approximately 40% of the direct costs have been spent (\$52,830 out of a total of \$133,150) largely due to costs incurred with the Hayward Zone 4 line A project (\$22,623).

#### **5. Action: Development of a RMP Five-year Plan and Planning for the Next Program Review**

Jay Davis stated that the workgroups are all developing five-year plans which will be completed by the end of this year. A five-year plan for the entire RMP will be developed in the first and second quarters of 2008. In the fourth quarter of 2008 a summary report on the work of the Exposure and Effects Pilot Study will be prepared. Dr. Davis indicated that these documents would set the stage for the Program review which is slated to begin late 2008/early 2009.

Chuck Weir recommended that the master plan for the RMP be revised after the Program review to incorporate comments made by the Review Panel. It was suggested that at the

next SC meeting that the Committee would begin to scope out who might be included in the Panel.

Adam Olivieri motioned for approval of the schedule for workgroups five-year plans, the master plan and the Program review. Kevin Buchan seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **6. Action: 2008 Pilot and Special Studies (P&SSs)**

Meg Sedlak indicated that there had been a concerted effort to solicit P&SSs through the workgroups on select topics of interest to the RMP participants. All but 2 of the 22 P&SSs were reviewed by each of the workgroups and ranked. A handout was provided that ranked the studies.

Jay Davis indicated that it was the goal of the five-year plan to prioritize the important questions to be answered and to address these questions through the P&SSs. Dr. Davis indicated that the mercury P&SSs were temporarily put on hold pending the development of a strategy for addressing mercury in the Bay.

Adam Olivieri began the discussion of P&SSs by saying that he thought it would be helpful if the summary tables included additional columns:

- How do the P&SSs relate to compliance or permit conditions?
  - Is this study related to an individual's permit requirements?
- Is the need for this information science-driven?
- Is this study policy driven? Will it help us in adaptive implementation?
- How is the study related to RMP management questions?

After a short discussion of the P&SSs, the SC approved the recommendation of the TRC and workgroups. More detailed scopes of work will be requested for the following studies: Guadalupe River watershed model development; watershed specific sediment loads; mercury/selenium effects on reproductive success of terns and stilts (EEPS study – this is being funded by EEPS); characterization of thyroid endocrine disruption (EEPS study); impacts of PAH-sediment on early life history of benthic fish (EEPS study – this is being funded by EEPS); remote observations of episodic sediment transport; comparison of contaminant patterns; perfluorinated compounds in seals; and alternative flame retardants in biota.

Methylmercury loading inventory for SF Bay, mercury isotope signatures as source indicators; and relative chemical availability of mercury from tributaries were put on hold pending development of the RMP mercury strategy.

#### **7. Action: Agenda for the Annual Meeting**

Jay Davis handed out the most recent version of the agenda for the annual meeting. The morning session will focus a third of the time on past successes (e.g., advances in wastewater treatment) and two thirds of the time will be a panel discussion. The SC discussed candidates for the panel such as Michelle Pla for BACWA and Geoff Brosseau

for BASMA. Kevin Buchan indicated that he would not be able to present at the meeting as he has a scheduling conflict. Others to include on the panel are Bruce Wolfe and Tom Mumley as well as a representative from the environmental community such as David Lewis of Save the Bay or Sejal Choksi.

Jay Davis indicated that he would like the lunchtime voting to include a discussion of ways to grade/score the Bay. This dot poster would be a follow-up to Jay's talk on how the Bay is doing. Jay Davis indicated that a letter grade frequently misses the nuances of what is actually happening in the Bay

Chuck Weir suggested voting that addresses personal choices and our own impact on the Bay. The graphic could include questions such as:

- Do you drive to work? (Copper from brake pads has been found to increase the toxicity to the Bay. PAHs are released to the atmosphere and deposited on the Bay where they can be toxic to benthic organisms and fish)
- Do you use antibacterial soap? (Antibacterial soap is no more effective at killing germs and frequently contains bactericides such as triclosan which are exceeding toxic to organisms and builds resistant communities. Triclosan has been shown in laboratories to degrade to dioxin under sunlight.)
- Do you dispose of pharmaceuticals down the sink? (Wastewater treatment plants are not designed to treat pharmaceuticals. While many are nonetheless removed during treatment, some are not. A safer alternative is to return these medicines to your local pharmacy)
- Do you recycle your batteries?
- Do you drink bottled water? Etc...

## **8. Pulse**

Jay indicated that the Pulse was progressing well and that he was looking for comments on the most recent version.

## **9. Program Update**

Meg Sedlak indicated that most of the 2006 data were in and were being validated. The big milestones for this quarter would be the Pulse and the AMR. The meeting was adjourned at 3:05. Next Steering Committee meeting is set for October 23<sup>rd</sup>.