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

June 2, 2010
9:30 AM

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT
Mas Dojiri (Chair) - *City of Los Angeles*
Sam Unger (Vice-Chair) - *Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Janet Hashimoto - *US Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX*
Jon Bishop - *State Water Resources Control Board*
Kurt Berchtold - *Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board*
David Barker - *San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Philip Friess - *Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County*
Robert Ghirelli - *Orange County Sanitation District*
Steve Meyer - *City of San Diego*
Gerhardt Hubner - *Ventura County Watershed Protection District*
Mark Pestrella - *Los Angeles County Flood Control District*
Mary Anne Skorpanich - *County of Orange*
Cid Tesoro - *County of San Diego*

STAFF PRESENT
Stephen Weisberg - *Executive Director*
Bryan Nece - *Administrative Officer*
Wesley Beverlin - *Legal Counsel*
Ken Schiff - *Deputy Director*
Steve Bay - *Principal Investigator*
John Griffith - *Principal Investigator*
Keith Maruya - *Principal Investigator*
Eric Stein - *Principal Investigator*
Martha Sutula - *Principal Investigator*
Peter Miller - *Supervising Scientist*
Shelly Moore - *Information Systems Manager*
Nathan Dodder - *Senior Scientist*
David Gillett - *Ecologist*
Ashmita Sengupta - *Modeler*

OTHERS PRESENT
Ed Torres - *Orange County Sanitation District*
Dominic Gregorio - *State Water Resources Control Board*
Joe Gully - *Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County*
Dean Pasko - *Orange County Sanitation District*

Commission Chair Dojiri called the meeting to order at 9:32 AM.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. MINUTES OF COMMISSION MEETING HELD MARCH 30, 2010

2. QUARTERLY FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED MARCH 31, 2010

3. QUARTERLY STATEMENT OF INVESTMENTS AT MARCH 31, 2010

4. MINUTES OF CTAG MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 11, 2010

Commissioner Dojiri requested three minor changes to the March Commission minutes. Commissioner Ghirelli then motioned for approval of consent items, seconded by Commissioner Meyer, and the items were unanimously approved.

REGULAR AGENDA

5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Steve Weisberg began his Director's Report by announcing several Commission representative changes. Samuel Unger was recently appointed as Interim Executive Director for Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board and would assume Tracy Egoscue's seat as both a Commissioner and her role of Commission Vice-Chair. Upon Gerry Thibeault's pending retirement, Kurt Berchtold would become the new Executive Officer for the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board and would move from alternate Commissioner to Commissioner. Weisberg congratulated the new appointees to the Commission, and then introduced several new SCCWRP staff members. These were Dr. Ashmita Sengupta, a modeler in the Biogeochemistry department, Dr. Nathan Dodder, a chemist in the Chemistry department, and Dr. David Gillett, an ecologist in the Biology department.

Moving to the technical portion of the Director's Report, Weisberg noted good progress on the rapid microbiological method studies, which would be discussed under a later agenda item. Regarding the advisory panel on contaminants of emerging concern (CECs) in recycled water, Weisberg showed a list of priority CECs that the panel had developed following their final meeting a few weeks ago. Their written report would be finalized in the coming weeks. He felt that the process was successful and congratulated Keith Maruya, who coordinated the effort. Commissioner Bishop commented on further steps that would be taken by the State to monitor CECs after the panel issued their report. Weisberg also reminded the Commission that the expert panel focused on CECs in coastal marine ecosystems was continuing and would meet next on September 30, jointly with a panel on CECs in freshwater environments organized by the Water Environment Research Foundation.

The Director lastly communicated that as a member of the planning committee for the California and the World Ocean 2010 Conference, he received two unsolicited comments about the high quality of SCCWRP's session and abstract submissions. The five sessions proposed by SCCWRP staff would cover rapid microbiological methods, emerging contaminants, bio-objectives, wetlands, and harmful algal blooms.

Commissioner Hashimoto arrived at 9:45 AM.

6. CTAG REPORT

Dominic Gregorio, Chair of the Commissioner's Technical Advisory Group (CTAG), reported on their regular May 11 meeting and a special meeting held April 12 to discuss preparation of a thematic document on the effect of the Clean Water Act in southern California. At the special meeting, they discussed the available datasets and outline for the thematic document. The group decided to focus on an outline organized by the status of beneficial uses and would prepare a mockup of the first section on "is it safe to eat the seafood", as well as a data availability table, before the next special meeting on July 21.

