



Bay RMP Technical Review Committee Meeting
June 23, 2021 - San Francisco Estuary Institute

Meeting Summary

Attendees (all participants remotely attending)

TRC Member	Affiliation	Representing	Present
Yuyun Shang	EBMUD	POTW	Yes
Mary Lou Esparza	Central Contra Costa Sanitary District	POTW	No
Tom Hall	EOA, Inc.	POTW	Yes
Ross Duggan	City and County of SF	CCSF	Yes
Anne Hansen Balis	City of San Jose	POTW	Yes
Bridgette DeShields*	Integral Consulting	Refineries	Yes
Chris Sommers	BASMAA (EOA, Inc.)	Stormwater	Yes
Shannon Alford	Port of San Francisco	Dredgers	No
Richard Looker	SF Bay Regional WQCB	Water Board	Yes
Luisa Valiela	US EPA	US EPA-IX	Yes
Ian Wren	Baykeeper	NGOs	Yes
Tessa Beach	US Army Corps of Engineers	USACE	No

*Chair; alternates in gray and italicized

Staff and Others

- Don Yee - SFEI
- Jay Davis - SFEI
- Melissa Foley - SFEI
- Miguel Mendez - SFEI
- Rebecca Sutton - SFEI
- Tan Zi - SFEI
- John Coleman - Bay Planning Coalition, RMP SC Member
- Jim Haussener - CMANC
- Simret Yigzaw - City of San Jose

1. Introductions and Review Agenda

Melissa Foley opened the meeting with a round of introductions and a brief review of the day's agenda.

2. Approve Meeting Summary from March 12, 2021, Confirm/set Dates for Future Meetings

Bridgette DeShields asked the group for any final comments on the previous meeting's summary. Receiving no comments, she continued to confirm the dates for upcoming meetings. Luisa Valiela inquired about the status of transitioning to in-person meetings, especially for the MYP meeting in October. Melissa noted continued efforts to develop protocols for internal and external staff at SFEI with a current plan to return to the office in September and potential of holding in-person meetings as soon as October. Melissa also mentioned that the Annual Meeting (October 14th) will be held virtually, though next year's meeting (October 13th, 2022) will be held in-person (with a potential virtual component).

Decision: Meeting summary approved.

3. Information: SC Meeting Summary from April 28, 2021

Melissa Foley reviewed the April SC meeting, noting future subgroup meetings or correspondence regarding yearly program fees and the Annual Meeting agenda. She also discussed the meeting of another subgroup on tire debris priorities in the RMP, which led to recommendations to focus on contaminants in tires and their presence in the Bay. Melissa spotlighted closing of the 2021 budget deficit through a recently finalized SEP order as well as savings from holding a virtual Annual Meeting and changing from publishing a Pulse to a RMP Update. Further, she gave an update on the RMP website renovation, particularly focused on accessibility and creation of a webpage for dischargers/fee payers to see status of payments to the RMP.

4. Discussion: S&T Review Update

Melissa began by discussing the status of sediment matrix work, detailing the overall sampling framework using targeted, margin, and Bay sites, as well as a focus on the Lower South Bay, where all three sites would be sampled on a 3-5 year interval compared to the 10-year interval for the rest of the Bay. She also noted the CECs likely to be added to the design, including bisphenols, PFAS, and PBDEs in the open Bay only. Melissa highlighted the 50% cost savings of the redesign (through reduced sampling frequency) compared to the current design. She spotlighted a recent sediment expert meeting about 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.

Melissa reviewed the timeline to begin with biota subgroup meetings in early July and an expert meeting in late August. With this timeline, the RMP hopes to hold a synthesis meeting in September in order to have something substantial to share at the October Multi-Year Planning Meeting and allow enough time before the December TRC meeting to generate and present a full design.

5. Information: Vessels in San Francisco Bay Update

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. 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.

6. Discussion: Presentation of Special Studies Proposals Recommended by Workgroups

Melissa Foley introduced the item by giving a quick overview of the budget, and then discussing the extensive coordination happening across workgroups. She continued with a review of the number and type of special studies that were up for consideration, noting that the time during this agenda item should be used to ask technical questions of the proposal authors present at the meeting. Melissa then briefly outlined each of the 21 proposals by workgroup, highlighting how each related to other RMP efforts - both proposed or already completed - as well as time sensitivity. Additionally, Melissa pointed out external funding contributions and any scalable study components. She also discussed funding of workgroup strategies, including suggested increases for ECWG and STLS.

After reviewing all the proposals for a workgroup, the TRC members discussed the technical details of the presented studies. Richard Looker noted the Water Board's concerns regarding planning for a long-term study for tire contaminants without establishing the existence of a problem in the Bay and its scope within the RMP. Rebecca Sutton remarked that the RMP is one avenue to fill studies and data gaps in a multi-year workplan, highlighting continued efforts to obtain outside funding opportunities and the rapid development of work in this area. Chris Sommers mentioned the need for continued discussion on the scope of strategies and whether they should focus exclusively on the RMP or include data gaps and needs outside of this scope. Ian Wren inquired about potential actions driving urgency of the PCB study in Steinberger Slough with Jay Davis noting past, present, and future clean-up efforts benefitting from this work. Chris Sommers mentioned some of the ongoing clean-up efforts that would benefit from characterization of baseline conditions in advance.

