



Bay RMP Technical Review Committee Meeting

March 25, 2026

Meeting Summary

Attendees

TRC Member	Affiliation	Representing	Present
Jamie Rose Sibley Yin	US Army Corps of Engineers	USACE	Y
Alicia Chakrabarti	EBMUD	POTW	Y
Tom Hall	EOA, Inc.	POTW	Y
Samantha Engelage	City of Palo Alto	POTW	N
Heather Peterson	City and County of SF	CCSF	N
Simret Yigzaw	City of San Jose	City of SJ	Y
Bridgette DeShields*	Integral Consulting	Refineries	Y
Chris Sommers	BAMSC (EOA, Inc.)	Stormwater	Y
Shannon Alford	Port of San Francisco	Dredgers	N
Richard Looker	SF Bay Regional WQCB	Water Board	N
Dan Hossfeld	US EPA	US EPA-IX	N
Aundi Mavoli	Baykeeper	NGOs	N

* Chair, alternates in gray and italicized

Staff and Others

- Jay Davis – SFEI
- Amy Kleckner – SFEI
- Martin Trinh – SFEI
- Sierra Garcia – SFEI
- Alicia Gilbreath – SFEI
- Michelle Azurin – SFEI
- Adam Wong – SFEI
- Don Yee – SFEI
- Cristina Grosso – SFEI
- Rebecca Sutton – SFEI
- Tom Mumley – Retired
- *Gerardo Martinez – SFBRWQCB*
- Setenay Frucht – SFBRWQCB
- Blake Brown – Central San
- *Bryan Frueh – City of San Jose*
- Paul Salop – AMS

1. Introductions and Review Goals for the Meeting (00:00:00)

Attendees introduced themselves, representing various entities including the Water Board, SFEI, and dischargers.

2. Decision: Approve Meeting Summary from December 9, 2025 Review/Confirm/Set Dates for Future Meetings, Confirm TRC Chair (00:03:00)

The meeting began with the formal approval of the meeting summary from December 9, 2025. Bridgette DeShields called for comments or changes, and receiving none, the summary was approved by the group. The Committee then moved to coordinate future meeting dates for 2026. For the June meeting, Bridgette noted a conflict with the 17th, leading the group to evaluate dates in late June. Chris expressed a preference for the 22nd or 23rd; the group ultimately reached a consensus to hold the meeting on Tuesday, June 23rd. Regarding the September meeting, Tom Mumley identified a conflict between the proposed 23rd date and the "Restoring the Nation's Estuary Conference" in San Francisco. To avoid this overlap, the Committee selected September 16th. Finally, Amy Kleckner confirmed that the Annual Meeting is locked in for October 21st at the David Brower Center.

Martin Trinh shared that this would be his final TRC meeting after five years with the group. Jay Davis and the rest of the Committee expressed their gratitude for Martin's excellent contributions to the RMP and fish studies, noting that Michelle Azurin would be stepping into his notetaker role temporarily. The session concluded with the confirmation of the TRC Chair. Chris nominated Bridgette to continue her leadership; the motion passed without opposition.

Decisions

- **Approved:** The meeting summary from December 9, 2025, was approved without changes.
- **Meeting Date Set:** The June TRC meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, June 23rd**.
- **Meeting Date Set:** The September TRC meeting is scheduled for **September 16th**.
- **Chair Confirmed:** Bridgette was confirmed to continue as the TRC Chair.

Action Items

- **Calendar Invites:** Amy will send out calendar invites for the Annual Meeting on October 21st at the David Brower Center.
- **Scheduling:** Finalize and send invites for the newly agreed-upon June and September TRC dates.

3. Information: Steering Committee Meeting Summary from January 26, 2026 (00:10:17)

Amy provided an overview of the January 26, 2026, Steering Committee meeting, noting that the RMP Charter remains unchanged and the 2026 Multi-Year Plan has been officially approved and posted online. Financial updates for the fourth quarter of 2025 showed 99% of fees collected, with the Water Board assisting in recovering the final 1% of outstanding dredger fees. Looking ahead, the Committee discussed a two-year extension for the "Tracking Bay Health" grant and addressed an upcoming EPA policy change regarding Quality Management Plans, concluding that the RMP is already well-prepared with a designated Quality Assurance officer.

