

**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 4, 2011
9:30 AM**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Sam Unger (Chair) - *Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Steve Meyer (Vice-Chair) - *City of San Diego*
Amber Mace - *Ocean Protection Council*
Janet Hashimoto - *US Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX*
Darrin Polhemus - *State Water Resources Control Board*
Adam Fischer (for Kurt Berchtold) - *Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board*
David Barker - *San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Mas Dojiri - *City of Los Angeles*
Steve Maguin - *Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County*
Ed Torres - *Orange County Sanitation District*
Gerhardt Hubner - *Ventura County Watershed Protection District*
Mary Anne Skorpanich - *County of Orange*
Jo Ann Weber (for 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*
Shelly Moore - *Information Systems Manager*
Steve Steinberg - *Supervising Scientist*
Karen Setty - *Science Writer*

OTHERS PRESENT

Joe Gully - *Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County*
George Robertson - *Orange County Sanitation District*
Bruce Posthumus - *San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Tim Stebbins - *City of San Diego*
Barbara Cameron - *City of Malibu*

Commission Chair Unger called the meeting to order at 9:37 AM. There were no changes to the agenda. Steve Weisberg announced two agency representative substitutions for the meeting: Jo Ann Weber was sitting in for Cid Tesoro, and Adam Fischer for Kurt Berchtold.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD DECEMBER 3, 2010

Commissioner Maguin motioned for approval of the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Dojiri, and the minutes were unanimously approved

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

3. QUARTERLY STATEMENT OF INVESTMENTS AT DECEMBER 31, 2010

4. MINUTES OF CTAG MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 4, 2010

There were no comments on the remainder of the consent agenda. Commissioner Dojiri motioned for approval of the remaining consent items, seconded by Commissioner Meyer, and the items were unanimously approved.

REGULAR AGENDA

5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Executive Director reported on current activities of the Authority and began by noting the large number of meetings being held at SCCWRP, which averaged 14 per month even during the holiday season. In addition to its many meetings on collaborative projects, SCCWRP was also becoming a training center for the member agencies, with recent classes on stream monitoring, algal bioassessment, and riparian plant identification. Weisberg was encouraging use of the facility for that purpose, citing the great member agency interest in a recent training event run by the Environmental Protection Agency on new approaches to toxicity testing that filled the conference room to capacity.

Weisberg next featured three growing partnerships. The first was with the Alliance for Coastal Technologies (ACT), with which SCCWRP began its interactions in 1998 by co-hosting a workshop on the potential for developing rapid microbial measurement methods. He indicated that groundbreaking workshop stimulated the agency's research directions and eventually led to last summer's rapid method demonstration project. ACT recently reorganized and formed a Board of Directors, which elected Weisberg as Chair. He distributed a magazine from ACT called "The Sensor" to the Commission and noted that this partnership will help bring new technology to southern California for member agencies to evaluate. The second partnership was with the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute (MBARI), with which SCCWRP is developing a pier-mounted device that will measure fecal indicator bacteria using automated rapid methods and deliver continuous telemetered data via the web. The prototype will be likely be deployed for testing on the Santa Cruz Pier this summer. The third partnership involved the Center for Ocean Solutions (COS), which pursues management resolutions for complex ocean issues. Currently, the COS was developing better data management capacity, which dovetails with SCCWRP's efforts on the California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN). The

SCCWRP seminar speaker for March is from COS and will discuss data infrastructure for marine spatial planning.

Commissioner Skorpanich arrived at 9:50 AM.

Weisberg next highlighted two projects with significant activity in the last quarter. First, SCCWRP had hired a new program manager (Dr. Steven Steinberg) for CEDEN, who was beginning to coordinate the regional data centers and outreach to data-collecting agencies. Steinberg introduced himself and shared a bit about his background. He was still working two days a week to complete his obligations as a Professor at Humboldt State University, but would transition full-time to SCCWRP in June. The second project was the source identification pilot project (SIPP). SCCWRP coordinated a study beginning in January to test different methods for identifying bacterial sources to beaches. The project shipped nearly 7,000 blind samples to 42 investigators from around the globe who would be using 37 different methods to identify and quantify the 64 different combinations of bacterial sources. Both method performance and repeatability will be examined. Commissioner Maguin asked if the methods differentiated species of bacteria or just sources. Weisberg explained that some of the methods did measure species, but most of the methods focused on source differentiation by genetic markers that operated within a species. Lastly, Weisberg mentioned that one metric he uses to judge organizational success is how often people seek out SCCWRP expertise. He noted that Eric Stein, SCCWRP's Biology Department Head, was recently invited to give a series of lectures in China, and two scientists from China planned to spend two months at SCCWRP during the upcoming summer for training.

