



## Bay RMP Technical Review Committee Meeting

June 15, 2022

### 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	Yes
Tom Hall	EOA, Inc.	POTW	Yes
Heather Peterson	City and County of SF	CCSF	Yes
Anne Hansen Balis	City of San Jose	POTW	No
Bridgette DeShields*	Integral Consulting	Refineries	Yes
Chris Sommers	BAMSC (EOA, Inc.)	Stormwater	No
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
<i>Simret Yigzaw</i>	City of San Jose	POTW	Yes
<i>Bonnie de Berry</i>	BAMSC (EOA, Inc.)	Stormwater	Yes

\*Chair; alternates in gray and italicized

#### Staff and Others

- Don Yee - SFEI
- Jay Davis - SFEI
- Melissa Foley - SFEI
- Martin Trinh - SFEI
- Rebecca Sutton - SFEI
- Diana Lin - SFEI
- Kelly Moran - SFEI
- Scott Dusterhoff - SFEI
- Alicia Gilbreath - SFEI
- John Coleman - Bay Planning Coalition, RMP SC Member
- Paul Salop - AMS

## 1. Introductions and Review Agenda

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

## 2. Decision: Approve Meeting Summary from March 23, 2022, and Confirm/set Dates for Future Meetings

Bridgette DeShields asked the group for any final comments on the previous meeting's summary. SFEI corrected a comment that was misattributed to Heather Peterson to Bridgette DeShields. Receiving no other comments, Bridgette confirmed the dates for upcoming meetings. The TRC is confirmed to meet next on September 21, 2022, and December 8, 2022. Luisa Valiela noted the Restore America's Estuaries 2022 Coastal and Estuarine Summit would be meeting in person in New Orleans from December 4-8 so she is tentative for the December TRC meeting. The upcoming Multi-Year Planning (MYP) workshop on October 26, 2022, conflicts with the CASQA stormwater conference. Melissa will inquire with the Steering Committee (SC) if the MYP workshop can be moved to the following Wednesday, November 2nd. The RMP had tentatively scheduled the upcoming Annual Meeting for October 5, 2022, but realized that it conflicts with Yom Kippur. The David Brower Center has availability on October 3 and 4. The TRC members had a preference for Monday, October 3rd, but confirmed they were available to attend on either day.

### **Action Items:**

- Send email to TRC and SC to assess availability for MYP workshop on November 2, 2022 (Melissa Foley, June 17, 2022)
- Send email to TRC and SC to assess availability for Annual Meeting on October 3, 2022 (Melissa Foley, June 17, 2022)
- Confirm new meeting date with the David Brower Center (Melissa Foley, June 24, 2022)

### **Decisions:**

- Bridgette DeShields motioned to approve the meeting summary. Heather Peterson seconded the motion. The motion was carried by all present members.

## 3. Information: SC Meeting Summary from April 27, 2022

Melissa Foley reviewed the April SC meeting, noting it had a similar agenda to the March TRC meeting covering topics such as WQIF funding, workgroup meetings, and Special Studies funding. The Regional Monitoring Program (RMP) and Nutrient Management Strategy (NMS) teams are working on a joint proposal to submit to the EPA Water Quality Improvement Fund. The focus of the discussion with the SC was around the use of RMP funds as match (required 1:1 matching funds). The RMP plans to allocate matching funds from already funded Special Studies or Status & Trends monitoring. This item will be further expanded on in a later agenda item.

Melissa gave an update on the timeline of the ongoing RMP website redesign. Feedback from the SC and TRC has been incorporated and a beta version will be uploaded and sent to the committees before the July SC meeting.

Other notable topics from the Steering Committee meeting included a Special Study and Workgroup review as well as communications updates on Annual Meeting and Pulse planning, all of which will be expanded on later in today's meeting.

## **4. Discussion: RMP Proposal for Water Quality Improvement Funds**

The EPA Water Quality Improvement Fund has \$24 million to allocate to projects in FY2023. Luisa clarified these funds are from the 2022 pot, but will be distributed in 2023. This is \$19M more than previous years, so the RMP and NMS will be submitting a proposal to supplement program funds. Ian Wren will take a lead role in developing the proposal as he is involved in both the RMP and NMS. The RMP has not submitted a full proposal before but has been tapped for matching funds. The preliminary joint proposal budget is a \$3.4 million ask over the course of four years, with a required 1:1 match (from non-federal funds). There is a required nexus to implementation of a project or management actions. Luisa anticipates the RFA will come out on June 30<sup>th</sup>.

