

**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 13, 2008  
9:30 a.m.**

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**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

Diego Cadena - *Los Angeles County Department of Public Works*  
Mas Dojiri - *City of Los Angeles*  
Tracy Egoscue - *Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region*  
Robert Ghirelli - *Orange County Sanitation District*  
Janet Hashimoto - *US Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX*  
Gerhardt Hubner – *Ventura County Watershed Protection District*  
Steve Maguin - *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*  
Darrin Polhemus - *State Water Resources Control Board*  
John Robertus - *Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Region*  
Mary Anne Skorpanich - *County of Orange*  
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*  
Eric Stein - *Principal Investigator*  
Chris Solek – *Scientist*  
Angelica Longoria – *Administrative Assistant*  
Heliana Teixeira - *Intern*

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Nick Ashbolt – *US Environmental Protection Agency*  
Joe Gully - *Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts*  
Gerry McGowen – *City of Los Angeles*  
George Robertson - *Orange County Sanitation District*  
Bill O'Brian – *City of Ojai*  
Art Coe – *Public*  
Irwin Haydock – *Public*  
Pete Michael – *Public*

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

**CONSENT AGENDA**

1. **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD MARCH 14, 2008**
2. **QUARTERLY FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED MARCH 31, 2008**
3. **QUARTERLY STATEMENT OF INVESTMENTS AT MARCH 31, 2008**
4. **MINUTES OF CTAG MEETINGS OF FEBRUARY 26, 2008**

Commissioner Maguin motioned for approval of consent items, which was seconded by Commissioner Dojiri. The consent items were unanimously approved.

Commissioner Skorpanich arrived at 9:47 am.

### **REGULAR AGENDA**

#### **5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

The Executive Director reported on the continued success of the Agency in creating partnerships to achieve scientific consensus, giving several examples:

- SCCWRP hosted a workshop on Harmful Algal Bloom monitoring in California that was co-sponsored by NOAA, the California Ocean Science Trust and attended by 40 of the leading national experts on the topic. The workshop resulted in agreement among the experts to initiate a statewide harmful algal bloom monitoring network and the Agency was asked by the workshop participants to take the lead in organizing the network. Taking advantage of having the expert scientists at the facility, SCCWRP also held a one-day phytoplankton taxonomic training course for the member agencies prior to the workshop.
- SCCWRP recently organized an intercalibration study for how to measure bacteria in sand, for which the six leading experts in the field came to southern California to process a set of common samples using 21 different method variations. Results of the study will be used to identify a preferred method for future sand studies.
- Dr. Angel Borja, Europe's leading scientist in sediment quality assessments, spent a week at SCCWRP to compare assessment methods used in California and the European Union. Dr. Weisberg also introduced Heliana Teixeira, a Ph.D. student from Portugal who was interning at SCCWRP and doing her dissertation comparing European and SCCWRP approaches to benthic biological indicators. These two collaborations are intended to foster a unified international approach to sediment quality assessments.
- Dr. Weisberg introduced Dr. Nick Ashbolt, one of the scientists leading the US EPA's Office of Research and Development effort to develop new national beach water quality criteria. Dr. Ashbolt is an expert in Quantitative Microbial Risk Assessment (QMRA) and was visiting SCCWRP to explore a potential partnership in conducting QMRA at the same beach as SCCWRP's Epidemiology Study (Doheny Beach).

Dr. Weisberg noted that the new Costa Mesa facility is serving as a catalyst for interaction with conference room occupancy averaging 16 meetings per month. He indicated that several

organizations were borrowing our facility for their meetings, which provides the opportunity to meet new stakeholders. As an example, the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) recently sponsored a public forum on Low Impact Development technology to help formulate their new water quality policy. Since the forum was held at our facility, the meeting introduced SCCWRP to several new organizations that share an interest with us on this topic.

Dr. Weisberg next reported on several offsite meetings that agency personnel had attended. He had been appointed to the SB1070 Monitoring Council, which was created by the state legislature and is responsible for recommending improved information dissemination for monitoring data statewide. As a representative of the SB1070 Monitoring Council, Dr. Weisberg was also asked to serve on a panel helping plan EPA's Office of Water's next National Coastal Condition Report. Next, Dr. Weisberg described his participation at the National Ocean Summit hosted by the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute. The Summit was a forum for educating federal legislators about ocean science issues. He indicated that he was invited as a water quality expert, but other than inquiries about harmful algal blooms, questions at the meeting rarely focused on contaminants and discharges. Several Commissioners asked what the primary topic of interest to the legislators was at the Summit and Dr. Weisberg responded that most questions focused on climate change effects on the ocean, particularly ocean acidification. Several Commissioners asked for a briefing on climate change effects on the ocean at their next meeting.