The regular meeting on May 11 was held jointly with the San Francisco Estuary Institute's (SFEI's) Regional Monitoring Program (RMP) Technical Review Committee. Gregorio observed that SFEI has a more complex and layered structure than SCCWRP. SFEI presented highlights from the RMP and both groups shared their respective research plans. CTAG then voted to recommend that the Commission approve SCCWRP's draft 2010-2011 Research Plan. Special presentations included one from SCCWRP on technical support for the whole effluent toxicity policy revision, plus joint presentations on stormwater studies, emerging contaminants, and sediment quality objectives.

Gregorio felt that the meeting was effective at stimulating collaboration; for example, they identified that SCCWRP would work collectively with SFEI on a pending "Pulse of the Estuary" report on CECs. The next joint meeting will be held in May 2011, with an agenda item on nutrients and eutrophication. SFEI and SCCWRP also wanted to plan a separate one-day workshop to continue discussion of stormwater issues and develop more joint research approaches in conjunction with the California Stormwater Quality Association, Southern California Stormwater Monitoring Council, and other relevant groups.

Commissioner Pestrella arrived at 9:55 AM.

7. CONTRACT REVIEW

As an informational item, Weisberg described contracts with a 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.

1) UC Berkeley ($141,504)
   Epidemiology Study

2) California Department of Health Services ($156,000)
   Beach Watch

3) UC Davis ($18,666)
   Training for Field Sampling of Stream Algae

4) USC ($71,248)
   Contaminants of Emerging Concern Using Bivalve and Passive Samplers

There were no objections to any of these contracts. Weisberg further noted that most of SCCWRP's frozen bond-funded state contracts had now been unfrozen. In particular, SCCWRP

was preparing to initiate work on a $4 million contract for microbial source identification work, a project that was approved by the Commission and executed just prior to the freeze.

8. FISCAL YEAR 2010/11 RESEARCH PLAN AND BUDGET

Steve Weisberg presented the proposed 2010-2011 Research Plan. It contained 53 projects in seven thematic areas. Ninety-three percent of the projects had collaborators (representing 92 different organizations), which was important for building consensus and supplementing SCCWRP's in-house technical capabilities. Weisberg focused on describing four research themes that are growth areas for SCCWRP: bio-objectives, CECs, nutrient criteria, and molecular methods. After describing planned research in each of these areas, Weisberg went on to discuss a recent change in SCCWRP's organizational structure that eliminated the Watersheds department and created new Microbiology and Biogeochemistry departments. The Watersheds department began ten years ago with a small research portfolio, but after the stormwater agencies joined SCCWRP it grew rapidly and was now well integrated into the other departments. As such, there was no need to retain what was the only place-based department. He next described the financial section of the Research Plan with a budget of $10 million, a milestone symbolizing excellent leveraging of SCCWRP's member agency contributions. Weisberg added that the research plan indicated strong, diverse revenue streams and that the organization was on solid ground financially.

Weisberg offered to take questions on the written Research Plan and verbal report. Hearing none, Commissioner Bishop motioned for approval of the Research Plan, seconded by Commissioner Meyer. It was approved unanimously with Commissioner Hashimoto abstaining.

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

The Commission considered adoption of a Resolution establishing rules to govern SCCWRP's compensation, benefits, and personnel policies and procedures, effective July 1, 2010. The Executive Director noted that there were no changes in the Resolution from the previous year, including no increases in the salary ranges for any of the positions, in accordance with the Personnel and Finance Committee's recommendation. Commissioner Friess motioned to adopt the Resolution, seconded by Commissioner Berchtold. It was adopted unanimously with Commissioner Hashimoto abstaining.

