



Bay RMP Steering Committee Meeting

July 21, 2021

San Francisco Estuary Institute

Meeting Summary

Attendees

SC Member	Affiliation	Representing	Present
Eric Dunlavey	City of San Jose	POTW-Large	Y
Amanda Roa	Delta Diablo	POTW-Small	Y
Karin North**	City of Palo Alto	POTW-Medium	Y
Adam Olivieri	BAMSC / EOA, Inc.	Stormwater	Y
John Coleman	Bay Planning Coalition	Dredgers	N
<i>Julie Beagle</i>	<i>US Army Corps of Engineers</i>	<i>USACE</i>	Y
Tom Mumley*	SF Bay Regional WQCB	Water Board	Y
Maureen Dunn	Chevron	Refineries	Y

* Chair, ** Vice Chair, alternates in gray and italicized

Staff and Others:

- Melissa Foley, SFEI
- Jay Davis, SFEI
- Miguel Mendez, SFEI
- Martin Trinh, SFEI
- Luisa Valiela, EPA
- Jen Hunt, SFEI
- Becky Sutton, SFEI

1. Introductions and Review Goals for the Meeting

After a quick round of introductions, Tom Mumley briefly reviewed the meeting's agenda. Melissa Foley also introduced incoming Environmental Analyst Martin Trinh of SFEI to the group.

2. Decision: Approve Meeting Summary from April 28, 2021, and Confirm Dates for Future Meetings

Tom Mumley asked the group for any final comments on the previous meeting's summary. Receiving no comments, he continued to confirm the dates for upcoming meetings. The dates of the 2021 and 2022 Annual Meeting were confirmed as well as the next SC and Technical Review Committee (TRC) meeting dates. No members voiced any conflicts with upcoming meeting dates and all confirmed they received calendar invites for the upcoming Multi-Year Planning Workshop and RMP Annual Meeting.

Action Item:

- Send out 2022 AM calendar events to RMP committee members (Martin Trinh, August 20, 2021).
- Confirm digital hosting platform for 2021 Annual Meeting (Melissa Foley, September 1, 2021)

Decision:

- Adam Olivieri motioned to approve the meeting summary. Karin North seconded the motion. The motion was carried by all present members.

3. Information: TRC Meeting Summary

Melissa Foley provided the SC with a summary of the previous month's TRC meeting, including the S&T Review, Annual Meeting and other communications items as well as recommendations for 2022 funding for special studies and SEP funding proposals. Many of these items were also on the agenda for the SC Meeting so a brief overview of each was given.

Luisa Valiela requested an update on the vessels available to support RMP sampling needs. Melissa Foley provided an update on the current status of different vessels operating in the Bay, overall highlighting a positive future outlook for availability and use of vessels for RMP studies. She discussed a new multi-year contract with the USGS R/V Peterson including its increased use to provide more opportunities for RMP studies. There are currently discussions of a multiyear contract with the USGS California Water Science Center to articulate science plans that will help the RMP take advantage of possible piggyback sampling on nutrient cruises of the full Bay and South Bay biweekly. Melissa also mentioned the use of MARE's vessel TomCat for selenium monitoring and for the water cruise in September. Melissa also noted the continued efforts to return the SFSU R/V Questuary to service, particularly partnering with CalMaritime for vessel maintenance.

Luisa gave an update regarding potential EPA funding via the San Francisco Bay Restoration Act. If funding is appropriated, a subgroup will need to be formed. This item was discussed further in the Multi-year Planning Workshop agenda item.

Action Item:

- Gauge interest in EPA funding subgroup (Melissa Foley, October 1, 2021)

4. Information: RMP Financial Update for 2021 Quarter 2

Jen Hunt provided the regular financial update for Q2 of 2021 to the Committee. Most funds have been allocated, although there is a \$74k discrepancy in the SEP project funding, which Melissa noted was correct in the SEP part of the financial memo. All fees have been collected for the 2018 and 2019 financial years, with hopes to unencumber 2018 soon. Currently 75% and 19% of the budget has been expended for 2020 and 2021, respectively, with 96% of 2020 fees already collected and 67% of 2021 fees collected. Jen noted an \$18k deficit for 2020 which will be covered by the \$185k balance from Tasks 1-5. Jen then reviewed the various set-aside funds. The undesignated reserves have a balance of \$937k with \$400k as the reserve threshold. The S&T reserve has a balance of \$896k, which has not changed since last quarter. There is a balance of \$74k in MMP funds that have yet to be allocated. There were no decision items this quarter. There were no questions or comments from Committee members.