7. Decision: Recommendation for Special Studies for 2022

The process of study prioritization by TRC members was similar to last year, and played out in a smooth and successful manner. This included assignment of AMR funds to CECs monitoring studies, funding of the top two proposals from each workgroup (or the top proposal if there were only two proposed by a workgroup), consideration of opportunities to spread studies across multiple years, and prioritization of unfunded studies for other RMP funding. In particular, the sediment study on temporal variability in North and Central Bay salt marsh was modified to a smaller study with reporting shifted to a second year of study. Similarly, the ethoxylated surfactants study was spread over two years with a split on method development and analysis of sediment from wastewater sampling. In addition, the study on upload of data into the DMMO database was only funded at half the recommended level.

In the process of attributing funds, Committee members noted affiliation-specific reasoning for supporting various studies. Chris Sommers noted interest in CECs stormwater load modeling exploration to understand how to use obtained stormwater data. Richard Looker expressed support for the CEC remote sampler development to support data gathering for stormwater studies. Several members noted the importance of the proposal on the moored sensor network to inform management actions, spotlighting it as the highest priority study.

When all the funds were allocated, Melissa noted the availability of other funding streams, specifically SEP and MMP funds, that could be used for high priority and time-sensitive studies. The group deemed the CEC remote sampler and PCB prey fish studies as high priority for other funding.

8. Decision: Update List of RMP Projects Eligible for Supplemental Environmental Project Funding and Recommend Allocation of Existing SEP Funds

Building on discussions from the last item, the goal for this agenda item was to update studies on the current SEP list, approve the addition of new studies, and flag any potential studies for MMP funding. Melissa noted the consideration of seven new SEP studies developed by the workgroups in addition to the unfunded studies added automatically to the SEP list. The additional studies span the EC and nutrients workgroups with several building on previous work and others funding novel efforts.

The discussion focused on potential projects that had an importance or urgency that warranted other, more immediate funding. As mentioned in the previous item's discussion, the CEC remote sampler study was the highest priority for MMP funds. In addition, the Baseline Survey of PCBs in Steinberger Slough study was named as a second priority, though it is important to note it is a two-year study. Chris Sommers did inquire about work in Richmond Harbor with several other PMUs as a part of SEP list and integration of regulatory meetings (i.e., discussion at a recent Water Board meeting) regarding PCBs and related TMDL reevaluation. Jay Davis remarked that

the proposed work in Steinberger Slough is a higher priority for the PCB Workgroup than inclusion of another conceptual model, especially with management actions planned in currently studied PMUs. The Richmond Harbor study would move to a special study if it is needed for TMDL development.

Considering SEP and MMP funding mechanisms as a whole, Ian Wren asked about the criteria needed to receive funds, specifically if studies on method development and standards qualify for funding. Melissa noted this falls under the purview of the MMP funds, though she will check to make sure this is true for SEP funds.

Action Items:

- Update SEP list with unfunded special studies projects and TRC approved new SEP proposals (Melissa Foley, July 31, 2021)
- Check if development of methods and standards qualify for SEP funds (Melissa Foley, 31 July 2021)

9. Discussion: Communications Update

Jay Davis began by asking the group to brainstorm ideas for several communication items, including the Annual Meeting agenda, 2021 RMP Update, and Estuary News articles. Jay reminded the TRC of the delay of the Pulse until 2022, but the Program should begin to think and plan the articles now.

Jay then reviewed the objectives of the Annual Meeting, with particular consideration this year for gaps left by a scaled-back State of the Estuary Conference. He presented the current ideas for presentations, with the group in agreement on the identified top candidates. Luisa Valiela mentioned a need for a variety of presentations to cater to a diverse set of groups due to the growing RMP audience. Jay also mentioned the advanced data analysis project as another presentation idea, which several members supported. Other possibilities elevated include cutting edge topics such as machine learning projects using drones and trash as well as use of drones by other programs.

Further, Jay shared the current ideas for the RMP Update 2021 with the featured project on sport fish monitoring. Generally, the group supported the current ideas outlined. Yuyun Shang noted the need to highlight the 2021 National Environmental Achievement Award from the National Association of Clean Water Agencies to the RMP for its collaborative approach to protect water quality in the Bay Area.

Jay shared potential topics for Estuary News articles with support for spotlighting nutrients work. Melissa also noted the potential for Estuary News to highlight a partnership between NOAA and SFSU/EOS (Karina Nielsen) on coastal acidification monitoring when NOAA is sampling in the Bay in early July.

10. Information: Status of Deliverables and Action Items

Melissa went over deliverables and action items with the TRC members. She noted that the deliverables report included a few overdue items, though they were nearly complete. Melissa noted deliverables in progress and those that have been delayed. She also highlighted a pending action item on cyanide and chlorophyll follow-up and recently completed items.

11. Discussion: Plan Agenda Items for Future Meetings

Melissa and Jay noted important items for the September meeting including preparation for the RMP Annual Meeting, S&T redesign update, and future RMP priorities. Richard Looker also mentioned discussion on lessons learned on coordination and collaboration across workgroups. Jay Davis also noted brainstorming on potential funding for Bay monitoring through the EPA, which Luisa Valiela remarked appears to be moving forward.

12. Discussion: Plus/Delta

Overall, the group was commended for their sustained effort and focus throughout the day, noting that they accomplished a lot and could look forward to shorter meetings going forward.

Adjourn