

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE COMMISSION OF
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COASTAL WATER RESEARCH PROJECT AUTHORITY**

**HELD AT THE OFFICES OF THE AUTHORITY
3535 Harbor Blvd., Suite 110, Costa Mesa, California**

**June 8, 2007
9:30 a.m.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Janet Hashimoto - *US Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX*
Darrin Polhemus - *State Water Resources Control Board*
Deb Smith - *Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region*
Jerry Thibeault - *Regional Water Quality Control Board, Santa Ana Region*
Arthur Coe - *Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Region*
Rita Robinson - *City of Los Angeles*
Mas Dojiri - *City of Los Angeles*
Bob Horvath - *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*
Robert Ghirelli - *Orange County Sanitation District*
Alan Langworthy - *City of San Diego*
Gerhardt Hubner - *Ventura County Watershed Protection District*
Diego Cadena - *Los Angeles County Department of Public Works*
Larry McKenny - *County of Orange*
Cid Tesoro - *County of San Diego*

STAFF PRESENT

Stephen Weisberg - *Executive Director*
B. Richard Marsh - *Legal Counsel*
Ken Schiff - *Deputy Director*
Bryan Nece - *Administrative Officer*
Steve Bay - *Principal Investigator*
Larry Cooper - *Principal Investigator*
Keith Maruya - *Principal Investigator*
Eric Stein - *Principal Investigator*
Martha Sutula - *Senior Scientist*
Karlene Miller - *Administrative Analyst*
Shelly Moore - *Programmer*

OTHERS PRESENT

George Robertson - *Orange County Sanitation District*
Ed Torres - *Orange County Sanitation District*
Joe Gully - *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*
Gerry McGowen - *City of Los Angeles*
Tim Stebbins - *City of San Diego*
Becky Smyth - *NOAA*
John Christensen - *NOAA*
Gunnar Lauenstein - *NOAA*
Jason Gregory - *NOAA*

Eric Handler – *Orange County Health Department*
Pat Brennan – *Orange County Register*
John Robertus - *Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Region*
Deborah Jayne – *Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Region*
Bruce Posthumus - *Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Region*

Commission Chair Polhemus called the meeting to order at 9:33 AM.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD MARCH 9 AND MAY 17, 2007**
- 2. QUARTERLY FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED MARCH 31, 2007**
- 3. QUARTERLY STATEMENT OF INVESTMENTS AT MARCH 31, 2007**
- 4. MINUTES OF CTAG MEETINGS OF FEBRUARY 14, 2007**

Commissioner Cadena motioned for approval of consent items, which was seconded by Commissioner Coe. The consent items were unanimously approved with a few typographical corrections to the minutes.

The Commission acknowledged Commissioner Coe and Horvath on their pending retirement and thanked both of them for their long and distinguished service to the Agency. Upon the motion of Commissioner Polhemus, seconded by Commissioner Ghirelli, a Resolution was unanimously approved to honor their service.

REGULAR AGENDA

5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Executive Director started by indicating the staff's pleasure with the building. He highlighted the many positive comments he had received from visitors about the meeting rooms, including the cameras and speaker systems that enhanced remote conferencing. He also indicated that the new building was having the desired effect of enhancing SCCWRP's role as a regional meeting center to facilitate development of scientific consensus. He indicated that there had already been several days in which all three conference rooms were in use simultaneously. He said that he was looking forward to the SCCWRP Open House, which was to follow immediately after the Commission meeting.

He began his administrative report by stating costs for constructing and moving into the new facility were on target. He indicated that he had briefed the Personnel and Finance Committee about the agency's cash flow in context of moving-related expenditures and that the agency had already restored its fund balance to \$900,000.

He began his technical report by announcing the September 19 kickoff meeting for the B'08 Regional Monitoring Survey. He stated that all reports from that project were nearing completion and would be available at the next Commission meeting. He reported next on status of the Doheny epidemiology study that began on Memorial Day. He said the study was going well except that low rainfall has reduced runoff to the point that the team was considering suspending the study until next year if water quality remained as good as it was at the moment.

He next reported on the highest ever concentration of HABS and domoic acid that were encountered on the San Pedro shelf in the cooperative study the agency was undertaking with the University of Southern California. Dr. Weisberg next reported on SCCWRP's continued success as an interface for several of the federal agencies between water quality science and management in southern California. He reported on the growing relationship with NOAA's National Center for Coastal Ocean Science and introduced members of that office that were here to observe the Commission meeting. He indicated that he was also looking to expand interactions with NASA, having recently been invited to serve on a grant review committee for NASA's coastal research program that will meet on October 10-11 in Washington. Finally, Dr. Weisberg provided updates on the Agency's Sediment Quality Objectives and the CIWQS Review projects.

6. CTAG REPORT

Gerry McGowan, Chair of the Commissioner's Technical Advisory Committee (CTAG), presented a summary of their May 16 meeting, most of which was spent in preparation for the special Commission meeting that took place the following day. He also indicated that CTAG had reviewed the draft 2008 Research Plan and voted to recommend its approval by the Commission. He said that Eric Stein also gave a presentation to CTAG on the San Gabriel Watershed Historical Ecology Report, which was well received.

7. DESIRABLE CONTRACT ATTRIBUTES

The Executive Director reminded the Commission that they had asked him to prepare a memo describing the attributes used to determine whether a contract should be accepted by SCCWRP. Dr. Weisberg described the attributes contained in a memo that had been distributed with the Commission package. Upon the motion of Commissioner Ghirelli, seconded by Commissioner Robinson, the proposed attributes used to determine SCCWRP contract acceptance was unanimously approved.