The update also highlighted staffing and project statuses, including the hiring of Jennifer Sun and Noah Rudko to the Emerging Contaminants team starting in April. While progress was made on many deliverables, the PFAS Synthesis and Strategy was identified as a high-priority delayed item, and a rejected NTA in Sediment manuscript will be reformatted as a technical report to fulfill enforcement order requirements. Communications efforts are showing growth in social media and webpage engagement, with the 2026 Annual Meeting theme confirmed as "Nutrients" and the Pulse report on track for an October release. There were no comments or questions from the group.

4. Information: RMP Planning Update (00:16:55)

The RMP planning update kicked off with the significant news that the final allotment for the Tracking Bay Health grant was received, bringing the overall five-year request to \$23.5 million. This funding comes with a no-cost extension through September 2031, providing the team more time to execute complex studies and scale up staffing. Amy noted that the immediate focus is the semi-annual progress report due at the end of April and the initiation of RFQs for numerical modeling, field support, and laboratory analysis. To avoid redundant paperwork, the update to the Quality Assurance Program Plan (QAPP) will be deferred until the fall of 2026, once the 2027 studies are finalized. The conversation also touched on the logistical challenge of tracking matching funds; since "Tracking Bay Health" funds cannot be used as a match for other EPA grants, the team must be meticulous in balancing core RMP funds with restricted federal dollars.

Staffing remains a critical priority over the next six months. While two new hires are joining the Emerging Contaminants team in April, Amy highlighted a list of 5–6 upcoming positions ranging from environmental analysts to senior scientists, which will help create redundancy for Don Yee and Alicia Gilbreath. Jay then summarized a \$3.2 million EPA proposal titled "Protecting Bay Fishers," which seeks to fund and expand a bioaccumulation monitoring plan originally developed under SWAMP. The proposal focuses on obtaining higher-resolution fish consumption data (targeting 1,300 surveys) and implementing risk communication strategies through partnerships with the Sequoia Foundation and the Department of Public Health.

The ensuing discussion focused on the frequency of fish monitoring. Tom and Chris both emphasized that while legacy contaminants like mercury and PCBs are declining very slowly,

PFAS is a "high concern" driver that may show more rapid trends and require more frequent sampling than the current five-year cycle. Jay noted that the proposed 2027 sampling would hit the "middle" of the RMP's traditional cycle, providing a critical data set to detect trends. The Committee discussed the effort to secure matching funds for this proposal, which included a request for \$40k/year in RMP strategy funds to cover Jay's time. While the Steering Committee supported the match, Tom noted that future meetings should include a more strategic discussion on how matching funds are leveraged across different SFEI and external projects.

5. Information/Discussion: Workgroup Planning Update (00:43:40)

Amy opened the session by outlining the heavy workgroup schedule for the spring. Several strategy teams and workgroups (Selenium, Mercury, and Sediment) have already met, with upcoming two-day sessions for the Emerging Contaminants (ECWG) and Sources, Pathways, and Loadings (SPL) workgroups. Becky presented a diverse array of high priority proposals for the ECWG, highlighting a shift toward multi-year planning. Key initiatives include a three-year stormwater CEC monitoring plan focused on PFAS in the first year, a study on "ultra-short" PFAS in Bay water, and a new effort to track flame retardants in bird eggs. Becky also detailed work on tire-derived contaminants (6PPD-quinone and HMMM) and a high-priority study for BACWA on Quaternary Ammonium Compounds (QACs), which have been causing treatment upsets in wastewater facilities. Diana Lin followed with the Microplastics update, proposing a three-year stormwater monitoring study. She also sought to reallocate a surplus from previous strategy funds to cover budget shortfalls in vessel contracts and manuscript writing for the tire rubber study. Tom advised that while the request was reasonable, she should follow protocol by seeking formal Steering Committee approval for the budget shift.

