

Report

To: Richard Sumner
 From: Josh Collins
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Synopsis of the First CRAM Core Team Meeting and First Southern California Workshop 25 February 2003

The CRAM Core Team (CT) met for the first time on January 16 2003 at the SCCWRP headquarters. Eric Stein (SCCWRP), Martha Sutula (SCCWRP) and Josh Collins (SFEI) met the next day, 17 January 2003, as contractors to USEPA for CRAM development to summarize the recommendations of the (CT). The complete minutes of the CT meeting are separate from this synopsis.

Subsequently, some members of the Core Team attended a workshop sponsored by SCCWRP to provide opportunities for the Southern California wetland community to become acquainted with the EPA 3-tiered approach to wetland assessment and especially to pre-view the basic RAM methodology.

Purposes of this synopsis:

- ?? Identify key recommendations of CT;
- ?? Allocate workload to revise the CRAM document for CT review;
- ?? Outline the contents of a typical CRAM metric;
- ?? Begin developing an agenda for the March CT meeting.

1. Key recommendations of the CT
 - a. Use ORAM as much as possible
 - b. Try to build one basic or core CRAM for all HGM classes and regions, perhaps with modules to address spatial and temporal variability.
 - c. Do not build GIS into CRAM
 - d. Do not build extreme taxonomic expertise into CRAM
 - e. Eliminate "habitat quality" metric
 - f. Plan for peer review beyond CT and Regional Teams.
 - g. Incorporate some of the HGM approach into the "habitat structure" metric.
 - h. Separate landscape metrics from site size metric.
 - i. Separate biotic metrics from abiotic metrics
 - j. Consider separating stressor metrics from state metrics.
 - k. For each metric, provide a concise rationale.

2. Workplan (for each task, non-lead parties will review what the lead party produces before the products are reviewed by the CT). Work will proceed from tasks of highest priority to tasks of lowest priority. Low priority tasks may not get accomplished before the 18 February 2003 verification exercise.

Major Task	Sub-task	Priority at this time	Lead Party
Final report	Design	Low	?
	Layout	Low	?
	Printing	Low	?
	Distribution	Low	?
Introduction	Background of USEPA 3-tiered Approach	Moderate	SCCWRP
	Goals/Purpose/Applications	Moderate	SCCWRP
Organization, Coordination, CRAM development process	Roles of CT and Regional Teams	High	SCCWRP
	Schedule	High	SCCWRP
	List server	High	SCCWRP
Conceptual models, Assumptions, and Definitions	Stressor-state-response model	High	SFEI
	Forcing functions model	High	SFEI
	CRAM Model (from Kentula et al.)	High	SFEI
	Assumptions	High	SFEI
	Definitions (calibration, verification, validation, stressor, state, indicator, metric, sub-metric, site, wetland, region, sample frame, rater, etc)	High	SFEI
	Address temporal variability of temperate-arid systems (consider need for field expertise to assess seasonal variability based on site visits during only one season; consider alternative approaches such as either adjusting scores for successional state vs. simple site classification for post-stratification of sites based on succession.	High	SCCWRP
Revise metrics, sub-metrics, and related "look up" tables of things when metrics are scored.	Develop a template for metrics allowing for alternative contents to be reviewed by the CT.	High	SFEI
	Identify "home file" types	High	SCCWRP
	Size metric: Address size classes cf. percentiles cf. value classes (i.e., small, medium, large. Develop site boundary rules (try to adopt ORAM rules and add new rules for intertidal wetlands).	High	SFEI
	Buffer metric: Develop protocol to average width per site (consider adopting ORAM approach). Consider adding minimum width as sub-metric.	High	SFEI

