Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program

Steering Committee Meeting Notes

December 12, 2024, 10:00 am - noon

Meeting Attachments

- Monitoring Coordination - Interviews and workshop summary
- Draft WRMP Commitment to Equity
- WRMP Cost Sharing Memo
- October 15 TAC meeting notes
- December 6 TAC meeting notes
- September 26th Steering Committee meeting notes

Steering Committee members and alternates: Jessie Olson (Save the Bay), Luisa Valiela (EPA), Erica Johnson (SFBRA), Dave Halsing (SBSP), Marco Berger (Multicultural Center of Marin), Kelli McCune (SFBJV), Jaime Lopez (BCDC), Sarah Firestone (USACE), Karen Thorne (USGS), Jana Affonso (USFWS), Stacy Sherman (CDFW), Sarah Moncada (Association of Ramaytush Ohlone), Matt Ferner (NERR), Brenda Goeden (BCDC), Xavier Fernandez (Water Board), Tom Kimball (USGS), Erin Chappell (CDFW), Matt Graul (EBRPD), Erika Castillo (Alameda County Mosquito Abatement District), Renee Spenst (DU)

WRMP staff: Donna Ball (SFEI), Alex Thomsen (SFEP), Sasha Harris-Lovett (SFEP), Hannah Kempf (SFEP), Aviva Rossi (SFEI), Lisa Beers (SFEI), Karen Verpeet (SFEI), Melissa Foley (SFEI)

Other attendees: Kyra Skye Gmoser-Daskalakis (UC Davis), Laura Feinstein (SFEI),

1) Approval of 9/26/24 Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Jessie Olson

- Process:
  - Alternates may vote, but do not have to.
  - People who were absent from the previous meeting may abstain.
- Outcome:
  - Meeting minutes were approved.

2) Program Updates

Alex Thomsen, Estuary Partnership
Karen Verpeet, SFEI
Erica Johnson, SCC

- From Alex Thomsen -- People and Wetlands Workgroup update:
  - Alex is currently working on the Project Benefits Map, which displays restoration projects and identified benefits, with an EJ community boundary overlay.
  - Currently in the mock-up phase and working with People and Wetlands Workgroup and other interested parties to define the benefits and determine how to incorporate it in EcoAtlas.
  - Please reach out to Alex if you work with EcoAtlas and would like to provide input into the Project Benefits Map.

- From Karen Verpeet -- Other funding information:
  - The first disbursement of EPA Program Office funds went to SFEI for the WRMP last week. SFEP's portion of the disbursement should be coming soon.

- From Erica Johnson -- Prop 4 passed on Nov. 5, 2025:
  - Now Prop 4 is called the "2024 Climate Bond".
  - The Conservancy is receiving $948.5 million of the bond. $75 million is earmarked for specific conservancy projects, $33.5 to a wildfire project, $415 million to climate resilience, $350 million to sea level rise adaptation (coastal/shoreline), and $75 million to dam removal.
  - Erica does not know the amount of the first allocation, but it will be administered in July 2025.
  - Erica is actively updating the request for proposal documentation based on Prop 4 requirements, and will release it in the future.
  - Also, the WRMP applied for $2.9 million from San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority, which is going to the board tomorrow. WRMP can respond to questions here.
  - Question:
    - From Luisa: has the state decided what agency will administer funding?
    - The largest amount of funds will go to the Wildlife Conservation Board and the Conservancy, in addition to the State Water Board, Parks and Recreation, Ocean Protection Council, and others
- Indigenous Peoples Acknowledgement will soon be on the WRMP website. The acknowledgement includes actions the WRMP is committed to and working towards. Thank you to Deja Gould and Jonathan Cordero for their review and feedback.
  - Feedback:
    - Some concern voiced about the number of words in the acknowledgement.
    - Alex will follow up with Deja and Jonathan to brainstorm additional ways to visualize the website statement.
    - Possible consideration of a video option. Sarah will follow up with Jonathan.

