

**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., Costa Mesa, California 92626**

**March 14, 2008
9:30 a.m.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Brain Baird – *Ocean Protection Council*
Diego Cadena - *Los Angeles County Department of Public Works*
Mary Anne Skorpanich - *County of Orange*
Mas Dojiri - *City of Los Angeles*
Tracy Egoscue - *Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region*
Robert Ghirelli - *Orange County Sanitation District*
John Kemmerer - *US Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX*
Gerhardt Hubner – *Ventura County Watershed Protection District*
Alan Langworthy – *City of San Diego*
Steve Maguin - *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*
Darrin Polhemus - *State Water Resources Control Board*
John Robertus - *Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Region*
Cid Tesoro – *County of San Diego*
Jerry Thibeault - *Regional Water Quality Control Board, Santa Ana Region*

STAFF PRESENT

Stephen Weisberg - *Executive Director*
B. Richard Marsh - *Legal Counsel*
Ken Schiff - *Deputy Director*
Bryan Nece – *Administrative Officer*
Steve Bay - *Principal Investigator*
Shelly Moore - *Principal Investigator*
Keith Maruya - *Principal Investigator*
Eric Stein - *Principal Investigator*
Karen Setty – *Science Writer*

OTHERS PRESENT

David Barker - *Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Region*
Phil Friess - *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*
Ed Torres - *Orange County Sanitation District*
Joe Gully - *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*
Gerry McGowen – *City of Los Angeles*
George Robertson - *Orange County Sanitation District*
Tim Stebbins – *City of San Diego*
Brock Bernstein

Commission Chair Polhemus called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD DECEMBER 14, 2007**
2. **QUARTERLY FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2007**
3. **QUARTERLY STATEMENT OF INVESTMENTS AT DECEMBER 31, 2007**
4. **MINUTES OF CTAG MEETINGS OF NOVEMBER 8, 2007**

Commissioner Maguin motioned for approval of consent items, which was seconded by Commissioner Ghirelli. The consent items were unanimously approved with minor revisions to minutes.

REGULAR AGENDA

5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Executive Director introduced SCCWRP's newest employee, Karen Setty who was hired as a Science Writer and will have primary responsibility for enhancing SCCWRP's web site and other communication tools. He next noted changes in Commission membership. Gerhardt Hubner was welcomed as the new Commissioner from the Ventura County Watershed Protection District, having switched roles with Jeff Pratt, who will now serve as Alternate Commissioner. Dr. Weisberg indicated that Don Wolfe, the former Commissioner from Los Angeles County Department of Public Works had retired and was replaced by Commissioner Dean Efstathiou (not in attendance). He also introduced John Kemmerer, Deputy Director of the EPA Region IX Water Management Division, who was representing EPA Region IX for this meeting. He indicated that he had a letter from Commissioner Strauss appointing Mr. Kemmerer to that role for this meeting.

Dr. Weisberg next reviewed several recent examples where SCCWRP has exhibited scientific leadership. The first example was a Harmful Algal Bloom workshop that SCCWRP was organizing at the request of NOAA's MERHAB (Monitoring and Event Response for Harmful Algal Blooms) Program. The goal of the workshop, which will take place from April 2-3 and is co-funded by the California Ocean Science Trust (CalOST), is to identify the impediments to integrating the numerous HAB research programs into a coordinated monitoring program. In addition, several of the invited experts coming to the workshop have volunteered to hold a training session on phytoplankton identification and domoic acid detection for SCCWRP member agencies on April 1.

Dr. Weisberg next described SCCWRP's leadership in beach water quality studies. He indicated that our epidemiological studies of swimmers, in which we are evaluating about 30 new approaches to assessing beach water quality, is becoming an integral part of EPA's criteria development for beach microbiology. In addition, SCCWRP is taking a leadership role in developing a standard methodology for measuring bacterial levels in sand, SCCWRP has been working with six national experts to design a study that evaluates 20 method variations that are presently in use. That study will take place the last week of April, with all of the experts convening at the Orange County Sanitation District for three days.

The Executive Director next indicated that the State Water Resources Control Board adopted Sediment Quality Objectives (SQOs) in February, making California the first state in the nation to have such standards. He indicated that the SQOs were based on scientific investigations conducted by SCCWRP, which were drawing international interest. The European nations are in the process of developing sediment quality objectives and several researchers will be visiting SCCWRP to compare approaches. SCCWRP will host a PhD student from Portugal for six months, as well as a researcher from Spain for one week this summer to collaborate on SQO-related research.

Dr. Weisberg next described a planned project to revisit shellfish beneficial use designations, in which SCCWRP will work with the SWRCB to map areas of shellfish habitat and harvesting to support more accurate and consistent designation of beneficial use locations. The project is expected to begin this summer and has the potential to call attention to designation methods for other beneficial use applications.