Revise metrics, sub-metrics, and related “look up” tables of things when metrics are scored (continued from previous page)	Hydrology metric: Address natural variability in timing of seasonal wetlands perhaps in relation to latitude, elevation, distance from coast. Address variability in degree of tidal action among systems within potential reach of the tides (i.e., lagoons cf. micro-tidal cf. muted tidal cf fully tidal).	High	SCCWRP
	Abiotic structure metric: Consider incorporating HGM classification approach. Consider including schematic cross-sections in sub-metric or look up tables. Consider structural and architectural roles of vegetation and macro-benthos.	High	SCCWRP
	Biotic structure metric: Consider basic plant community structure parameters such as overall richness, percent cover, percent non-native species, macro-alga, interspersions, etc.	High	SFEI
	Living resources metric Consider how to augment “home files” regarding special status species using field sign of wildlife uses.	High	SFEI
	Special wetland metric The Regional Teams might nominate wetlands of special interest.	Moderate	Regional Teams through SFEI and SCCWRP
Begin to prepare for scoring exercises	Identify needs for existing data and data sets to calibrate the metric scores.	Moderate	SCCWRP and SFEI separately for their regions.
	Begin to address reference condition concept (one approach for all metrics and all HGM classes or not; historical condition cf ideal according to experts cf average of all least-disturbed sites)	Moderate	SFEI
	Outline alternative approaches to overall assessments per HGM class (i.e., summing across metrics or not; weighting metrics or not; summarizing stressor metrics separately from state metrics or not; etc.)	Moderate	SFEI and SCCWRP together
	Select verification sites for each region.	High	SCCWRP, CCC, and SFEI separately for their regions.
Prepare for validation exercises (Level III)	Prepare full proposals for next round of Section 104 grants	Very High	SCCWRP, SFEI, State Resources Agency, NWI, ABAG

3. Draft Guidelines for Developing the CRAM Metrics

The purpose of this document is to guide the Core Team of the CRAM through the process of developing the metrics. Individual metrics may not exactly follow these guidelines.

The objective of these guidelines is to help the different authors to produce comparable metrics for review by the Core Team.

It is assumed that the CRAM metrics will be used in scoring forms similar to what has been produced as Version 5.1 of the Ohio Rapid Assessment Method (OPRAM).

Draft Guidelines for Developing the CRAM Metrics

Note: Some of the elements of these guidelines, such as author names and alternatives analysis, will be omitted from the final metrics after their full review and acceptance by the Core Team and Regional Teams.

Metric Title: (as it will appear on the scoring form)

Lead Author(s): (for the purpose of tracking production and responding to reviews).

Rationale:

The core metrics of the CRAM are supposed to be common to all wetlands and regions. Why is this metric included? To what key functions of interest to the wetland management community does this metric relate?

Seasonality:

Is there a limited period of time during a year when this metric should be scored? Why or why not?

List of Attributes:

Each metric represents a set of attributes. For example, the metric called "Hydrology" might have attributes of "sources of water", "maximum water depth", "duration of inundation/saturation", etc.

Annotations of the Attributes:

Each attribute should be briefly annotated with its expected relationship to the functions represented by the metric. For example, the annotation for the attribute called "maximum water depth" for the Hydrology metric might be "maximum depth relates to and The major attributes of each metric should be listed.

List of Conditions of the Attributes:

Each attribute can be classified per its general condition. For example, for the "maximum water depth" of the "Hydrology", the classes of condition might be "permanently inundated", "regularly inundated", "seasonally inundated or saturated", etc. The major classes of condition for each attribute of each metric should be listed.

4. Next Steps

Based on the these recent CRAM meetings, topics come into focus that might be fashioned into an agenda for the next workshop scheduled for Morro Bay in March.

A. **Morro Bay Workshop.** Each of our three regions are starting from different places and addressing slightly different priorities as we move together toward realization of monitoring programs. The EPA 3-tiered approach provides a coherent organizing framework that guides us toward comparable products. Both the Bay Area and South Cal efforts have benefited technically and politically from community workshops. Does the Morro Bay effort anticipate holding a similar meeting at some point?

B. **Refine our objectives and audience.**

The following CRAM objectives or uses have been mentioned to date:

- ~~///~~ assess restoration potential;
- ~~///~~ monitor regional ambient status and trends;
- ~~///~~ prioritize sites for protection;
- ~~///~~ predict impacts of development or changes in management;
- ~~///~~ evaluate mitigation and/or restoration project performance.

These various objectives reflect the interests of different agencies and different levels of government. One version of CRAM probably cannot meet all of these objectives. That means that version one of CRAM will not meet everyone's needs.

C. **Strategic Plan.** It has been recommended that the Core Team should draft a short (1-2 page) strategy statement that we can get reviewed by the primary audience for CRAM for circulation among interested parties.

D. **Review the new CRAM.** This can begin after the draft CRAM is prepared over the next few weeks.