Weisberg asked for questions from the Commission on either his oral or written Director's Report. Commissioner Polhemus asked about SCCWRP's nutrient isotope tracer research, indicating that the State's groundwater isotope tracer project performed poorly when mixed sources were present. Martha Sutula, SCCWRP's Biogeochemistry Department Head, concurred with Commissioner Polhemus on the potential limitations of this tool, but indicated that it has not yet been evaluated for ocean inputs and the sources may be more distinct. Commissioner Dojiri asked when results would be available from the Source Identification Protocol Project (SIPP) method evaluation study. Weisberg expected data submission from the project participants by May 1 to enable a meeting that would take place among participants at the May 24 American Society for Microbiology meeting. He anticipated a verbal report to the Commission in September. Commissioner Mace asked if SCCWRP would bid on the request for proposals from the Marine Protected Area (MPA) Monitoring Enterprise (MME). Weisberg responded that they would not, as he preferred to work as a partner with the MME rather than as a contractor. He was next asked how he envisioned that partnership would develop. He replied that there were numerous opportunities, particularly in developing the assessment tools for characterizing condition of biological communities in the Southern California Bight, in implementation of the State Water Board's Areas of Special Biological Significance monitoring, and as SCCWRP moved forward with planning of the next Bight regional monitoring program. He added that it was still early in the collaboration process, as the MME had not yet selected their contractors nor finalized their sampling design. Commissioner Mace asked if it would be appropriate to invite the MME to the next Commission meeting to have them present their plans and identify how they would like to collaborate with SCCWRP. Weisberg responded that the Commission has not historically requested many presentations by outside groups, but he thought that it was appropriate and that the MME would likely welcome the opportunity for interaction.

Jo Ann Weber arrived at 10:10 AM.

6. CTAG REPORT

Dr. Tim Stebbins, the new Commission's Technical Advisory Group (CTAG) Chair, reported on the CTAG meeting held February 8. Stebbins was elected Chair, and Wanda Cross of the Santa Ana Regional Board was elected Vice-chair. He indicated that CTAG reviewed the Commission's contract memo and recommended Commission approval. CTAG received a presentation on the draft 2011-12 Research Plan and discussed three possible add-on projects. For the project to develop a gene microarray for identifying stressors for stream invertebrates, CTAG requested that SCCWRP be sure to make the linkage between stressors and the biological community condition, which Weisberg agreed is an important part of the project. CTAG will review another draft of the Research Plan in May before making a recommendation on the final version that will be presented to the Commission for approval in June.

CTAG liked SCCWRP's presentations on epidemiology studies and communication, which are included on the current Commission agenda. Stebbins next described planning for the third joint meeting with the San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) on May 19. Three main research topics will be discussed at that meeting, including biological effects, nutrients, and contaminants of emerging concern. Stebbins noted that SCCWRP and SFEI were interested in developing a shared approach for issuing fact sheets. Other items on the CTAG agenda included feedback from the 2011 SCCWRP Symposium, a Bight '08 update, and an update on the Clean Water Act thematic report preparation.

Commissioner Maguin asked about how much of the CTAG meeting was spent reviewing SCCWRP's work vs. serving as an information conduit. Stebbins replied that this issue was a topic of discussion at their meeting. During that discussion, several CTAG members asked to receive project information earlier in the project life cycle when there was more opportunity for project modification. Weisberg agreed this would be a good idea. As a result of the CTAG discussion, SCCWRP is compiling work plans and information about project advisory committees so CTAG can have additional insight about these projects at an early stage.

7. CONTRACT REVIEW

The Executive Director requested that the Commission approve a resolution regarding the following contracts that had been offered to the Authority:

- 1) State Water Resources Control Board (\$700,000)
Bioanalytical Methods for Recycled Water Applications
- 2) State Water Resources Control Board (\$120,000)
Screening for Chemicals of Emerging Concern in Los Angeles Region Freshwater Rivers
- 3) State Water Resources Control Board (\$270,000)
Bioobjectives Development
- 4) State Water Resources Control Board (\$510,000)
Technical Support for Nutrient Numeric Endpoint Development in California Estuaries
- 5) Moss Landing Marine Laboratory/San Jose State (\$300,000)
Depressional Wetlands
- 6) State Water Resources Control Board (\$150,000)

Expand the role of the State's Advisory Panel on CECs in Coastal and Marine Ecosystems to include inland freshwater systems

As an informational item, Weisberg also presented 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, they were noted to ensure that the direction of the Authority's work is consistent with the desires of the Commission.

- 7) Environment Canada (\$75,000)
Molecular Toxicity Identification
- 8) Aquatic Science Center (\$30,000)
Wetland Classification for Statewide Applicability

Weisberg explained that contract 6 did not appear on the supporting memo because it was first offered to the agency earlier that week. Commissioner Mace asked how the additional work associated with contract 6 would affect the project schedule, to which Weisberg responded that it would extend the Panel's original schedule by about 8 months. Mace expressed concern that the revised schedule might put the report out of sync with potential meetings by the OPC to address CECs. Weisberg indicated that there would be opportunity for interim briefings at such meetings and agreed to work with Commissioner Mace to ensure her needs were met.