10. RAPID MICROBIOLOGICAL METHODS UPDATE

The Executive Director described progress in implementing recommendations from the Commission's Rapid Microbiological Monitoring Methods Task Force, which were endorsed by the Commission at their last meeting. Staff were preparing for a summer demonstration project in which a rapid method would be used alongside traditional methods for monitoring select beach sites. Staff from the participating laboratories and two NGOs had undergone training at SCCWRP (both in the lab and classroom), as well as at their facilities. Data from proficiency tests would be analyzed to ensure that the participating labs produced results consistent with traditional methods and with SCCWRP's results. SCCWRP had prepared both a standard operating procedure and training video to support this effort. As part of outreach efforts, staff was also giving a press demonstration and a series of presentations to various stakeholder groups. Electronic signs were being installed at several sites to communicate beach warnings and closures. Health officials could update them based on the rapid method results using a web-based input form. Weisberg showed an example of the sign display where red flags indicated closure (e.g., due to a sewage spill) and yellow flags indicated a warning (i.e., when

results exceed standards). These could be used in addition to their new website and Twitter updates. The method would be rolled out at nine sites and SCCWRP would test three other rapid methods behind the scenes at the same time. The Task Force planned to meet again on June 29 to evaluate whether the labs had demonstrated sufficient competency during the proficiency testing period to move ahead with the demonstration.

Because this effort was getting a good deal of press attention, Weisberg asked the Commissioners about whether SCCWRP should issue a press release and then took several questions on his presentation. The Commission followed up with a question about the likelihood that the electronic signage would be ready by July and Weisberg indicated that he was about 70% sure. He was asked how likely it was that warnings would be issued by noon. Weisberg replied that the Task Force insisted rapid method-based warnings needed to be posted by noon if the demonstration project was to move forward and he thought that it was probable, although the frequency with which that happened would be one way that success of the project would be assessed. Based on Commission feedback, Weisberg agreed to schedule a conference call after a few weeks with communications personnel from participating groups and member agencies to discuss possible preparation of a press release by an appropriate organization(s).

11. BIO-OBJECTIVES

Ken Schiff presented an update on research to support the State Water Board's implementation of bio-objectives. This work is a partnership among SCCWRP, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the US Geological Survey. The project was undertaken because biological objectives provide a more direct assessment of a stream's aquatic life beneficial use condition than do chemical concentrations. The project had just begun and would run for about three years. Schiff showed four parts to the development philosophy, explaining that initial efforts would be limited to benthic macroinvertebrate indicators in perennial wadeable streams. Eventually, the State desired multiple indicators with numeric endpoints for all waterbody types in California, incorporating some degree of regional flexibility.

Schiff described nine steps to the policy development, the first five of which were technical tasks that would involve SCCWRP. The first, establishing reference conditions, would set biological expectations for non-impacted sites across different biogeographic regions. Schiff explained that a great deal of data was available for this task, but researchers were still unsure about the resolution of bioregion delineation and how to deal with regions where few or no unimpacted sites existed. He showed a list of large-scale monitoring programs that collect related data at over 1500 sites and a map of reference sites that came out of a 3-day expert workshop held by the State. The second task was development of stressor-response models to determine expected conditions at non-reference sites. Schiff then showed examples of stressor-response graphs with both hypothetical and actual data. In this area, plenty of biological measures and datasets were available, but researchers had concerns about model selectivity, sensitivity, and scale. The third task, waterbody classification, involved extrapolating the stressor-response model to each stream and verifying with field reconnaissance. The stream's biological condition could then be classified by tiered thresholds specific to the bioregion. Resolution would again be a challenge for this task (e.g., segments, water bodies, catchments), and the classification thresholds would depend upon policy discussions. In response to a question about whether the index of biotic integrity (IBI) would be used as the biological indicator, Schiff answered that the proposed metrics are still uncertain, but will be selected based on the optimal stressor-response model. The fourth task was stressor identification, whose goal was to help stakeholders identify site-specific causes for remediation in the case of unmet bio-objectives. While multiple approaches existed for this task, none of them were well-vetted in California. Because of this, the research team hopes to engage the US Environmental Protection Agency in three test case

studies looking at different stressors in different locations. Lastly, the fifth technical task dealt with information management, which the State would like to rely of the California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN). CEDEN is scheduled to be launched in June with chemistry data, and incorporate biological and habitat data within the next few years.

Schiff finished his presentation by explaining that the project would mirror SCCWRP's technical support of the sediment quality objectives policy development, involving stakeholder, science, and regulatory advisory committees. In terms of the project time frame, they would need to produce all of the required technical support documents by December 2012, and the State would hold a public input workshop by March 2013. Responding to a question about the deliverables from the project, Schiff explained that there would be one product for each of the five technical tasks, including a reference condition management plan, stressor-response models, waterbody classification GIS layers, a stressor identification guidance document, and a web-based tool for data exchange. Commissioner Bishop added that they expected to issue a set of bio-objectives, but it was still premature to say exactly what form it would take. Some discussion followed about the precedence of biology versus chemistry data and the implications for developing tiered chemistry objectives to match the bio-objectives.