Scott Dusterhoff and Matt Heberger provided updates on Sediment and SPL, respectively. Scott introduced a plan to develop sequential conceptual models for bay sub-embayments, with South Bay as the next priority, as part of the "Schoellhamer Cycle". He also discussed an ambitious 10-year, \$7 million Bay Modeling Study Plan, suggesting that modeling coordination discussions might eventually need to move to a dedicated forum outside the Sediment workgroup. For SPL, Alicia and Matt highlighted the Watershed Dynamic Model (WDM) and the development of a fixed monitoring station network, with the first pilot site expected to be operational this fall. Jay concluded the workgroup reports by focusing on legacy contaminants. Mercury synthesis products are nearing a June deadline, while PCB efforts are pivoting toward a \$2 million "Tracking Bay Health" plan. This plan is still under development but tentatively includes further development of Priority Margin Unit (PMU) conceptual models and expanding the OPTICS study from San Leandro Bay to Steinberger Slough.

The section wrapped up with Jay introducing a new "Cross-Workgroup Coordination" tool—a tracking table designed to manage projects that overlap multiple workgroup topics. The tool categorizes workgroups as Primary (P), Secondary (S), or Secondary Plus (S+), with the latter denoting a mandatory technical review role. Chris and Tom discussed the functional logistics of this tool, specifically how to ensure "S+" advisors are invited to the correct meetings without

creating "meeting fatigue." Tom emphasized that this framework is essential for integrating Bay modeling and monitoring across the RMP. The group reached a consensus to use the table as a living document, adapting it as they learn which coordination methods (sharing reports vs. joint meetings) work best for different project types.

Action Items

- **Budget Protocol:** Diana will work with Amy to draft a formal request for the April Steering Committee meeting to reallocate the microplastics strategy surplus to underbudgeted contracts.
- **Meeting Invitations:** Jay and the workgroup leads will identify "S+" advisors for upcoming May meetings and ensure they receive invitations to relevant technical discussions.

6. Information/Discussion: 2025 Aquatic Toxicity Testing Results (01:56:47)

Ezra Miller presented the results from the 2025 water cruise aquatic toxicity testing, a check-in the RMP performs every six years. The testing utilized Mysid shrimp (*Americamysis bahia*) to evaluate 7-day survival and growth across nine stations. Ezra shared that no toxicity was observed at any station, with survival and growth rates mirroring the control groups. While the study was technically sound, it prompted a deeper discussion regarding the statistical methods and the long-term value of the program. Ezra asked the Committee to weigh in on whether to continue using the traditional "No Observed Effect Concentration" (NOEC) method or switch to the "Test of Significant Toxicity" (TST), which is now the standard for California effluent testing.

The Committee's discussion quickly pivoted from statistical nuances to whether ambient toxicity testing should be continued at all. Tom Hall questioned the value of spending resources on a test that hasn't yielded a "hit" in over 12 years, noting that 100% effluent rarely shows chronic toxicity anymore. Chris added that toxicity in the region is almost exclusively associated with urban pesticide use in creeks, which is already monitored and managed through other regulatory programs. The group reached a consensus that infrequent, ambient sampling is unlikely to capture episodic events and lacks a clear regulatory driver. Consequently, the TRC decided to recommend that the Steering Committee consider suspending the testing or, at minimum, aligning it with the 10-year California Toxics Rule (CTR) monitoring cycle to save costs and leverage concurrent data.

Decisions

- **TIE Sampling:** Agreed to immediately discontinue the collection of extra water volume for Toxicity Identification Evaluations (TIEs), as the logistical burden outweighs the minimal likelihood of needing a TIE.
- **Statistical Reporting:** If testing continues in any form, the RMP will have the labs report both NOEC and TST statistics, as the incremental effort for the lab is negligible.