3) Notes from the Field – WRMP Science in Action

Lisa Beers and Aviva Rossi, SFEI

Desired Outcomes: SC is informed about new WRMP science activities

- Update on Birds workgroup (Aviva Rossi)
- Site-Level Monitoring Updates (Lisa Beers)

- From Aviva -- Birds Workgroup has formed: A kickoff meeting occurred in early November.
    - During the meeting, they drafted monitoring questions and formed a subcommittee. They now have a final draft of monitoring questions. Next, they will work on indicators/metrics that are broad enough to encompass all birds of interest to the SC (not just tidal marsh birds).
- From Lisa -- Site-level monitoring updates:
    - Currently finalizing subcontracts to get folks in the field. Current team includes Levi Lewis (FFH), Chris Janousek (veg), Matt Ferner (transition/water quality), and Karen Thorne (SETs and marker horizons).
    - Lead Scientists are currently working with landowners to get permissions, etc., to work on site access.
    - Received 2024 SET data from Karen Thorne's group is now available. Also the2024 CRAM assessments are complete. More detailed info at the next SC meeting (18 of the 22 sites covered, 33 AA points).
    - Chris Janousek was in the field yesterday at Laumeister for ground water wells and vegetation transects.
        - From the chat: Chris Janousek calls his wells "ground water" wells but they are actually not that in terms of the traditional terms. They are pore water wells and stay within the root zone of the marsh. I would suggest renaming that monitoring task for clarity.
    - WRMP monitoring efforts are currently working within the permit structures of the landowners. Currently there are no issues with permitting. Steering Committee members from the regulatory agencies are open to assisting with permits and setting up conversations within their agencies.

4) Opportunities for Monitoring Coordination and Data-Sharing

Hannah Kempf, SFEP

Desired Outcomes: SC is informed about monitoring coordination workshop, and provides feedback and reflection on potential next steps for the WRMP.

- Process:
    - Started with a review of the monitoring enterprise in the Bay and Delta.
    - Followed with interviews with a subset of regional experts about challenges and opportunities for coordinating monitoring and data sharing across the Estuary.
    - Conducted a small workshop with interviewees to collect themes for WRMP staff to create action steps.

        - Interviewees agreed that coordinated monitoring could improve scientific understanding about regional drivers of change.
    - Today, the Steering Committee will discuss and prioritize potential next steps.
    - Hannah will make a final report by the end of this month.
    - WRMP staff will use the information from today to prioritize action steps, taking into account funding availability and staff capacity.
- Barriers:
    - Lack of funding, socio-political barriers, lack of standardized protocols among agencies conducting monitoring, comparable data are stored in different places.
- What role can the WRMP play in improving coordination?
    - Data sharing
    - Communications and networking
    - WRMP products
- Steering Committee is polled to prioritize action steps related to data sharing.
    - See screenshots at the end of the notes
    - Highest priority for data sharing – WRMP should identify management questions that require Estuary-wide data. But this should build off of existing management questions.
    - The original management questions were very collaborative and Estuary-wide.
    - There are many priority management questions that span the Bay and Delta that have yet to be addressed.
    - We need to be careful that we do not allow the Delta management questions dictate the Bay management questions.
    - Now is not the right time to update the management questions.
- Steering Committee is polled to prioritize action steps related to communications - first option is the top priority.
- Steering Committee is polled to prioritize action steps related to products – both products are equally desired. Follow-on discussion about whether an MOU is necessary or not.
- Questions:
    - Regarding communications: How would a bill be different from Bill Text - AB-1755 The Open and Transparent Water Data Act?
    - Regarding data sharing: Just want to note that some of these tools already exist, though currently primarily populated with Delta science and monitoring. Collection of metadata across monitoring enterprise: Home | Science Tracker; Tools to compare datasets and ID gaps: Delta Science Shiny apps; Also, IEP and DSC do not have their own proprietary data platforms but have coordinated use of existing efforts.
    - From Kelli McCune: Robyn Grimm and Tara Moran at the CA Water Data Consortium may be good to talk to, if you have not yet. The mission of the CA Water Data Consortium has some shared purpose as the WRMP. To achieve the AB1755 vision, implementing State agencies recognized the importance of broad collaboration inside and outside of government. To help realize the goals of AB1755, state agencies supported the creation of the California Water Data Consortium, a non-profit organization with active State participation. They may be a good learning exchange partner: https://cawaterdata.org/
    - Tom Kimball: I agree with those comments expressed - my two cents are 1) that while the WRMP is taking this on, I would presume there would be co-ownership/interest from the Delta side, and 2) I suggest that the first poll high priority "C" item may be modified to not include the last part of the sentence ("that can be within the same

