

**Minutes of the Regular Commission Meeting of the
Southern California Coastal Water Research Project Authority (SCCWRP)**

**Held at the offices of the Authority:
3535 Harbor Blvd., Costa Mesa, California 92626**

**December 5, 2014
9:30 AM**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

John Kemmerer — *US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region IX*
Vicky Whitney — *State Water Resources Control Board*
Catherine Kuhlman — *California Ocean Protection Council*
Sam Unger — *Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Kurt Berchtold (Chair) — *Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board*
David Barker — *San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Mas Dojiri — *City of Los Angeles*
Grace Hyde — *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*
Bob Ghirelli — *Orange County Sanitation District*
Tim Stebbins — *City of San Diego*
Gerhardt Hubner (Vice-Chair) — *Ventura County Watershed Protection District*
Gary Hildebrand — *Los Angeles County Department of Public Works*
Mary Anne Skorpanich — *County of Orange*
Todd Snyder — *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 Scientist*
John Griffith — *Principal Scientist*
Keith Maruya — *Principal Scientist*
Eric Stein — *Principal Scientist*
Steve Steinberg — *Principal Scientist*
Martha Sutula — *Principal Scientist*
Shelly Moore — *Supervising Scientist*
Scott Martindale — *Editor*

OTHERS PRESENT

Phil Friess — *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*
Cid Tesoro — *Port of San Diego*
Bruce Posthumus — *San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board*
Peter Vroom — *City of San Diego*
Joe Gully (CTAG Chair) — *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*
Gerald McGowen

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

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. Minutes of Meeting Held September 5, 2014**
- 2. Quarterly Financial Statement for the Period Ended September 30, 2014**
- 3. Quarterly Statement of Investments at September 30, 2014**
- 4. Minutes of CTAG Meetings Held November 13, 2014**
- 5. 2014 Financial Audit**

Commissioner Ghirelli motioned to approve Consent Items 1-5, and Commissioner Whitney seconded the motion. The Commission approved the motion unanimously with Commissioner Kemmerer abstaining.

Commissioner Skorpanich arrived at 9:36 AM.

REGULAR AGENDA

6. Personnel and Finance Committee Report

Commissioner Ghirelli, Chair of the Personnel and Finance Committee, reported on SCCWRP's annual audit and finances, which were presented at the Committee's December 5, 2014 morning meeting. Ghirelli said SCCWRP received a clean audit for the 14th year in a row and congratulated staff for effectively managing the agency's finances. The agency's financial position remains strong. Ghirelli also stated that Personnel and Finance Committee at their morning meeting developed 2015 performance goals for the Executive Director.

7. Strategic Planning Committees

The strategic planning committees that were formed at the Commission's May 2014 Strategic Planning meeting provided updates:

- Funding Model Committee: Commissioner Hyde, chair of the Funding Model Committee, stated that the Committee had met and anticipates bringing a recommendation regarding the future of SCCWRP funding to the Commission at its June meeting, well in advance of the expiration of the agency's Joint Powers Agreement in 2017.
- Mission Statement Committee: Commissioner Hyde, chair of the Mission Statement Committee, presented a revised Mission Statement for Commission consideration. Commissioner Dojiri suggested that the Mission Statement's focus on enhancing the scientific foundation for "water quality management" could be viewed too narrowly, prompting a discussion among Commissioners that culminated with Commissioner Snyder recommending the following substitution: "To enhance the scientific

foundation for management of Southern California’s ocean and associated coastal watershed resources.” Commissioner Hyde was asked why the word “unbiased” was included in Goal 2 of the Mission Statement, as it was redundant with the words “respected source”. However, several Commissioners indicated they felt it was an important enhancement. Commissioner Dojiri expressed concern that Goal 3b – “Effectively communicate SCCWRP’s research purposes and findings to member agencies and other stakeholders” – would not adequately capture SCCWRP’s role in transferring technology to member agencies. Commissioner Hyde encouraged Commissioners with additional suggested revisions to send them to Weisberg for the Committee’s consideration and agreed to bring back a revised version for Commission approval at the March meeting.

- Commissioner Lunch Committee: Executive Director Weisberg reported that the first Commissioner lunch following the September 2014 Commission meeting had been effective and that the second lunch was scheduled immediately following today’s meeting with the state and federal regulatory member agencies (excluding the regional boards). The Regional Boards agreed to go out to lunch with Weisberg after the March 2015 Commission meeting, followed by wastewater treatment agencies in June 2015.

8. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Weisberg thanked Commissioner Cid Tesoro, who recently left his job with the County of San Diego for a new position with the Port of San Diego, for his many years of service to the Commission. Weisberg noted that Tesoro played an instrumental role in the addition of stormwater agencies as members of the Commission. Weisberg presented Tesoro with a plaque and homemade cookies.

Weisberg began his Director’s Report by announcing several awards that SCCWRP had received in the last quarter:

- Steve Steinberg received the Outstanding Poster Award during the 2014 Esri Ocean GIS Forum in November.
- Steve Steinberg received an Ocean Leadership Award from the West Coast Governors Alliance on Ocean Health
- The Algalita Marine Research Foundation recognized SCCWRP with a Certificate of Recognition for SCCWRP’s role in providing scientific support and guidance to Algalita as Algalita developed its research expeditions.
- Weisberg, John Griffith and Yiping Cao received a Level II Scientific and Technological Achievement Award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for their contributions to development of quantitative polymerase chain reaction methods for use in quantifying microbial water contamination.

Weisberg reported that the intersessional topical research planning sessions with CTAG continue to be successful. In particular, he noted that the last one on contaminants of emerging concern was attended by NOAA’s Director of Water Quality Monitoring, Status and Trends Assessments and EPA’s Director for Standards and Criteria Division, both of whom made special trips from Washington DC to participate. Weisberg indicated that both agencies highly respect SCCWRP’s leadership role and are supportive of its research

direction. Also both agencies were interested to see the how the member agencies react to the science directions, as SCCWRP provides a unique venue for assessing how science products might flow to a user community.

Weisberg said the Surfer Health Study launched successfully on December 1, 2014, with robust surfer participation and a plan in place to perform daily water sampling. The unique study was already receiving strong media coverage from multiple surfing organizations. Asked by Commissioner Snyder about why there was so much media coverage of the Surfer Health Study, Deputy Director Schiff, the study's lead, said that multiple surfing organizations had been publicizing it.

Weisberg reported on SCCWRP's collaboration with XPRIZE. XPRIZE held a competition to developed pH sensors designed to monitor ocean acidification. In the next stage of the competition, SCCWRP and its four POTW member agencies would be partnering with XPRIZE to test four newly developed pH sensors. That testing is scheduled to begin in May.

Weisberg finished by reporting on the State Water Board's recycled drinking water research priorities workshop that was held at SCCWRP on October 29, 2014. The State Board considered the workshop a success in enhancing communication among the many parties involved in decisions about water reuse, including the State Board, the Regional Boards, stormwater agencies, wastewater treatment agencies and drinking water agencies. Another achievement of the workshop was an enhanced relationship between and two of the leading recycled water organizations – National Water Reuse Foundation (NWRF) and the WaterReuse Research Foundation (WRRF), all of which contributed to helping the State Board organize and run the workshop. Weisberg indicated that the workshop was organized around four research themes: a) human health, b) operations and engineering, c) ambient water effects and d) economic and social effects. Weisberg stated that the one research area he anticipates expanding based on the workshop outcome is how reduced flow from diminished wastewater discharges affects stream health. This dovetails well with existing SCCWRP research on flow ecology and which was identified as a priority by workshop participants. Asked by Commissioner Skorpanich about how recycled water could alter streams fed primarily by effluent, Eric Stein, head of the Biology Department, said that the first step will be for scientists to establish how much flow is optimal/appropriate for organisms living in these streams. Commissioner Whitney, who hosted the workshop on behalf of the State Water Board, commented that the workshop was highly successful and thanked SCCWRP for their contributions. Commissioners Gibson and Berchtold, who were workshop participants, echoed that sentiment.

9. CTAG Report

CTAG Chair Gully reported that CTAG was supportive of the redesigned 2014 Annual Report. In reviewing the draft material, CTAG had a concern that Report needed to enhance the connection between the cover story on sediment quality and the science that SCCWRP has done to create the story. Therefore, CTAG was seeking feedback from the Commission as to whether the main purpose of the new Annual Report was to communicate SCCWRP's work to upper level managers or to document the activities of SCCWRP during the year,

which would be more consistent with a true Annual Report. Several Commissioners responded that it was both, but the quarterly Director's Reports served to document SCCWRP's activities and therefore the emphasis should be on communication. Weisberg indicated that CTAG's feedback had been helpful and staff is making changes to the Annual Report to make sure both objectives were addressed. Gully also noted that CTAG was standing by to review all of the articles in the Annual Report through their standard publication review process.