This combined project will include monitoring in the watersheds and Bay that will be used to build models that will inform applications and management implementation. The RMP and NMS are developing a structure and workplan that supports this narrative. Luisa emphasized that the proposal must provide the background that sets the stage with the RMP and NMS as collaborative science partners in the area, particularly focusing on the ability of the project to provide useful and timely information for a range of management applications. Tom Hall was interested in the process of weighting and assigning the level of effort into the many different areas of interest, given the different aspects of the project. Melissa confirmed that the majority of the matching funds would support the "input data" while the EPA funds would support the water quality modeling toolbox. Tom emphasized the need to ensure there are enough resources committed to the application of the data and models; Luisa reminded the group that implementation-focused projects would score highest.

Ian recognized Tom's concern and reiterated the need to create a strong cohesive narrative. He noted that nature-based solutions have not been well funded in the past. He noted Tom's observations of matching funds for RMP monitoring projects and WQIF funds supporting modeling and application and inquired if there was any benefit to using matching funds to fund implementation projects.

Jay clarified with Luisa that there is no preference between obtaining many letters of support or one letter with many signatures. Typically, the Water Board provides separate letters of support for the RMP and NMS, which is not particularly diverse. Luisa emphasized that the primary object of the letter(s) is to reflect strong regional support for the project.

Melissa noted that without a request for applications, there is not a concrete timeline. The proposal team will send the proposal to the TRC and SC for feedback when the proposal is drafted.

## 5. Discussion: Presentation of Special Studies Proposals Recommended by Workgroups

Melissa Foley introduced the item by giving an 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 16 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.

After reviewing all the proposals for a workgroup, the TRC members discussed the technical details of the presented studies. Luisa inquired about the viability of some stormwater focused studies given a lack of rain, with Melissa answering that only the Tire and Roadway Contaminants study is rain dependent. Ian Wren also inquired about the time sensitivity of PFAS studies, with the marine mammal study informing Status & Trends by 2025 and PFAS in archived sport fish given the funding provided by the Water Board. Luisa was curious if a pilot project for marine mammals was needed given what we've learned from previous sampling efforts. Rebecca Sutton elaborated on some of the details that need to be worked out, including the volume and types of samples that can be obtained from harbor porpoises and seals. For the Microplastic Workgroup, Diana updated the proposal to emphasize that the RMP would only be supporting the first year of the study, with no expectation to fund additional years. Diana is seeking external funding and Patagonia and Ocean Protection Council (OPC) have expressed interest in the project.

For the Sediment Workgroup, Melissa noted that the Napa and Sonoma Rivers sediment flux study had been cut after the Sediment Workgroup determined that supporting one year of data collection was not worth the investment, but that other funds should be sought to collect multiple years of data. The other proposal change was for the sediment flux study that is now focused on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge as the Sediment Workgroup prioritized this area over the previously proposed Benicia Bridge. Luisa noted that this study is not time sensitive for the RMP but inquired about its status for USGS. Melissa commented that if staff and funding are still available, the USGS is likely to still be interested in a year's time.

The workgroup strategy budgets were included as integral components for funding.

## 6. Decision: Recommendation for Special Studies for 2023

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 CEC monitoring studies, funding of the top proposals from each workgroup, consideration of opportunities to

spread studies across multiple years, and prioritization of unfunded studies for other RMP funding.

In the process of attributing funds, Committee members noted affiliation-specific reasoning for supporting various studies. Richard Looker noted the Water Board's concerns regarding planning for a long-term study for microfibers without establishing the existence of a problem in the Bay and its scope within the RMP. Melissa noted that during previous Microplastic Workgroup meetings, direction had been given to Diana by workgroup advisers and stakeholders to expand the focus of the program to sources and pathways instead of monitoring. Other members were sympathetic to the Water Board's stance, expressing interest in the microplastics study from a scientific perspective and would like to see it eventually addressed but were reserved from a regulatory standpoint. Members inquired if the project could proceed at a limited capacity with funding from outside sources, but Diana emphasized that it would be difficult to adequately answer questions under a limited scope. Patagonia has already contributed funds and the OPC has identified microplastics as a high priority at the state level and could contribute funds if it can leverage matching funds from the RMP. Kelly Moran stated that work by Scott Coffin at the State Water Board suggests there is evidence that SF Bay exceeds published microplastic thresholds. These thresholds have not been adopted by the Water Board. Melissa asked the group if analyzing microplastics in sport fish was a higher priority for funding (study currently on the SEP list), but RMP members suggested the study stay on the SEP list.

Mary Lou Esparza inquired about the linkage between the non-targeted analysis for marine mammals and the sport fish study. Rebecca Sutton elaborated on the ability of NTA to identify potential target analytes for future marine mammal studies, recalling the NTA in water study that identified tire contaminants. Many PFAS chemicals are not covered by targeted analyses that usually select for past uses in AFFF, which excludes the chlorinated and brominated forms often found in PFAS involved in everyday usage. Marine mammals, being apex predators, would be a good species in which to study bioaccumulation.