platform"), or modify accordingly. As written discussions could get sidetracked on what is the right platform and data compatibility, etc.. Whereas, the focus may be simply the discussion around management questions/issues that need information from both the delta and estuary to inform them.

5) Participate in WRMP Science – Survey on Representation in Wetland Decision-Making

Alex Thomsen, SFEP

Desired Outcome: SC members take the representation survey.

- Provide background about the survey.
- SC members take the survey

- Survey covers demographics and feedback from target groups. The survey is developed in collaboration with UC Davis and approved by the IRB.
- Aggregated data will be made available in 2025.
- May be required by CA Public Records Act to release survey.
- Not collecting names/emails, and all questions are optional.
- People and Wetlands Workgroup decided on which groups to survey over time: those involved in wetlands restoration/adaptive management.
- If you receive the survey more than once, please only take it once.

6) WRMP Cost-Sharing

Sasha Harris-Lovett, SF Estuary Partnership

Desired Outcome: SC is informed about the WRMP's cost-sharing strategy.

- Brief overview of funding efforts via cost-sharing.
- Main sources of funding for WRMP: EPA, SF Bay Restoration Authority, Wetland Program Devlopment Grants, in-kind support from agencies, and considering cost-sharing as a supplemental source of funding.
- Optional fees, shoreline adaptation fees options are currently on hold, at least until WRMP has a large body of data to show what we can do.
- Cost-sharing approach: work with agencies/municipalities that can directly benefit from WRMP data. One option is LIDAR, as multiple entities are interested in using high quality LIDAR regional product.
- WRMP is close to getting what is needed to get initial LIDAR effort. Logistics of cost-sharing takes a lot of staff time. This approach is strengthened by existing data products (BHM 2020).
- Please reach out if there is a particular WRMP product that Steering Committee member agencies are interested in.
- If there are specific points on the cost-sharing memo, please send these comments to Sasha.

7) WRMP Commitment to Equity

Alex Thomsen, SF Estuary Partnership

Desired Outcome: SC votes to approve the WRMP Commitment to Equity.

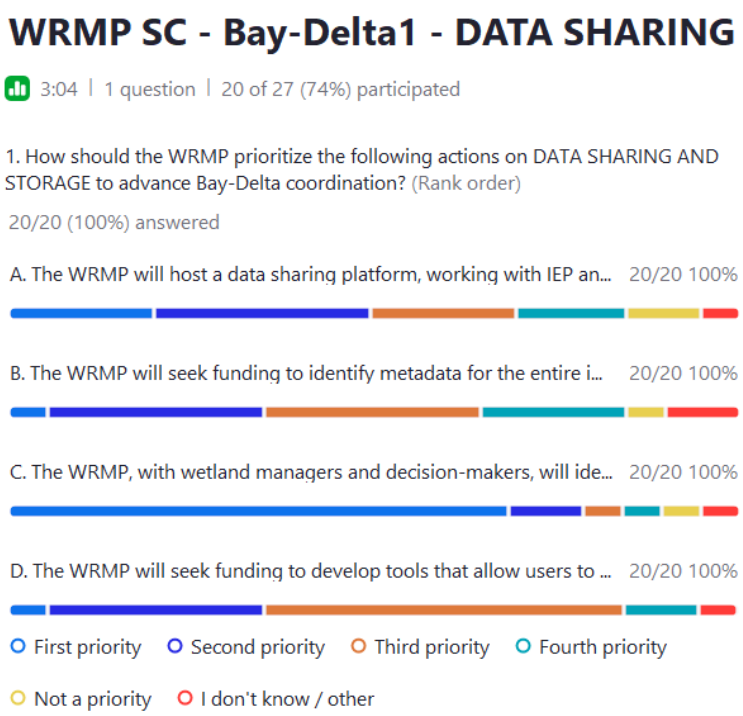
- Provide background about why have a formal commitment to equity, and the process of creating it. After approval we will post it on the website.