- **Programmatic Recommendation:** The TRC recommends that the Steering Committee evaluate "suspending" or "deleting" ambient aquatic toxicity testing from the Status and Trends program, given the lack of observed toxicity over the last decade and the absence of a clear regulatory requirement.

Action Items

- **Steering Committee Briefing:** Jay and Amy will convey the TRC's recommendation to the Steering Committee, specifically highlighting the lack of regulatory necessity and the potential to reallocate these resources.
- **Alignment Check:** Jay and Amy will inquire with Water Board representatives if there are any specific management reasons or hidden regulatory drivers that would necessitate maintaining the current 6-year cycle before a final suspension is enacted.

7. Information/Discussion: 2026 S&T Monitoring Plans Update (02:27:40)

Amy provided an update on the 2026 Status and Trends (S&T) monitoring, with a focus on the North Bay Selenium study. The Selenium Strategy Team met on March 11 to review sampling results through 2023 and discuss future plans. A primary development for 2026 is a collaboration with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) beginning in April. RMP staff will join CDFW tagging cruises to collect sturgeon muscle plugs and egg/ovary tissue, a method that provides more samples for less money than previous private charters. Jay and Ezra discussed the potential to use these egg/ovary samples for both selenium and Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CECs), noting the need to coordinate on specific container types and tissue mass requirements. Amy confirmed that leftover tissue will be archived for future analysis, and that there will be additional opportunities to collect samples in 2027.

Logistically, the RMP will use the *Questuary* (Cal Poly Maritime) for water, clam, and sediment sampling, with field support from AMS. The USGS has been selected as the analytical partner for selenium in tissue samples because their methods require significantly less tissue mass than previous laboratories used. Amy also noted that she is currently reviewing a data release from the USGS that covers missing selenium data from 2011 to 2019, which will be included in a final report alongside new data by the end of 2027. On the stormwater front, Martin reported on a "mixed" season of precipitation. Despite long dry spells, the team successfully captured 18 of the targeted 22 CEC samples using small remote samplers. The "large remote" automated sampler pilot is technically ready but currently awaiting a significant storm to launch.

Action Items

- **CDFW Coordination:** Amy to contact Vanessa at CDFW immediately regarding the line-setting schedule for April.
- **Workgroup Agenda:** Amy to reach out to Becky about possibly adding the discussion of sturgeon ovary CEC analysis to the upcoming ECWG meeting agenda.

8. Discussion: AI use on RMP Products (02:47:10)

Amy presented an overview of the SFEI AI Framework and Governance, which distinguishes between established analytical AI and newer generative tools like Gemini, ChatGPT, and Claude. SFEI staff are currently approved to use Gemini within the secured Google Workspace environment, but use of personal accounts or non-Gemini tools requires specific IT permission. For projects funded by federal or state agencies, staff must confirm agency-specific AI permissions before use. The core standards of the policy dictate that humans must remain the lead intellectual contributors; AI is intended as a tool for efficiency rather than a replacement for human judgment. All AI outputs require human review, disclosure to partners, and a commitment to environmental responsibility.

Amy highlighted that current narrative meeting minutes require approximately 20 hours of labor to produce, leading to a discussion on whether such extensive documentation is necessary now that meetings are routinely recorded and transcribed. Committee members expressed that the existing "minutes" format is often excessive and favored transitioning to a more efficient, AI-assisted "true" summary format. This change is intended to focus on the core dialogue and logic leading to outcomes, utilizing AI to generate concise overviews while ensuring that staff remains the primary author of final decisions and action items. Sierra Garcia and Jay expressed caution, emphasizing that while AI can be a starting point, it often oversimplifies or misinterprets technical nuances, requiring a "triple check" by staff with institutional knowledge.

The group reviewed broader use cases such as drafting plain language summaries, report outlines, and code development. Matt confirmed that AI is already a valuable time-saver for writing code. Sierra highlighted a unique application: since the public may use AI to summarize long RMP reports, staff could use AI internally to see if their main points are being captured accurately; if the AI misses the mark, it indicates a need for clearer, plain-language writing in the original document. The session concluded with a brief mention of future discussions, including with the Steering Committee, regarding contractual requirements for subcontractors and AI usage.