Dr. Weisberg next indicated his pleasure about how SCCWRP has become more integrated into Ocean Protection Council (OPC) activities since the OPC became a member of the SCCWRP Commission. Dr. Weisberg noted that he now serves on the Science Advisory Team for the OPC and is a Trustee for the California Ocean Science Trust (he distributed an information sheet about CalOST), which coordinates science activities for the OPC. He indicated that during the last few months SCCWRP was providing technical assistance to OPC staff as they considered developing Low Impact Development (LID) policies for the State. Eric Stein served on an experts panel on LID at the last OPC meeting and SCCWRP has agreed to host one of two workshops OPC will be holding to gather public input on the topic (Dr. Weisberg handed out an OPC flier about this meeting to be held on March 26). Commissioner Bohan thanked staff for their assistance, provided further detail about the March 26 workshop and addressed several questions from the Commission. Several other opportunities to get involved in LID are available through SCCWRP, including a June seminar on evaluating LID as well as model stormwater monitoring guidance manuals and other tools developed in collaboration with the Stormwater Monitoring Coalition (SMC). Dr. Weisberg also indicated that he anticipated further interaction with the OPC as the process of designating Marine Life Protected Areas (MLPAs) in southern California begins this summer.

The Executive Director continued his report by updating the Commission on the status of SCCWRP's JPA (Joint Powers Agreement). The draft document updated at the December Commission meeting has now been through legal review by the signatories and will be brought to their boards for approval over the next six months. Dr. Weisberg indicated that he had not yet received feedback from all of the associate member agencies about the associate member agreement that is an appendix to the JPA. Dr. Weisberg requested that any additional feedback on the associate member agreement be provided prior to the next Commission meeting.

Dr. Weisberg last highlighted recent media attention on SCCWRP's endocrine disruptor work, including an LA Times article and follow-up interview in a San Diego newspaper with SCCWRP scientist Steve Bay. Mr. Bay answered several questions posed by Commissioners about emerging contaminants. Eric Stein also answered questions from the Commission about his research on climate change effects on wetlands.

6. CTAG REPORT

Gerry McGowen, Chair of the Commissioner's Technical Advisory Committee (CTAG), presented a summary of their February 26th meeting. CTAG representatives received the Director's Report and update on Bight'08 from the Executive Director. He indicated that CTAG

had extensive discussion about the value of the January SCCWRP Symposium and asked that it be made an annual event. He further indicated that CTAG reviewed the first draft of the 2008-2009 SCCWRP Research Plan and an update on SCCWRP's new website, with only relatively minor revision suggestions offered for both. CTAG was pleased overall with these activities. Final discussion points at the meeting included the possibility of adding the San Francisco Estuary Institute as a member of CTAG. The next CTAG meeting will be held May 29, 2008.

7. CONTRACT APPROVAL

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

- 1) City of Los Angeles (\$374,000)
Sediment Toxicity Identification

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

- 2) State Water Resources Control Board (\$1,250,000)
Technical Support for Nutrient Numeric Endpoint Development in California Estuaries

Upon the motion of Commissioner Ghirelli, seconded by Commissioner Baird, the contract was unanimously approved by Resolution, with Commissioner Polhemus abstaining.

- 3) State Water Resources Control Board (\$588,000)
Shellfish Beneficial Use Study

Upon the motion of Commissioner Kemmerer, seconded by Commissioner Robertus, the contract was unanimously approved by Resolution, with Commissioner 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.

- 4) USC Sea Grant (\$32,776)
Ballona Creek Modeling Study
- 5) Hercules Inc (\$165,331)
Toxaphene Methods Development
- 6) Hercules Inc (\$31,000)
Toxaphene Analysis
- 7) Bureau of Reclamation (through CDM) (\$14,952)
Chemical Analysis
- 8) Santa Ana Regional Board (through Resource Management Associates) (\$20,000)
Nutrient Loads Study
- 9) Copper Development Association (\$36,000)

Sediment Analysis

- 10) California Ocean Science Trust (\$10,000)
NOAA (through Aster Engineering) (\$11,746)
Harmful Algal Bloom workshop
- 11) State Water Resources Control Board (Two contracts for \$20,000 each)
Assessing Conditions in South San Diego Bay
- 12) State Water Resources Control Board (through San Jose State University) (\$69,000)
SWAMP Data Center
- 13) State Water Resources Control Board (through San Jose State University) (\$40,000)
Inclusion of Volunteer Monitoring Data into the SWAMP Data Center
- 14) Department of Water Resources (through San Jose State University) (\$50,000)
CEDEN
- 15) State Water Resources Control Board (\$50,000)
Monitoring Program Design for the Central Valley Regional Board
- 16) County of San Diego (\$75,000)
Fire Runoff Study

There were no objections to any of these contracts.