5. Discussion: RMP Fees for 2023-2025

As an introduction to the item, Melissa reminded the SC that there had been a temporary hold in fee increases for the 2022 calendar year due to the economic circumstances caused by the pandemic. After a brief history of RMP fees and increases, during which it was explained that fees were typically calculated for three-year blocks and were raised 1-5%, Melissa recapped the discussion from a subgroup meeting where representatives from all discharger groups agreed to a 3% increase each year for the 2023-2025 time period. Melissa further noted that past budget increases have not kept up with inflation.

Tom added that contributions from dredgers will not cover the current shortfall, with Adam opening the floor to explore options of how to correct the current budgeting and accounting process. Luisa interjected with a note of caution about reducing the percent contribution of a sector, and to notify the group of a potential increase in program funds to be discussed in a later item. Melissa reminded the group of the \$200k gap in 2021 from small and medium dredgers (excluding the USACE). In discussions with a subgroup to identify how to proceed with dredging fees, they suggested Melissa calculate the difference between year by year fees versus a rolling average over a 5-year time frame. Small dredgers would continue to pay per year based on in-Bay disposal volume. Luisa mentioned that there have been hints of unease by dredgers to continue paying into the RMP. Melissa underscored that most complaints are from small/medium dredgers who have concerns over the fees, as they feel their decrease in in-Bay disposal should correlate with a decrease in fees. Eric Dunlavey suggested that RMP staff work with the Water Board to develop projections for dischargers to understand the cost of them doing permit monitoring on their own or through the RMP. Amanda Roa noted having a small line item or paragraph in the cover letter for the RMP fees invoice would be beneficial.

Stormwater and wastewater entities have largely accepted the 3% increase - the vote to confirm will be held in October.

Decision:

- Tom Mumley motioned to hold the vote to confirm the 3% increase in the October SC meeting, Karin seconded the motion. The motion was carried by all present members.

Action Items:

- Present budget and dredging figures to BPC for 2023-2025 years (Melissa Foley, August 2, 2021)
- Develop estimates of monitoring costs alone and through RMP (Melissa Foley and Water Board staff, October 15, 2021)

6. Information: Progress Report on S&T Review

Melissa Foley updated the group on S&T Review progress, giving a brief review of the water design. The TRC wanted to keep the core number of stations (6 historical and ambient stations), sampling 22 sites as usual, while reducing the number of legacy contaminant analytes, and adding bisphenols, organophosphate esters, PFAS (special study), tire contaminants in Lower South Bay in the dry season (special study), and quaternary ammonium compounds (QACs; pro bono study with Dr. Bill Arnold at the University of Minnesota). Tom Mumley wanted to specifically define what is considered the “wet season” for CEC monitoring, which Melissa defined as up to two weeks following a rain event, with timing based on the USGS cruise schedule. Tom pointed out that sampling in the North Bay near the Napa River was not a priority. Melissa noted that the wet season design is a pilot with three years being used to confirm the value of the design. However, the dry season monitoring may highlight the contaminants of most concern, indicating that contaminants persist in the Bay throughout the year.

After going through the water design, Melissa noted a change in approach for the sediment review to make the process more efficient. Meetings with the Council of Wisdom were held prior to the expert meeting in order to hone in on a draft design that captured the stakeholders needs. Melissa summarized a recent sediment expert meeting to discuss the preliminary sampling design, in which the advisors generally approved of the draft design. Further, she noted feedback from advisors, including suggesting continued inclusion of benthic surveys, sufficiently monitoring trends, the long duration between samples, screening of new CECs, and linkages across both matrices and sites. Revised frequency of sampling could halve the sediment S&T budget from \$1.9 million to \$945k.

For biota, seven different areas are being discussed by the Council of Wisdom. Sport fish studies are likely to remain unchanged, while bivalve monitoring in its previous form will likely be discontinued, instead piggybacking on other collections happening at the edge of the Bay for the Nutrient Management Strategy. As for bird eggs, Jay recommended a focus on cormorants and

dropping terns as tern colonies are more nomadic while cormorants have more site fidelity in their nesting and terns are only nesting in Lower South Bay, among other reasons.

Tom noted that he initially anticipated the possibility of the revised S&T design reducing funds for Special Studies, but the current revisions suggest that the overall S&T cost will be within range of the current budget. Cutbacks in contaminants across matrices are recommended because focus is being directed to high value topics and CECs. Substantial cost savings have been realized, but there could be a need for more special studies for sediment, particularly if there is a need to do benthic monitoring.

7. Decision: Approve Special Studies for 2022 and List of Eligible RMP Studies for SEP Funding

Melissa reviewed recommendations from the TRC, who proposed to fund 13 out of 20 special studies totalling \$1,100,000 in funds, all of which has been allocated except for \$500. Highlights included the increased interconnectedness of these proposed studies and the distribution of special study funds among the workgroups that is similar to past years. Most studies are monitoring-related, however, modeling work has been increasing in recent years. Melissa followed with an overview of the workgroup strategies that were also included for funding. Tom addressed the cost of managing all of these workgroups, in particular the amount of meetings needed to sustain each group, especially with STLS. In response, Melissa reviewed the necessary time for cross-workgroup coordination and meetings, with Jay adding that Dr. Kelly Moran had been doing pro bono work to help with this coordination, so additional future funding was needed.