The Executive Director finished with an Administrative Report, indicating that revenues were on target and that the agency was effectively rebuilding the fund balance that had been reduced by costs associated with the new facility. He also indicated that the new web site was proceeding well and that he hoped to provide a preview at the next Commission meeting. Finally, he discussed status of the pending Joint Powers Agreement, indicating that there had been a request for a change to the Agreement that had been approved at the previous meeting. The Agreement called for changing the organization's name from "Southern California Coastal Water Research Project Authority" to "Southern California Coastal Water Research Partnership". Counsel had identified some legal connotations associated with the word "partnership" and recommended against the using the term to avoid confusion. The Personnel and Finance Committee recommended that the draft Joint Powers Agreement be modified to retain the original name of the organization, to which the Commission agreed.

Commissioner Egoscue asked for additional detail about the amount appearing in the "Miscellaneous" category of the quarterly financial statement, noting that it was larger than typically associated with miscellaneous expenses. Dr. Weisberg indicated that he understood the concern, would provide her with additional details about those expenses and would suggest ways at the next Commission meeting to more appropriately categorize those items so as to keep the miscellaneous expense category small.

## **6. CTAG REPORT**

Gerry McGowen, Chair of the Commissioner's Technical Advisory Committee (CTAG), presented a summary of their May 29th meeting. CTAG representatives received the Director's Report and Bight'08 update from Ken Schiff, Deputy Director. He also indicated that CTAG had reviewed the draft 2008/2009 Research Plan and voted to recommend its approval by the Commission. There were three technical presentations. Ken Schiff gave a presentation on SCCWRP's epidemiology study. Eric Stein gave a presentation on the levels of bacteria at reference sites located throughout southern California. Kerry Ritter gave a presentation on advances in designing effective and cost efficient monitoring programs for member agencies.

There was also discussion about potentially adding the San Francisco Estuary Institute as a member of CTAG. The next CTAG meeting will be held August 28, 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) State Water Resources Control Board (\$1,000,000)  
Epidemiology Study to Assess Swimmer Health Risk

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

- 2) U.S. EPA (\$295,159)  
Statewide Network of Reference Wetlands

Upon the motion of Commissioner Egoscue, seconded by Commissioner Maguin, the contract was unanimously approved by Resolution, with Commissioner Hashimoto 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.

- 3) U.S. EPA (\$90,728)  
Marine Benthic Indicators
- 4) State Water Resources Control Board (\$75,000)  
Emerging Contaminants on Fish in Upper Newport Bay
- 5) State Water Resources Control Board (\$50,000)  
Bight'08
- 6) California Department of Health Services (\$75,000)  
Beach Watch
- 7) State Water Resources Control Board (through San Jose State University) (\$29,323)  
Bioassessment Data Management
- 8) United States Geological Survey (\$25,000)  
National Hydrography Dataset (NHD)

There were no objections to any of these contracts.

## **8. FISCAL YEAR 2008/2009 RESEARCH PLAN AND BUDGET**

Dr. Weisberg presented the 2008/09 Research Plan to the Commission for their approval. He emphasized that the majority of the projects are multi-year studies conducted in partnership with other organizations. He also pointed out the organization of this year's Research Plan by

thematic areas, as requested by CTAG. Dr. Weisberg then provided an overview on some of the new areas of research emphasis.

Upon motion of Commissioner Robertus and seconded by Commissioner Maguin, the 2008/2009 Research Plan and Budget was unanimously approved.

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

Dr. Weisberg described the draft salary resolution for Commission consideration, which earlier had been reviewed by the Personnel and Finance Committee. The draft resolution included three changes from last year's resolution in response to results from the recent salary survey. The first was adjusting the salary ranges for the Deputy Director, Principal Scientist, Supervising Scientist, Administrative Officer and Information Systems Manager, which were found to be below average in the salary survey. The salary range for other job classifications would be adjusted based on the All-Urban Consumers CPI index increase for the Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County Consolidated Metropolitan Area, which is presently 3.3%. Second, a 403b 100% matching program for the first 2% of employee salary has been added. Third, the Administrative Analyst classification was removed and replaced with new position classifications for Network Administrator, Office Manager and Editor to better reflect their respective job responsibilities. The salary range for these positions was set as the average of the range for each of these positions from the recent salary survey.

Upon the motion of Commissioner Robertus and seconded by Commissioner Maguin, the resolution, to be effective July 1, 2008, was unanimously approved.