All other studies were unanimously moved to core funding and approved by the TRC for Special Studies funding. 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 funds allocated to projects exceeded the available budget by ~\$100k. Given the possibility for additional funding sources, the TRC decided to not remove any studies from funding.

## 7. 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 reviewed recently funded SEP studies including the "PFAS and Chlorinated Paraffins in Sediment" and "Shoal Mapping of Nutrients and Chl-a." Two new studies were proposed for addition to the list by the PCB Workgroup. The microplastic study not slated for funding should also be considered for addition to the SEP list. Don Yee gave overviews of the two proposed SEP additions, "Measurements of Sediment Deposition in Priority Margin Unit Intertidal Areas" and "Measurement of Water and Sediment Exchange between San Leandro Bay and San Francisco Bay." Mary Lou Esparza supported adding the

microplastic dryer study proposal to the SEP list. Richard Looker noted the Program had moved beyond the need for the remote pilot testing project proposed in 2017 as the group recommended funding a remote sampling project in 2023. Bonnie added that early pilot testing was helpful in determining whether concentrations were high or low for PCBs and determining which samplers were appropriate for certain analytes. The project on the SEP list is slightly different from the one recommended for funding in 2023. The group supported adding the two PCB studies and Microplastic study to the SEP list. The group expressed interest in having the workgroup leads review the list prior to the TRC commenting on priority studies.

**Action Items:**

- Get input from workgroup leads on special studies included in SEP list and send revised version to the TRC for input on priorities (Melissa Foley, June 17, 2022)
- Update SEP list with unfunded special studies and approved new SEP proposals (Melissa Foley, July 31, 2022)

## 8. Discussion: Communications Update

Jay Davis began by asking the group to brainstorm ideas for several communication items, including the Annual Meeting agenda, 2022 RMP Pulse, and Estuary News articles.

Jay then reviewed the objectives of the Annual Meeting, presenting a draft list of speakers and presentations for consideration. Melissa confirmed the David Brower Center can accommodate remote speakers as well as a remote audience. The RMP is still attempting to invite Jackie Speier to participate in the meeting in whatever capacity she can. Luisa appreciated that multiple members of the EPA are being considered to speak about the Clean Water Act. Richard inquired about the prospect of having someone speak about PCBs in Priority Margin Units (PMUs), suggesting Miriam Diamond give a big picture overview based on a recently published paper.

Jay reviewed who had submitted their Pulse perspectives as well as the due dates for those still outstanding. He has received drafts from Jim McGrath and Alexis Strauss-Hacker of the Regional Board and everyone else has shared outlines (drafts to be sent in by June 30<sup>th</sup>). Richard suggested distributing summaries of the outlines to involved parties to avoid overlap between perspectives. The monitoring component of the Pulse will focus on summarizing progress to date on meeting management goals.

Jay highlighted the recent Estuary News article profiling a day in the life of an RMP scientist, Martin Trinh. A draft article was shared by Amy Mayer and will be published soon. The group decided to wait until December to feature a Clean Water Act themed supplement to the Pulse. Jay polled the group for ideas regarding the September edition, with Luisa and Yun suggesting an article on the ongoing drought conditions and how that affects the RMP monitoring designs.

## **9. Information: Status of Deliverables and Action Items**

Melissa reviewed the deliverables and action items with the TRC members. She noted that the deliverables report included a few overdue items, such as Tan Zi's sediment model calibration report, Diana Lin and Miguel Mendez's PCB sediment thresholds report, and the sediment erosion and deposition report, though they were nearly complete. Melissa noted deliverables in progress including the In-Bay Modeling Strategy, Floating Percentile Method for sediment thresholds, bird egg collection (2/3 sites complete) and PCBs in Steinberger Slough. Other projects that have been delayed include the 2021 Quality Assurance summary, Integrated Modeling and Monitoring Strategy, Margins report, and the Stormwater Conceptual Model Bay-centric write up. Jay noted that the RMP had reached an agreement with All Positives Possible to do a follow up to the fish survey. However, complications with the State Board held up contract negotiations, combined with a lack of funds, caused both parties to nix the proposed study. Instead, All Positives Possible is interested in submitting a WQIF proposal focused on filling in data gaps in pertinent fishing areas. Jay will be assisting them in this process.

## **10. Discussion: Plan Agenda Items for Future Meetings**

Melissa noted important items for the September meeting including preparation for the RMP Annual Meeting and future RMP priorities. Luisa suggested getting an update from SCCWRP, with Melissa noting she had just joined their long-term prioritization meeting recently and could request a presentation.

## **11. Discussion: Plus/Delta**

The TRC thanked Bridgette for leading the group through the special study prioritization. The group noted the meeting's efficiency as well. The group identified the SEP list as a potential area of improvement. Suggestions include changing the process to improve feedback which may require more offline input from queried members.

**Adjourn**