Action Items

- **Steering Committee Briefing:** Amy will present the TRC's feedback on AI usage to the Steering Committee in a few weeks for further guidance.
- **Subcontractor Policy:** Table the discussion on subcontractor AI compliance and contractual language for the next SC meeting.
- **Summary Trial:** RMP staff will "play" with AI prompts to find a standardized summary length (e.g., one to two paragraphs per agenda item) and solicit feedback on the new format.

9. Discussion/Information: Informatics Update (03:22:20)

Adam Wong and Cristina Grosso provided the quarterly informatics update. Adam focused on the status of various RMP datasets in the upload pipeline. Per previous Committee guidance,

the team is prioritizing mercury and PCB data, specifically those required for the ongoing mercury synthesis, such as 2024 bird eggs and sport fish. Tom Hall noted that for NPDES permit purposes, the "POTW world" urgently needs access to the 2021 and 2023 water cruise data, as the 2019 dataset is currently the newest available for reasonable potential analyses. Adam confirmed that these specific water datasets are in the final review stages and are expected to be available on CD3 within a couple of weeks. To improve transparency, the Committee requested that the tracking spreadsheet be updated to include "Target Completion Dates" for public accessibility. Amy also stated that this agenda item is an opportunity for the group to request that specific data sets be prioritized, if not already.

Cristina presented preliminary prototypes for new, topic-based RMP Data Dashboards designed to make curated data more accessible than the raw outputs found in CD3. The initial focus is on mercury sediment trends, featuring interactive maps and plots that mirror RMP Pulse visualizations while allowing users to "drill down" into the underlying tabular and raw data. Jay explained that complex graphics, like the TMDL-specified length-adjusted striped bass trends, will include explanations of the data selection and regression methods used to reach the finalized figures. Tom Hall suggested a specific "canned report" use case for the dashboards: an interactive tool to query the three most recent California Toxics Rule (CTR) metals and cyanide datasets by station. Cristina and Adam agreed to mock up this simplified reporting tool to help stakeholders easily access these frequently used permit-related figures.

Action Items

- **Spreadsheet Update:** Adam Wong will add a "Target Completion/Publicly Available Date" column to the "Dataset Upload Priority" tracking spreadsheet.
- **CTR Use Case:** Cristina Grosso will develop a mock-up for a simplified dashboard tool focusing on the most recent three sets of CTR metals and cyanide data by station.
- **S&T Data:** Adam to prioritize the final review of the 2021 and 2023 water cruise data for public release on CD3 within the next two weeks.
- **Interactive Prototype:** SFEI staff to share a more interactive version of the dashboard at a future meeting for Committee "play-testing."

10. Discussion: Communications Update (03:48:45)

Jay and Sierra provided a comprehensive update on the RMP's communication efforts, starting with the 2026 Pulse. The report is currently on schedule, with a primary theme of Nutrients. Feature articles are being drafted by the Water Board, BACWA, and SFEI's NMS team, and the RMP has secured a Santa Cruz-based artist to provide specialized phytoplankton illustrations. The Committee brainstormed ways to leverage this art at the Annual Meeting, including using it for name tags or as a prize for survey participants to increase engagement. Jay and the group discussed ideas for the meeting's technical sessions, including a focus on Legacy Contaminants/TMDLs Revisited (highlighting mercury and PCBs), and CECs and Microplastics (including the PFAS synthesis and a new dryer study). Jay is currently coordinating with Dave Senn to identify a high-profile keynote speaker, possibly an expert in nutrient modeling.