8. CONTRACT APPROVAL

The Executive Director requested that the Commission approve resolutions regarding the following contracts that would be offered to the Authority.

- 1) State Water Resources Control Board (\$200,000)
Effect of Global Climate Change on Southern California's Coastal Wetlands

Upon the motion of Commissioner Thibeault, seconded by Commissioner Smith, the contract was unanimously approved by Resolution, with Commissioners Hashimoto and Polhemus abstaining.

- 2) EPA (\$218,000)
Demonstration of a Fish Gene Microarray for Wetland Monitoring

Upon the motion of Commissioner Thibeault, seconded by Commissioner Dojiri, the contract was unanimously approved by Resolution, with Commissioner Hashimoto abstaining.

- 3) SFEI (\$200,000)
Historical Ecology

Upon the motion of Commissioner Thibeault, seconded by Commissioner Dojiri, the contract was unanimously approved by Resolution, with Commissioner Hashimoto abstaining.

- 4) Moss Landing Marine Laboratory/San Jose State (\$938,000)
SWAMP Special Studies

Upon the motion of Commissioner Horvath, seconded by Commissioner Robinson, the contract was unanimously approved by Resolution, with Commissioner Hashimoto and Polhemus abstaining.

As an informational item, Dr. Weisberg described contracts with value of \$250,000 or less that the Authority has accepted or indicated a willingness to accept. While the governing agreement of SCCWRP requires no Commission action on these, the contracts were described to inform and ensure that the direction of the Authority's work is consistent with the desires of the Commission.

- 5) Tetra Tech (\$35,000)
Estuarine Nutrient Criteria Technical Support
- 6) South Orange County Wastewater Authority (\$25,500)
Epidemiology Study

There were no objections to either of these contracts.

9. FISCAL YEAR 2007/2008 RESEARCH PLAN AND BUDGET

Ken Schiff presented the 2007/08 Research Plan to the Commission for their approval. He identified that one-third were new projects and the remaining two-thirds were ongoing multi-year studies. He emphasized that 90% of the projects will be conducted in collaboration with other organizations, including many with member agencies. He then provided an overview of how these Research Plan projects intersected with member agencies' needs, as expressed at the November CTAG meeting.

Upon motion of Commissioner Langworthy and seconded by Commissioner Horvath, the 2007/2008 Research Plan and Budget was unanimously approved.

10. RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING RULES GOVERNING COMPENSATION, BENEFITS, AND PERSONNEL, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Dr Weisberg reported that there were only two proposed changes to the previous year's resolution. One was to raise the upper end of the salary scale for all positions to reflect a cost of living adjustment. The other was the addition of a Supervising Scientist position.

Upon the motion of Commissioner Ghirelli and seconded by Commissioner Coe, resolution number 07-02, to be effective July 1, 2007 was unanimously approved.

11. HISTORIC ECOLOGY

Eric Stein presented results from SCCWRP's recent report on historical ecology of the San Gabriel watershed, which quantified wetland changes since the period of California annexation (ca. 1850). Numerous data sources were used to gain insight into historical wetland and riparian habitats, including Mexican land grant sketches, US General Land Office maps, irrigation maps, topographic maps and soil surveys, and 1920's aerial photographs. The study concluded that the San Gabriel River was a dynamic system and the lower watershed historically was substantially "wetter" than current conditions. Approximately 86% of historical wetlands in the watershed were estimated to have been lost, with the greatest losses being to palustrine alkali meadow wetlands in the tidal fringe area. The study also identified several

opportunities for wetland restoration where remnant wetlands and/or wetland signatures exist. Dr. Stein indicated that this study serves as the foundation for SCCWRP's regional historical ecology program, the next phases of which include assessing historical wetlands in the Santa Clara River, Ventura River and Oxnard Plain.

12. WETLANDS AS TREATMENT SYSTEMS

Martha Sutula presented results from a study of the habitat value of urban wetlands, which includes natural (habitat) wetlands, treatment wetlands and multipurpose wetlands created for habitat and treatment. The goal of this study is to provide information on how urban wetlands can be managed to increase compatibility with wildlife beneficial uses. Results of a biological survey showed that, while urban infrastructure provide basic constraints on achievable condition, site-specific conditions can mitigate these constraints. These factors include, but are not limited to wetland size, project objective and design criteria, and intensity of maintenance. We found that habitat wetlands could achieve "best attainable" condition if: 1) the sites can support wetland hydrology, 2) the hydrology can be managed to mimic natural hydroperiod, 3) the site is designed to have good physical structure, 4) the wetland and buffer have native vegetation, 5) the wetland is maintained frequently to manage stressors, but not in manner which is incompatible with the seasonal cycles of reproduction, and 6) issues of bioaccumulation and toxicity are not a factor. She indicated that this last factor would be addressed in the subsequent phases of the project.

13. FUTURE MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

Commissioner Smith requested a presentation on the agency's hydromodification studies. Commissioner Hubner requested a presentation on the agency's emerging containments research. Commissioner Dojiri requested a presentation on summary results from the Bight'03 project. Commissioner Polhemus requested a summary of the action items that resulted from the five year strategic planning meeting. Dr. Weisberg reminded the Commission that they had earlier invited Mike Chrisman to meet with them at their September meeting as part of considering whether to invite the Ocean Protection Council as a new member of SCCWRP. After discussion, it was agreed that the presentation on emerging contaminants would be tabled to the following meeting and that the September Commission meeting would be an extended one (until 3:00) to accommodate a presentation on results from the Bight'03 study after lunch.

14. OTHER BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS

None.

15. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

16. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 pm until the next Commission meeting on September 14, 2007.

ATTEST:

Bryan Nece
Secretary