Commissioner Meyer asked about how the Agency tracks the life cycle of its many projects and whether the staff could produce a matrix table describing project status for the Commission. Weisberg agreed to work with Meyer in preparing an example for review at the next Commission meeting. Commissioner Torres asked about reducing the need for paper copies of Commission materials, pointing out that Orange County has a special website where information is posted prior to their Board meetings. Weisberg responded that the meeting materials are already distributed electronically and that any Commissioner can opt not to receive a hard copy. Commissioner Maguin queried Weisberg about how contract amounts and scoping elements are determined. Weisberg responded with several common scenarios. Commission Chair Unger, observing the interest in understanding these details, suggested that this might be a good topic for a future meeting.

There were no objections to any of the contracts. Commissioner Maguin motioned to approve all contracts requiring Commission approval, which was seconded by Commissioner Dojiri. The motion was unanimously approved, with Commissioners Polhemus and Hashimoto abstaining.

8. EPIDEMIOLOGY STUDIES

Weisberg noted that epidemiology studies have historically been conducted at beaches with wastewater influence, rather than the nonpoint source impacted beaches that predominant in California. The SCCWRP studies focus on nonpoint source beaches and will fill a critical information need for EPA as they consider adoption of new criteria for rapid microbial measurement methods due in 2012. Commissioner Maguin asked about the health effects of sewage spills versus disinfected wastewater and Weisberg indicated that the EPA's recent epidemiology studies to evaluate rapid methods were specific to disinfected wastewater. In response to a question from Adam Fischer, Weisberg indicated that sampling for the SCCWRP studies was conducted during the dry summer period when the most swimmers are exposed, not following storm events.

Weisberg presented SCCWRP's study design, which he indicated followed EPA's to ensure that any differences we observed with their results at wastewater affect beaches could be attributed to conditions at California beaches, rather than to methodological differences. The study examined health effects in swimmers versus non-swimmers at three beaches (Doheny and Malibu State Beaches, Avalon Bay Beach). In addition, the ability to predict swimming-associated illness was evaluated for different bacterial indicators and methods. Weisberg indicated that this was still an interim report, with data analysis completed for Doheny, but still ongoing for the other two beaches. He noted that there was an increase in the incidence of illness for swimmers at Doheny and that there was a relationship between indicator concentrations and illness when the stream was flowing across the beach; the predictive ability dramatically decreased when a berm formed and the source was discontinuous. The new rapid microbial measurement methods provided comparable predictive ability to traditional measurement methods, though the predictive ability of the rapid methods was superior when the one-day time lag for processing the traditional methods was considered.

Commissioner Mace asked if the source(s) of bacteria had been identified that contributed to illness at each of the beaches. Weisberg noted that he was waiting for the evaluation of source tracking measurement methods (see Agenda Item #5), but intended to apply the most promising method(s) on archived samples from the study. Commissioner Mace asked about the health risk from nonhuman fecal sources. Weisberg explained that recent quantitative microbial risk assessment (QMRA) studies to address that question had found that pathogenicity of cow fecal material is similar to that of human material, but health risk from bird fecal material is an order of magnitude less. He further indicated that EPA was presently considering whether to establish variable criteria depending on the site-specific sources, which would be based on these QMRA studies and SCCWRP's evaluation of how accurately source identification methods allowed characterization of site-specific sources. Commissioner Hubner asked how the Commission could help move the adoption of rapid methods forward more quickly. Weisberg indicated that he had recently briefed EPA staff on results from last summer's Demonstration Project, as well as other SCCWRP studies, which appeared to have a large influence on their thought process. Commissioner Dojiri indicated that he hoped to move forward with a demonstration project in Los Angeles this summer, which Weisberg indicated SCCWRP would support and would provide additional useful information in helping EPA with their criteria development.

9. COMMUNICATION

Weisberg presented SCCWRP's communication strategy, starting with a reminder of the agency's philosophy established at previous Commission strategic planning meetings to target communication toward member agencies and other water quality management audiences, rather than the general public or K-12 students. He indicated that SCCWRP is currently spending about \$600,000 each year on communication, about two-thirds of which is specific to communication with member agencies. Remaining expenditures are also relevant to the member agencies, but are targeted toward reaching other public agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and fellow scientists that participate in water quality management dialog.