Sierra highlighted significant progress in expanding the RMP's reach, noting that collaborations with Maven's Notebook have nearly doubled readership for the articles on stormwater. A major focus of 2026 is the implementation of Plain Language Summaries, which will be developed on a case by case basis for reports that may be of interest to non-technical audiences. These "low-lift" documents use a standardized template to highlight key takeaways and implications of RMP reports. The Committee discussed the necessity of reviewing these summaries; while they were previously generated after a report was finalized, the TRC decided the plain language summary text (Intro, Key Findings, and Implications) should be included within the body of draft reports to allow for simultaneous technical and plain-language review. Sierra requested feedback from the Committee on the plain language summaries, including on formatting or color, especially if Committee members plan to print physical copies. She also introduced the concept of "mini fact sheets" and ready-to-use slide decks based on existing Pulse content to help stakeholders communicate RMP findings to their own constituents.

The discussion moved toward stakeholder engagement strategies, with Sierra planning "coffee chats" (informal interviews) with less-engaged stakeholders to gather feedback. Chris suggested that Sierra should speak directly to individual city and county stormwater managers to understand their specific data needs. Sierra also announced that SFEI is bringing on a part-time social media freelancer in May to expand capacity.

Decisions

- **PLS Integration:** Plain Language Summaries will now be included in the body of draft reports (Intro, Findings, and Implications) for TRC review to ensure the wording is vetted alongside the technical content.

Action Items

- **Homework Alert:** TRC members should watch their inboxes on **May 11th** for the first round of *Pulse* article drafts for a three-week review.
- **Stakeholder Outreach (Homework):** TRC members to assist Sierra by sharing the survey with stakeholder networks and suggesting stakeholder professional groups/settings to connect with the "less engaged" group (email sierrag@sfei.org)
- **Stormwater Connections:** Chris Sommers will coordinate with Sierra to provide contacts for individual stormwater managers following the BAMSC Steering Committee meeting.
- **Resource Sharing:** Ezra to tag Sierra in existing CEC summary slides used for BACWA presentations to assist in creating new comms slide deck templates.
- **Review PLS Set:** Jay and Sierra to send the full set of existing Plain Language Summaries to the TRC for high-level feedback on wording, formatting, and templates.

11. Information: Status of Deliverables and Action Items (04:34:26)

Amy provided a comprehensive update on RMP deliverables, highlighting a high volume of recently completed work, as well as overdue and delayed deliverables, which are viewable in the [slide deck](#) from the meeting.

The agenda item concluded with an emphasis on inter-program communication. Tom Hall advocated for better "crosswalks" between the TRC and the Nutrient Management Strategy (NMS), citing a recently finalized NMS science update as a prime example of a report with wide-reaching relevance. Sierra Garcia noted that future RMP e-updates will now include a dedicated "nutrients quarter" to ensure that such overlapping information is consistently shared and made accessible to both programs.

Action Items

- **NMS Integration:** Amy to check in with the NMS teams for any recently completed reports that should be added to the RMP deliverables review list.

12. Discussion: Plan Agenda Items for Future Meetings (04:46:37)

The Committee concluded the meeting by outlining the agenda for the upcoming June Technical Review Committee (TRC) session. A discussion ensued regarding a recurring agenda item: the "Review of S&T Target Analyte Lists and CEC Tiers." Amy sought clarification on its necessity, and Jay explained that it was historically used to ensure S&T monitoring remained aligned with emerging contaminants of concern. However, because ECWG now handles this process thoroughly, the Committee decided that a separate agenda item is no longer required. Instead, this information will be integrated into the general S&T planning update for 2027.

Decisions

- **Agenda Adjustment:** The "S&T Target Analyte List and CEC Tiers" will no longer be a standalone agenda item; it will be included as a slide within the S&T planning update.

13. Discussion: Plus/Delta (04:49:30)

The meeting concluded with a review of the room's new integrated audio-visual setup, which was deemed a significant improvement in sound quality over the previous "Owl" system. While the increased microphone sensitivity improves clarity for remote participants, the Committee noted it also picks up side conversations. Additionally, the group addressed the current low camera angle, and the option of utilizing the secondary podium camera for split-screen views during presentations.

Action Items

- **Microphone Etiquette:** Amy to create a reminder slide for future large workgroup meetings (specifically the ECWG) to warn in-person attendees that the new mics may broadcast their side conversations to the entire Zoom call.