- Consultants from Outreach by Design helped create an Equity and Engagement Strategy, released earlier this year. This informed the creation of our equity statement.
    - Desired outcomes: include WRMP values/commitment/goals, be feasible, be broad enough to achieve goals, be brief and poignant, acknowledge history of injustice.
- Process:
    - WRMP drafted a statement based on SFEP and SFEI equity statements; it has received WRMP People & Wetlands feedback and since been revised.
    - Today's goal is to have the Steering Committee review and approve a final version. The finalized statement will be posted on the WRMP website.
    - Website will also have short-form FAQs regarding our commitment to equity.
    - If Steering Committee has more feedback than can be incorporated in this meeting, we will form a focus group to meet in early 2025.
- Feedback:
    - Add "plants" to habitat and fish in the section about wetland benefits.
    - The line "taken advantage of" jumps out at Luisa, suggested that "Scientists" makes people feel responsible. Suggested maybe "scientific institutions" or "scientific community".
    - The section on "access to" is not strong enough. Marco Berger will help refine the commitment to equity.
    - People & Wetlands Workgroup is concerned that scientific enterprise was not specific enough. Brought up that there is a distrust of scientific actions due to a history of science being extractive for communities of color.
    - Laura likes having the government piece in the statement, since there is a well-documented history of this happening in the Bay area. Same with the scientist's piece.
    - Legally, is this statement acceptable? Do we have all the right words that we want in there? Is "taken advantage of" accurate, or does that refer more to the medical enterprise historically? It is beholden on us to know our history and change practices.
    - Focus more on our intended practice moving forward – our commitment to changing practices going forward.
    - From chat: Agreed scientific institutions or community. I do think the People & Wetlands Workgroup were intentional about including scientists because of the extractive ways scientists have engaged with communities of color.
- Outcome:
    - Steering Committee wants to further refine the Commitment to Equity before it goes live. Marco Berger, Erica Johnson, and Matt Ferner volunteered to help refine the statement with Sasha.
    - If you voted to refine the statement, please reach out to Sasha or Alex so that your concerns can be addressed. (These included Marco, Brenda, Renee, Matt Graul, Luisa, Jana, Stacy, Karen Thorne, Erin Chappell, Jaime Lopez.)

9) Announcements

- South Bay Salt Pond Project Lunch and Learn Series happening soon! Information will be available soon. https://www.southbayrestoration.org/media/lunch-and-learn-science-fish-and-fish-habitats-south-bay-wetlands
- King Tide Day event SATURDAY @ 9-12 with Multicultural Center of Marin, Canal Alliance, UC Berkeley and the City of San Rafael at 711 Grand in San Rafael.

Poll results on improving Estuary-wide monitoring coordination:



WRMP SC - Bay-Delta2 - COMMUNICATIONS

Poll | 1 question | 20 of 28 (71%) participated

1. How should the WRMP prioritize the following COMMUNICATIONS and NETWORKING actions? (Rank order)

20/20 (100%) answered

A. The WRMP will facilitate conversations with Delta partners (IEP, ... 20/20 100%

B. The WRMP will provide a structured space at an existing regional... 20/20 100%

C. The WRMP will establish a team of partners in Bay and Delta to ... 20/20 100%

D. The WRMP will identify legislative staff that have an interest in u... 20/20 100%

First Priority Second Priority Third Priority Fourth Priority

Not a priority I don't know / other

WRMP SC - Bay-Delta3 - PRODUCTS

Poll | 1 question | 18 of 28 (64%) participated

1. How should the WRMP prioritize the following actions about data PRODUCTS? (Rank order)

18/18 (100%) answered

A. The WRMP will create a standing MOU to fund and support the c... 18/18 100%

B. The WRMP will seek funding to collect regular high-resolution es... 18/18 100%

First priority Second priority Not a priority I don't know / other