Within member agencies, SCCWRP specifically focuses on communicating through CTAG. Weisberg reviewed communication mechanisms for CTAG, including quarterly meetings at which CTAG typically reviews at least two projects, quarterly Director's Report that includes a short progress report on every project, monthly e-mails describing when SCCWRP staff are planning to give external seminars, and manuscript review; every manuscript that staff prepares, even when they are junior authors to other institutions, is provided to CTAG for review. In addition, the annual SCCWRP Symposium is planned in partnership with CTAG to assist them in communicating our work to their fellow member agency staff.

Weisberg next talked about communication with the Commission, which is accomplished formally through quarterly Commission meetings and quarterly Director's report. This is augmented with annual informal meetings with each Commissioner, usually over lunch, to get a better understanding of member agency needs and which SCCWRP projects provide the most value. One output of these meetings was an expressed desire to improve communication with the Commissioner's oversight bodies, which has led to development of two new communication products. One is a coffee table type document that provides a 40 year retrospective on the effectiveness of the Clean Water Act being written in collaboration with CTAG. The second is a series of two-page fact sheets that each Commissioner could share with their respective oversight committees. Weisberg distributed an example on the topic of rapid indicator measurement methods. The Commission reacted positively to the draft fact sheet and Weisberg displayed a topic list created and ranked by CTAG for future fact sheets. Weisberg offered to prepare another fact sheet on chemicals of emerging concern for discussion at the next Commission meeting.

Weisberg next described the mechanisms used for communicating with the scientific community, including publishing in scientific journals, making presentations at scientific conferences, serving on advisory committees, and participation in scientific societies. Weisberg handed out a list of federal, state, and project advisory committees that SCCWRP staff presently serve on.

Finally, Weisberg reviewed mechanisms for communicating with other water quality management agencies and NGOs. These include the web site, the SCCWRP Annual Report and participation in consortia, such as the Stormwater Monitoring Coalition, the Beach Water Quality Work Group, the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project, the Orange County Coastal Coalition, and the Multi-Agency Rocky Intertidal Network. He also indicated the many advisory committees that staff serve on also lead to communication with other agencies.

At the end of the presentation, he asked the Commissioners what SCCWRP could do to improve communication. Commissioner Torres inquired about CTAG's charter and discussion ensued about how CTAG could enhance their level of technical review. Commissioners Meyer and Unger suggested re-examining CTAG's charter at a future Commission meeting. Commissioner Polhemus suggested that perhaps other agency staff with different areas of expertise might be able to assist the CTAG representative in conducting technical review. Weisberg responded that such mechanism was already in place and that any CTAG member could invite subject matter experts either from within or from outside their organization to the CTAG meetings. Polhemus also asked about distributing the CTAG agenda more widely, to which Weisberg replied that CTAG receives their meeting materials through a listserv and that any CTAG member can request that additional staff be added to that listserv. Commissioner Skorpanich suggested webcasting more meetings, which Weisberg indicated could be arranged easily upon request. Commissioner Torres returned to the earlier discussion about enhancing CTAG review early in the project planning phase. Torres also asked about moving SCCWRP seminars to a different day of the week, since many agency employees are out on Fridays. Weisberg noted that the conference rooms are typically in use and SCCWRP scientists are often offsite on other days of the week, but all of the seminars are webcast and recorded for later viewing on SCCWRP's website. Commissioner Unger concluded the discussion by asking the CTAG Chair to report back at the next Commission meeting about which elements of interactions with CTAG are working well and what actions CTAG could take to address areas that need improvement.

10. FUTURE MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

Commission members identified a number of potential agenda items for the next meeting:

- Bight '08 - Commissioner Barker asked for both a status update and full report on the 2008 Bight Regional Monitoring Program. Weisberg agreed to provide the status update at the next meeting and discuss when to schedule presentation of the findings.
- Governance - Commissioners Meyer and Skorpanich raised the issue of SCCWRP's governance structure and voting rights, and requested an agenda item to frame specific questions for consideration by the Commission's Personnel and Finance Committee. Commissioner Polhemus suggested first reviewing an earlier discussion on this topic from a previous strategic planning meeting.
- Chronic toxicity test - Commissioner Maguin asked about an informational presentation on the State Board's chronic toxicity statistical test, so that the Commission could consider the possibility of asking SCCWRP to do some work in this area.
- National Beach Conference - Commissioner Skorpanich asked for a recap of the National Beach Conference.
- MPA Monitoring - Commissioner Mace asked about scheduling a discussion with the MPA Monitoring Enterprise. Weisberg added that since they will begin sampling in the summer, it would be best not to delay this item. Commissioner Maguin suggested that the item include a discussion of both baseline and special monitoring.

11. OTHER BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS

There was no other business.

12. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Barbara Cameron from the City of Malibu encouraged the Commission to hear a presentation from the MPA Monitoring Enterprise, citing the importance of integrating that effort with the Bight regional monitoring program.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:34 PM until the next Commission meeting on June 3, 2011.

ATTEST:

Bryan Nece
Secretary