12. STATEWIDE BAYS AND INLAND WATERS TOXICITY STANDARD DEVELOPMENT

Steve Bay presented the agency's technical activities to assist the State Water Resources Control Board in developing guidance for stormwater toxicity testing. Whole effluent toxicity (WET) methods for evaluating regulated discharges have been used for many years and are standardized in US EPA guidance manuals. In California, the SWRCB's WET testing policy is under revision to provide improved and up-to-date guidance. In particular, the SWRCB intends to transition to a new assessment methodology (called a Test of Significant Toxicity) to improve the reliability of toxicity test data interpretation. However, toxicity testing applications for relatively consistent discharges, like POTW effluent, is more straightforward compared to highly episodic and variable discharges like stormwater. The Agency's project objectives are to support the policy, in particular for municipal stormwater discharges, by assisting with the technical elements of the policy implementation guidance. These technical elements include stormwater toxicity sampling, testing methods, calibrating the new statistical method for west coast species, and help with training and communication of the new provisions issued by the State.

Bay and Ken Schiff will be the lead researchers from SCCWRP, partnering with a number of stakeholders from both northern and southern California. Their current task was formation of a project committee with managerial, scientific, and regulatory representation. The project committee was scheduled to meet for the first time July 1 in Sacramento. Bay communicated that the State will hold four workshops in different parts of the State to help with the policy transition once it was available.

13. BIGHT'08 UPDATE

Ken Schiff reported on the 2008 Bight Regional Monitoring effort. He reminded the Commission that Bight '08 involves close to 100 organizations and then discussed the status of each of the six elements. Coastal Ecology was ahead of schedule compared to the previous Bight program and the sediment toxicity report had already been drafted. Preliminary results showed the most frequent toxicity in bays, marinas, ports, and estuaries, while toxicity in offshore areas was infrequent. In the Water Quality component, sampling was completed for the nutrient mass balance study and a report was being drafted. The harmful algal bloom (HAB) study portion had been restarted after a one-year delay and sampling had recently finished. He reported that the Shoreline Microbiology component had been stalled because a freeze in the bond funds, but

that staff was gearing up to start that work in the fall given the likelihood that funds for this project would soon be unfrozen.

For the Wetland Eutrophication component, sampling was completed and data analysis underway. Schiff showed dissolved oxygen levels in Famosa Slough over the year-long sampling period, where levels were below 5mg/L for about four months out of the year. He noted that there was a similar plot available for virtually every estuary in southern California for dissolved oxygen, algae and several other measures. These data would be used to support the State's nutrient criteria development. The Rocky Reef subcommittee had finished sampling and most data analysis, covering almost 70 different rocky reefs. Finally, the Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS) draft report was written.

14. FUTURE MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

Three items were identified for the September Commission meeting: 1) an update on the rapid microbiological methods; 2) ocean acidity issues and outcomes of the ocean acidification workshop; and 3) selection of meeting dates for calendar year 2011. With reference to the first item, Weisberg announced that he would send out an email update after the Task Force meeting on June 29. In response to a request from Commissioner Meyer, Weisberg proposed presentation of nutrient mass emissions data when it was ready in about nine months. Weisberg also announced that he had requests to reschedule the rest of the year's Commission meetings on Fridays, as the furloughs which led to moving the meeting days away from Fridays were scheduled to end soon. Commissioner Bishop responded that he was unsure about the discontinuation of furloughs. The group agreed to keep the upcoming September meeting on the previously selected Wednesday and further discuss scheduling at that time when more information about furloughs would be available.

15. OTHER BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Several Commissioners commented that they liked the book suggested by Weisberg at the previous Commission meeting, called "Dirty Water: One Man's Fight to Clean Up One of the World's Most Polluted Bays". They felt it was an accurate depiction of water quality management changes in the 1970s in Los Angeles and appropriately characterized some of the activities that led to SCCWRP's present structure and role.

16. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

17. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:02 PM, until the next Commission meeting on September 1, 2010.

ATTEST:
Bryan Nece
Secretary