Gully reported that CTAG held an intersessional collaborative CEC research planning workshop with SCCWRP staff in October and found that most of SCCWRP's research directions in this arena aligned well with CTAG research priorities. Gully noted, though, that funding does not yet exist for some of the identified priorities for both SCCWRP and CTAG. Gully finished by indicating that the collaborative research planning process developed earlier this year continues to be successful.

Gully said CTAG endorsed a SCCWRP staff recommendation that since research planning with CTAG was now a year-round process, the Research Plan submitted for Commission approval in June should take the form of an executive summary organized around thematic areas. The Executive Summary Research Plan should present a 10- to 15-year research vision, rather than a more narrow, one-year vision. Under the proposed new research planning process between staff and CTAG, the Commission would receive a 20-page Research Plan Executive Summary for approval each fiscal year, and the full Research Plan (which would be hundreds of pages long) would be written incrementally with CTAG throughout the year and become a living document. Gully urged the Commission to support this new Research Plan.

Gully said CTAG recommended approval of Contracts 1-6, noting that Contracts 7-8 were offered to the agency subsequent to their meeting and therefore were not reviewed by CTAG.

10. Contract Review

SCCWRP's Joint Powers Agreement requires Commission approval of contracts in excess of \$250,000. In addition, the State of California requests a resolution of acceptance for contracts exceeding \$100,000 offered by the State or Regional Water Boards.

Weisberg recommended approval of the contract exceeding \$250,000:

- 1) Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (\$1,343,000)
Marina del Rey Toxics TMDL Special Studies

Commissioner Stebbins motioned to approve the contract, and Commissioner Dojiri seconded the motion. The Commission approved the motion unanimously, with Commissioners Hildebrand, Whitney and Kemmerer abstaining.

As an informational item, Weisberg also presented contracts with a value of \$250,000 or less, which SCCWRP has accepted or indicated a willingness to accept. While SCCWRP's

governing agreement requires no Commission action on these, the contracts were presented to ensure consistency of the agency's directions with the Commission's intentions.

- 2) State Water Resources Control Board (\$100,000)
Beach Watch
- 3) NOAA (\$99,717)
Bioaccumulative Chemicals in Marine Mammals
- 4) County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (\$95,000)
Bight'13 Water Quality Nutrient Analyses
- 5) San Francisco Estuary Institute (\$40,000)
Cyanotoxins Strategy Report
- 6) SANDAG (\$11,140)
Buena Vista Lagoon Enhancement
- 7) State Water Resources Control Board (\$100,000)
Dissolved Oxygen Objectives
- 8) US Environmental Protection Agency (through University of North Carolina Wilmington)
(\$85,350)
Toxicity Linkage Study with Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals

The Commission did not raise any objections to the contracts.

11. SCCWRP 2015-2016 Research Plan

Executive Director Weisberg reinforced CTAG Chair Gully's observation that the new collaborative research planning process was working well, but necessitated a revision of the format for the Annual Research Plan submitted to the Commission in June for their approval. He reported that the proposed new Research Plan format would be to create a series of twenty-page ten-year research visions for each of SCCWRP's thematic areas that would be updated continuously as funding for new projects within those areas became available. Weisberg added that he would also like to produce an Executive Summary Research Plan for the Commission to review annually. The Executive Summary would provide a broad overview of the directions the agency was taking within each theme area, and would serve as a pointer to the more detailed project-specific documents for each theme area if a Commissioner wished to have that greater level of detail. Weisberg noted that the new Research Plan structure would ensure that the Research Plan does not become quickly outdated as new funding arrives throughout the year, as the more detailed thematic research plans would be updated continuously with CTAG. He indicated that the approach would also better inform the Commission about the staff's directions, as SCCWRP internally plans its research in longer than one-year increments.

Commissioner Ghirelli expressed support for the new Research Plan process and encouraged staff to emphasize in the Research Plan Executive Summary why SCCWRP works in each of its thematic research areas. Asked by Commissioner Stebbins whether the Commission Dashboard should be scrapped as well, Weisberg said that all Commission communication products, including the quarterly Director's Reports, would likely be altered by this shift in the research planning process towards a more integrated thematic focus.

There were several positive comments and no objections to moving forward with the new Research Plan process.