8. BIGHT'08 UPDATE

Ken Schiff reported on progress in planning the next Bight-wide regional sampling. Bight'08 will be larger than previous efforts, with five program elements. Three are consistent with previous Bight monitoring (coastal ecology, water quality, and shoreline microbiology) while two are new: rocky reef habitat and Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS). Each of these elements was described in more depth. Mr. Schiff indicated that all of the working groups have formed technical subcommittees and are in the process of completing draft work plans. He felt that the planning process is moving along on schedule, with some workgroups well prepared to begin fieldwork this summer. Mr. Schiff also noted that the Bight programs have served as fertile ground for interesting ancillary studies, for which he provided several examples. One example was investigation of a new sediment camera as a possible surrogate/supplement for benthic infaunal sampling. EPA scientist Giancarlo Cicchetti will be coming to southern California to train local scientists on the technology, which will be deployed at a subset of Bight stations to assess if it provides comparable answers to conventional methods. Mr. Schiff next highlighted the new tools and approaches that will be used in the water quality component, including high frequency radar, autonomous underwater gliders, and molecular techniques for quantifying algal species. Dr. Weisberg commented that Bight'08 will also be a great opportunity to test SQO method application. The Commission asked several questions about the effect of ASBS on dischargers and SCCWRP's involvement with the Southern California Coastal Ocean Observing System. They lastly requested clarification on the time period for data collection for each of the working groups. Commissioner Robertus observed that it would be valuable to indicate the history of dredging at a site along with the sediment quality assessment, to which Mr. Schiff agreed. Commissioner Robertus also remarked that in the future it might be helpful to have a separate, secure funding source for the Bight effort.

9. SCCWRP SYMPOSIUM

The Executive Director described feedback received on the effectiveness of the SCCWRP Symposium and discussed plans for future symposia. He stated that more than 100 people attended and an additional 30 people observed remotely via webcast. He indicated that the Symposium provided several benefits to SCCWRP: 1) it facilitated interaction with member agency staff who do not typically come to SCCWRP for meetings, 2) enhanced interaction among SCCWRP staff and 3) encouraged facility upgrades to allow web-based broadcasting of the Symposium (which was password protected), technology which is now being used on an almost daily basis for our other meetings. Dr. Weisberg then made a presentation about responses to a survey of symposium participants and indicated that the survey responses were overwhelmingly positive and consistent with the positive feedback received at the CTAG meeting. He thanked the Commission for their suggestion to hold the Symposium and indicated that he would be implementing CTAG's suggestion to make it an annual event.

10. CIWQS REVIEW

Results from the CIWQS (California Integrated Water Quality System) Review Panel that was organized by SCCWRP and held February 27-28 were presented by Panel member Brock Bernstein. The purpose of this review was to see whether the SWRCB had addressed and resolved the seven areas of concern identified during the first phase of the review process in May 2007. Dr. Bernstein reported that the Panel felt the CIWQS team had made a remarkable turnaround. Where the Panel found the program to be dysfunctional during the 2007 review, they now felt that program was on the road to success. In particular, they gave the CIWQS team high marks for refining the project scope, validating system requirements and rebuilding key constituencies. Areas where more progress was still needed included addressing data quality issues, producing key reports and improving the user interface. Dr. Weisberg indicated that he was working with the Panel to produce a final report, which he anticipated would be available in about a month.

11. SWAMP DATA CENTER

Shelly Moore made a presentation about the data center that SCCWRP is hosting for the State's Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP). She indicated that many dischargers in California want to contribute their data for regional assessments such as 303(d) listing assessments, but this is difficult because data among programs is not typically in comparable formats. SWAMP's goal is to create four regional data centers that will feed into a central data center (California Environmental Data Exchange Network or CEDEN) where all data can be retrieved in the same format. Other regional data centers will be housed at Moss Landing Marine Laboratories (MLML), San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI), and UC Davis. As a pilot project, SCCWRP has been working with the Stormwater Monitoring Coalition to build a data center focused on ambient stream data from stormwater agencies. SCCWRP's role as a regional data center includes QA/QC, building specialized tools, putting data into comparable formats, and connecting users of data with a local contact for more information. The information management team at SCCWRP has met with representatives from each user group to create similar table structures, and will work with them to transform historical data into a consistent format. The Commission then engaged Ms. Moore in discussion regarding the QA/QC policy and the availability of data that was submitted but did not meet these requirements.

12. FUTURE MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

The Commission identified two items for future meetings. The first was to review the new SCCWRP brochure. The second was a presentation on the Agency's new web page design. They also requested an update on the LID workshop and a discussion of SCCWRP's work with the SMC on this topic.

13. OTHER BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Egoscue asked about when the Commission would have the opportunity to comment on the recently conducted salary survey. Dr. Weisberg indicated that he had presented the salary survey to the Personnel and Finance Committee earlier that morning and would include it with the Salary Resolution that would be presented for consideration by the entire Commission at their next meeting.

14. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

15. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:02 pm until the next Commission meeting on June 13, 2008.

ATTEST:

Bryan Nece
Secretary