Melissa then launched into the proposals for the special studies. Timeliness is a critical factor for many of these studies. The TRC recommended spreading funding for the ethoxylated surfactants study over two years but Tom asked if this will impact the timeliness of the study. Tom further objected to the “non time-sensitive” classification of the Stormwater Monitoring Strategy given the stormwater CECs in its fourth and final year and guidance will be needed to continue that work. For the sediment delivery to North Bay marshes, the TRC decided to fund the proposal but spread it over two years. Julie Beagle inquired about site considerations for this study with Melissa saying the sediment workplan and priorities for the Wetland Regional Monitoring Program will help determine priority sites. As for the temporal variability in the sediment delivery study, a proposal was made to sample nine out of 12 months in order to reduce costs. Tom expressed some concerns about this decision as obviously a full year is preferable technically. However, nine months is better than none. The second year of the Whale’s Tail sediment study was also suggested for funding.

The Water Board placed a high priority on moving forward with additional PCB studies and suggested that the PCB/Steinberger Slough Study be funded. Because it is a two year study, Tom suggested that this study be funded with RMP funds, while another study be covered with the MMP funds. Melissa identified the Whale’s Tail study as a good candidate since the first year

was funded by a SEP. Tom stated that the Water Board wants to prioritize PCBs. Luisa agreed that the EPA is also interested in PCBs, although not necessarily having to establish a revised TMDL but adding any information possible. If funded with MMP funds, money would be immediately available. However, Jay suggested that they would not be ready to sample until next summer given the need to develop a plan and acquire the necessary permits, so immediate funding was not required.

Tom stated that the Water Board does not want to fund the DMMO updates with RMP funding because of the lack of a nexus with management priorities and the cost of having SFEI staff do data entry. Becky commented on the technical difficulty and importance of this task. Luisa noted there are other parties interested in the utility of the DMMO database with the EPA seeing it as a priority and Julie added that the USACE is looking at the availability of other funding to support the DMMO.

The group also briefly reviewed the studies to be added to the SEP list. Eight studies were proposed to be added to the list. These, along with the five special studies that were not funded will be added to the SEP list. Tom reminded Melissa that some reorganization of the list may be necessary so others at the Water Board are able to look at the list and determine priorities for funding.

Action Items:

- Organize unfunded and new studies (Melissa Foley, October 20, 2021)

Decision:

- Eric Dunlavey motioned to approve the TRC special study recommendations with Tom's recommendation of adding the Steinberger Slough PCB study to the special study list and moving a similar study to the SEP/MMP list. Adam seconded the motion. The motion was carried by all present members.

8. Discussion: Multi-Year Planning Workshop Agenda

The goal of this discussion was to identify agenda items for the 2021 MYP meeting. Melissa suggested prioritizing a discussion of the draft MYPs for each workgroup, with some emphasis placed on workgroup structure and the potential for a substantial revision in the future. Eric liked the proposed agenda and agreed with focusing on integration (internal and external). The external focus for some workgroups could also help identify possible external funding sources in addition to the potential funding from the EPA. Julie Beagle reemphasized the desire for a diagram of programs within the Bay and how they are connected, a road map of sorts showing how internal and external matters relate, with Tom agreeing this would be helpful.

Luisa further expanded on the aforementioned San Francisco Bay Restoration Act, which is about to be authorized. There are several ranges of potential funding, from \$25M- \$50M, which requires the designation of program areas for funding to be sent (emphasis to wetlands and

water quality, nutrients a priority). A discussion ensued on where funds would best be allocated. Adam brought forth the issue of how the money should be received, and wondered if the SC is the right group to decide that. Thoughts included bringing Warner Chabot (SFEI ED) into the discussion. Tom added that funding should be sustainable.

Jay noted that the group should think about the planning process for this coming year, especially if there is more investment in working groups, strategy, and coordination. Using the list of SEP studies to prioritize potential EPA funding may not be the best option as they already have a chance of getting funded and generally are not as carefully considered as regular special studies; figuring out how to best use additional funds will require more processes and thought. Tom recommended forming a small group to help figure this out with Adam, Karin, and Eric expressing interest in participating in this process. This group could also help to flesh out the MYP Workshop agenda in further detail.