**10. BIGHT'08 UPDATE**

Ken Schiff reported on progress of the Southern California Bight'08 Regional Monitoring Program. He indicated that Bight'08 has more agencies (nearly 90) and more elements (6) than previous Bight efforts. Three program elements are consistent with previous Bight monitoring (coastal ecology, water quality, shoreline microbiology), while three are new to Bight'08 (rocky subtidal habitat, Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS), and estuarine eutrophication). Bight'08 planning is proceeding on pace for successful implementation and has already produced valuable products. For example, the Coastal Ecology quality assurance activities have documented improved laboratory performance and developed standardized guidance manuals for use in routine monitoring programs. The Bight'08 Rocky Habitat element, which includes kelp forests, has produced bight-wide maps of rocky reefs in southern California. This has potential benefit for the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative (MLPA), which is mandated to create marine protected areas in this region by 2010. Sampling for Coastal Ecology and Rocky Habitats is scheduled to begin this summer. Sampling for ASBS, Water Quality, and estuarine eutrophication is scheduled to begin in fall.

## **11. SCCWRP BROCHURE**

The Executive Director presented the new SCCWRP brochure for Commission review. Commissioner Egoscue suggested that the document was too busy and focused on the technical aspects of the organization, rather than on the shorter messages about the multi-institutional cooperative nature that makes the organization unique. After discussion, the consensus of the Commission was to produce a limited run of the brochure to fill immediate needs and re-examine potential design enhancements later this year. Dr. Weisberg indicated that he would get together individually with Commissioner Egoscue to obtain further suggestions for incorporation into the next version.

## **12. SCCWRP's EPIDEMIOLOGY STUDIES**

The Executive Director presented the results from the agency's 2007 epidemiology studies and plans for epidemiology studies in 2008. He indicated that SCCWRP was undertaking epidemiology studies for two reasons: 1) EPA's national criteria for beach water quality were based on studies conducted at beaches with known wastewater sources reaching the beach and studies were needed to assess whether their findings were applicable to beaches with nonpoint source inputs, which is the predominant beach type in California; and 2) several organizations, including SCCWRP were developing improved approaches based on molecular methods for measuring beach water quality, including measurement of organisms such as viruses, phages, and anaerobic bacteria, but that there was a need to establish health risk relationships for these methods before they can be used for public health protection. Over the next three years, epidemiology studies will be conducted in southern California at three study sites: Doheny (Dana Point), Avalon (Catalina Island), and Surfrider (Malibu) beaches, which cover a spectrum of contamination sources. Dr. Weisberg indicated that sampling was ongoing at the first two beaches and that sampling was going well. The Commission asked several questions about how new indicators might be incorporated into water quality criteria and whether they would replace enterococcus. Dr. Weisberg replied that he did not believe the new indicators would replace enterococcus, which is particularly abundant in the human intestinal tract and relatively inexpensive to measure. Rather, he felt that the additional measures are more human specific and would be used as confirmatory measures if they demonstrated a better health risk relationship than enterococcus. Dr. Weisberg also re-introduced Dr. Nick Ashbolt who talked about an approach the US EPA was considering: using Quantitative Microbial Risk Assessment to develop site-specific criteria based on the nature of the bacterial source. Several Commissioners asked for another briefing on the findings from the epidemiology study when they become available next spring.

## **13. BACTERIAL CONCENTRATIONS AT WATERSHED REFERENCE SITES**

Eric Stein presented SCCWRP's research on bacterial levels in natural streams from undeveloped catchments throughout southern California during dry weather. He indicated that these data would likely be used by several member agencies to set TMDL targets. The results indicated that bacterial levels in natural streams were typically low and nearly always below State water quality standards. Bacterial concentrations were influenced by environmental conditions such as flow and temperature with the highest concentrations (at times exceeding state water quality standards) occurring mid-summer when the potential for human contact is greatest. These results led to a discussion by the Commission that included indicator bacteria relationships to health risk. Dr. Weisberg was asked whether it was likely that the kinds of epidemiology studies described in the previous item would be conducted in freshwater. He responded that this was unlikely because there was no funding on the horizon for such studies.

Additionally, such a study would be logistically difficult since you need a large number of swimmers and an insufficient number of people swim in these freshwater streams.

**14. FUTURE MEETING AGENDA ITEMS**

The Commission Chair identified three items for future meetings. The first was the election of the Commission Chair and Vice-Chair. The second was a presentation on the Agency's new web site. The third was a presentation on ocean acidification.

**15. OTHER BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Dr. Weisberg indicated that he had been contacted by Commissioner Bohan asking whether they could opt out of receiving hard copies of the Commission meeting package, relying instead on the electronic versions that are also sent out. Bryan Nece indicated that any Commissioner can opt out of receiving hardcopies by contacting him at [bryann@sccwrp.org](mailto:bryann@sccwrp.org).

**16. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

**17. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:28 pm until the next Commission meeting on September 12, 2008.

ATTEST:

Bryan Nece  
Secretary