12. Annual Report

In response to CTAG concerns that the 2014 Annual Report was too focused around only one research area (sediment quality) and did not illustrate the breadth of the agency's work, Weisberg proposed two possible solutions: (1) Staff could prepare two-page summaries for each thematic research area that summarize key accomplishments, or (2) staff could provide additional text in the document that explains how to find additional information about all of the research areas in which the agency works. Weisberg noted that the two-page summaries would significantly increase the girth of the Annual Report and could potentially confuse the reader by shifting the focus away from the feature articles and onto the non-feature accomplishments summaries.

Commissioners endorsed the first option, expressing confidence that the additional content would greatly improve the ability of the Annual Report to communicate both the breadth and depth of SCCWRP's research. Weisberg said staff would add the two-page summaries to the Annual Report as requested.

13. Information Technology and Visualization

Executive Director Weisberg introduced the item by explaining that the Information Management & Analysis Department was transitioning from serving as a support department to a true research department, and that the department's full research vision would be the focus of the next CTAG intersessional research planning workshop in January 2015.

Steve Steinberg, head of the Information Management & Analysis Department, opened his presentation on the department's research vision by discussing the impact that SCCWRP's data management efforts have had on environmental monitoring programs through the decades. He indicated that the data formats developed through the Bight program and the SMC have served as the foundation for both the local data management systems of many of the member agencies, as well as for state programs like the Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program. Although the Department will continue with these core data management efforts, Steinberg said they are taking on more of a research focus around three topic areas: data acquisition, data management, and data visualization. The rest of his presentation focused on acquisition and visualization, which are the newer research areas. Within data acquisition, he spoke about mobile acquisition technologies, including development of a portable field microscope called the CellScope that links to a smartphone,

a set of computer probes that can be used to monitor water quality, and environmental monitoring drones that can capture overhead images of landscapes. Within data visualization, he described calculators that can automatically generate numerical indices of biological condition, computerized visualization tools (including virtual reality), and GIS software that can calculate and analyze various hypothetical scenarios.

Asked by Commissioner Snyder about using drones, Steinberg said they could be used to fly above a watershed or estuary and that they would be remote-controlled by a person, not autonomously controlled. Asked by Commissioner Skorpanich about what types of variables could be tested using simulation models, Steinberg said the models would need to be based on algorithmic variables.

14. Future Meeting Agenda Items

Commissioner Dojiri asked for an update on digital PCR and the new automated bacterial measurement devices that the agency was developing. Executive Director Weisberg said the timing for that item would be better in the fall, as the organization was still in the early phases of that research. Weisberg indicated that CTAG was planning ~~to~~ their next two meetings around wetlands and climate change, topics which several Commissioners had also asked for. He suggested using those topics for the next two Commission meetings, and then focusing the September Commission meeting on advances in microbiology. Commissioner Dojiri indicated that was acceptable.

Weisberg announced that the new Mission Statement would be presented to the Commission for final approval in March 2015, and plans for a revised funding model would be presented in June 2015.

15. Other Business and Communications

Commissioner Stebbins announced that Peter Vroom, Deputy Director for the City of San Diego Public Utilities Department's Environmental Monitoring and Technical Services Division, would be replacing Stebbins effective January 1, 2015. Stebbins said he would continue to serve as the City's CTAG Representative.

Commissioner Kuhlman stated that the California Ocean Science Trust was scheduling a series of webinars to discuss the findings of its Ocean Acidification panel and that all Commissioners were invited to participate.

Asked by Commissioner Unger if SCCWRP could assist member agencies in planning for sea level rise, Weisberg said that staff were just beginning to explore partnerships in that area that would allow them to meet that request. He further indicated that staff would be scheduling an all-day CTAG research planning meeting in the coming months to discuss how SCCWRP should focus its work in the climate change arena, of which sea level rise was part. He envisions reporting on that at the June Commission meeting. Several Commissioners requested that the talk include steps that environmental managers can take to respond to impacts, how to measure the rate at which climate change is occurring, and future impacts of storm surge.

Commissioner Whitney reported that the State Water Board's trash policy had recently become effective and that its wetlands policy would be released in January 2015, followed by a desalination policy in February or March.

16. Public Comments

No public comments were raised.

17. Adjournment

Commission Chair Berchtold adjourned the meeting at 12:05 PM until the next Commission meeting on March 6, 2015.

Attest:

Bryan Nece
Secretary