Action Items:

- Provide an update on website changes at October meeting (Melissa Foley, October 20, 2021)
- Produce draft of MYP plan (Melissa Foley, October 6, 2021)
- Create short lists of research interests for EPA funding (SC Subgroup, October 15, 2021)
- Ask TRC about MYP planning process (Melissa Foley, September 22, 2021)

9. Information: Wetland Mercury Monitoring Project Update

Jay provided an update on the planning process for the Wetland Mercury Monitoring Project, which is currently funded through restoration project permit requirements. Jay clarified this project does not belong to either the Bay or Wetland RMPs but borders both programs. The Water Board wants to keep this as a Water Board project to minimize governance costs, although it may fall under the Wetland RMP once the Wetland RMP is more established. Tom emphasized that the Water Board would like the project to focus on fish monitoring. At the moment, there is a contribution of \$30k per project for four projects, with a focus in the North Bay; funding may also come from the Eden Landing restoration, but the timing of that is not clear; so planning has focused on using a total of \$120k that is currently in the bank. Mercury TMDLs are also an issue of interest. The preliminary design was discussed with a current preliminary draft plan of sampling eight stations (six fixed stations, two non-fixed stations) three times over a 10-year period. Jay emphasized the importance of reference marshes for indicating the impact of restoration against a background of general regional trends. Melissa inquired about a potential nexus with the USACE, with Julie and Tom noting an overlap in projects but a need to build knowledge through current efforts. Luisa asked if there was coordination, particularly on the metrics being monitored, between this project and work by the South Bay Salt Ponds Restoration Project. There is no direct coordination at the moment. Tom concluded the item by asking how the Water Board can create revenue for wetland studies.

10. Discussion: Communications

Jay Davis started this item by discussing the agenda for the Annual Meeting. A smaller group volunteered to provide input but Jay has not received much yet. He can be reached by email regarding this matter. Jay would like a total of 12 talks for the meeting, in a format of four subject blocks of three talks each. Jay further expanded on the merits of each presentation, noting that all suggested talks will be ready in time. One talk of interest was the Sediment for Survival talk, as Tom noted that this is a candidate for the State of the Estuary conference (Oct. 1), with Jay adding that the RMP did help fund this project. Jay suggested adding another dredging talk, totaling three presentations on sediment during the first block of the conference. Earlier discussions about addressing dredger concerns could be handled by including a discussion on the value of the RMP. Echoing Julie's earlier comments, Maureen stated it would be nice to have a short 5-10 minute presentation on how the RMP ties into other programs.

Luisa noted she would like to see some talks on PFAS, however, Tom expressed caution for work that has not been peer-reviewed, particularly for PFAS. Julie suggested the BACWA-funded nutrient project if there was a need for a climate change-focused discussion but Tom noted that presentation is not ready. Tom inquired about looping in the Delta RMP but other members stated they did not want to push any associations with the DRMP. Jay suggested including a talk about sediment flux in the dredging section with others sharing support for this idea. Melissa suggested focusing only on the Golden Gate study and splitting one 20 minute talk into two parts, monitoring and then modeling. Luisa inquired about findings from the Suisun Marsh that could be connected to other agencies; sport fish monitoring could be a way of doing so. Tom suggested having someone give an overview on other programs and findings, a short presentation could suffice but the idea of an interactive panel resonated with the group. This could include a space for participants to contribute questions or add to the discussion. The group pivoted discussion to who could host such a space. Potential candidates include Christina Toms or Sammy Harper with Tom reaching out to individuals at the Water Board. Tom would like for someone from every group to have the opportunity to speak up. Jay wrapped up this item by confirming he will send out top 10 topics for the RMP Update. Estuary News will be focused on nutrients for the September issue.

Action Items:

- Finalize Annual Meeting agenda (Jay Davis, August 18, 2021)
- Send out top 10 topic list for RMP Update (Jay Davis, August 20, 2021)

11. Discussion: Status of RMP Deliverables and Action Items

Melissa briefly reviewed past deliverables and action items. Red projects on the deliverables list currently consist of the sediment bioaccumulation study on PCBs as well as the Floating Percentile Methodology project. Both tasks are currently in the works. The triclosan in small fish report has been sent to the group for comments. Ezra Miller of SFEI recently sent out the North Bay Fire NTA article and memo for comments as well. Tom expressed he would like to minimize

any further delay of the PMU fish tissue report because it was funded with SEP funds that have a defined due date. Tom will follow up with Jay and Melissa for this item.

Action Item:

- Confirm SEP study due date with Tom Mumley and Jay Davis (Melissa Foley, August 16, 2021)

12. Discussion: Plan Agenda Items for Future Meetings

Due to time restrictions, the group did not discuss this agenda item. The group mentioned the timing of the October SC meeting, closely following the Annual Meeting.

13. Discussion: Plus/Delta

The group unanimously agreed that the meeting was highly productive, especially keeping the approval of Special Studies and SEP's in mind. The group noted that they are eager to get back to in-person meetings, with the possibility of a hybrid January SC meeting being discussed. However, the intermediate Annual Meeting, SC, and TRC meetings will all likely be virtual.

14. Adjourn