Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program
Steering Committee Meeting
June 23, 2020 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Remote via Zoom

Attendees: Heidi Nutters (SFEP), Kelly Santos (SFEP), Aimee Good (SF Bay NERR), Christina Toms (Water Board), Dave Halsing (SBSPRP), Sahrye Cohen (USACE), Sarah Firestone (USACE), Brenda Goeden (BCDC), Brian Meaux (NOAA Fisheries), Donna Ball (SFEI), Tony Hale (SFEI ASC), Erika Castillo (Alameda County Mosquito Abatement), Cristina Grosso (SFEI ASC), Gregg Erickson (CDFW), Julian Wood (Point Blue), Kaylee Allen (USFWS), Luisa Valiela (EPA), Melissa Foley (SFEI), Mike Chotkowski (USGS), Moira Mcenespy (SCC), Renee (DSP), Sandra Scoggin (SFBJV), Xavier Fernandez (Water Board), Jen Siu (US EPA Region 9), Maggie Jenkins (SCC), Jenna Judge (Puget Sound Partnership), Matt Ferner (SF Bay NERR), John Callaway (Delta Stewardship Council)

Actions:
Please select the alternate December meeting dates that work for you in this Doodle Poll

1) Welcome, Introductions
Project Update, SC Membership - Heidi Nutters, WRMP Project Manager

- Intersectional Environmentalism: Identifies the ways in which injustices happening to marginalized communities and the earth are interconnected.
    - Suggestion to include a representative on the Steering Committee who focuses on Environmental Justice. Considering CA Environmental Indian Alliance which would need to be brought to the Core Team
- Welcome two new members to Steering Committee
    - SFEI/ASC - Melissa Foley (replaced Josh Collins who rotated on to the TAC)
    - SF Bay NERR - Aimee Good (replaced Mike Vasey who rotated on to the TAC)
- WRMP Logo - now complete
    - ADA compliant
    - Powerpoint slides, letterhead
    - Reach out if you would like to use the materials with the logo
- WRMP Funding Strategy
- BRRIT Workshop
    - Planning a workshop that explores the role of regional monitoring in project specific permit requirements

2) Data Management Update

Tony Hale and Cristina Grosso, Aquatic Science Center

Presentation on the latest update on the data management tasks, followed by brief discussion

Desired outcome: Inform Steering Committee

- Workplan timeline
    - Due dates have been shifted to account for the date of the first TAC meeting
- Fit-gap analysis
    - Describe each indicator's data requirements
        - Focus on management question #1 and indicators 1,2,3,4,7
    - Identify and describe currently available data sources
        - Proposed data source criteria/considerations
        - See slides for the criteria
    - Process for TAC engagement
        - Review proposed data source criteria/considerations
        - Determine min standards to meet indicator requirements
        - Determine if data sources will or will not address the needs of the indicators
        - Anticipated SC decision on data source prioritization in response to Fit-Gap Analysis
- Let Tony and Cristina know what you need for data management update
    - Comments
        - Don't feel completely grounded
        - Want to know what is going on at the TAC
        - Suggestion to give TAC update first, then data management update

3) Technical Advisory Committee Update

Christina Toms, SF Bay Regional Water Quality Control Water Board

Inform Steering Committee about the makeup/membership of the TAC and what we've asked the TAC to do

Desired outcome: Inform Steering Committee

- Asked the TAC to look at the WRMP Plan and Chapter 2 Scientific Framework
- Overview of priority recommended actions based on guiding questions (see slides)
- Indicator prioritization and master matrix (see slides)
    - Using conceptual model in the Plan
    - A lot of the data can be used to address the management questions. The focus is management question 1 and indicators 1,2,3,4, and 7

- TAC Expectations
    - Operationalize the matrix &space-time framework
    - How should we measure indicators? Consider data and level of detail
    - How should we use the resulting data?
    - What levels of uncertainty and variability do we need to understand in order to properly interpret WRMP data?
- Questions
    - Sources of sediment: primarily focused on natural physical processes and will work with sediment workgroup. Where sediment supply is a challenge - want to understand how we can alter the management through dredging or strategic sediment placement.
    - Road map
        - Frequency of meetings - likely will have a standing meeting. Ideally monthly and then meet less frequently
        - Get work groups up and running (remote sensing, wildlife, etc)
    - What is being tackled with data management question 1?
        - Does it make sense to include the T-zone?
            - Focus on master matrix and space time framework
            - Question of priorities - how difficult is it to include T-zone - want the TAC to look at indicators and see if they think these indicators are the highest priority
        - Workgroups
            - Will the workgroups only include TAC members?
                - The purpose of the workgroups is to provide highly technical expertise - it is likely we would bring in other people
                - Agreement that we might need to pull in others for focused discussion
            - In choosing TAC members, we wanted to take into account the connections to other work groups
                - Eg. Three TAC members are already on the sediment work group
            - If we get alternate direction from the TAC, it would likely be adding indicators, not subtracting
            - So, it sounds like the plan is to figure out ALL the indicators for management question 1 before moving on to any of the indicators in the other management. questions.

        - The TAC is being asked if they agree
        - Want to set the process, starting with question 1 is helpful for developing that process

4) Funding + Program Cost Case Studies and Discussion

Opportunity for the SC to learn about and discuss related programs and models to understand what works and equivalent costs.

- BayRMP - Melissa Foley, SFEI
    - Regional Monitoring Program
        - What, where, and why
            - Collecting data, communicating information, supporting management decisions
        - Program participants
            - Municipal wastewater, industrial wastewater, municipal stormwater, dredgers, regulators
        - RMP Program Structure
            - Steering Committee has reps from all dischargers
            - Technical review committee - NGO seat, dischargers, some overlap with wastewater agencies (large, medium, and small discharger)
            - Workgroups (sediment, emerging contaminants)
                - 2-3 external advisors per group and stakeholders to make sure the science is applicable
            - Strategy teams meet less frequently (eg. every 5 years)
        - Long term management plans feed into prioritized management questions which feed into scientific knowledge which feed into management questions
        - Funding Model
            - Split almost evenly between program management, monitoring, and special studies
        - Relevance and guidance
            - Coordinate with other monitoring programs early
            - Coordination is time consuming
            - PM needs do not scale linearly with the size of the program
            - Include external experts where possible

- Centralized Data Management Office (CDMO) - Matt Ferner, SF Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
    - Co-located with one of the reserves in South Carolina
    - NERRS monitoring program provides accessible data that can be compared across sites
    - System-wide monitoring program
        - Data collection, standardized protocols, national/regional coordination, centralized data management, connections to other networks
    - Monitoring coordinators and technicians get together once a year
    - Shared database management strategy
        - Centralized was chosen deliberately
    - Core program components
        - Important to have a data coordinator (not just a program coordinator)
        - CDMO cost invested in telemetry (artifact of NOAA owning all satellites)
        - 3 full time data analysts (dedicated personnel)
        - QA/QC is performed by field staff, QA/QC checklist, guidelines
        - Online data portal
        - Annual training workshop (60% of funding goes to staff and training workshop)
        - External/collaborative Data Management Committee (DMC) to provide guidance, oversight and support
    - Annual Funding
        - Only gone up slightly over the past years (see slides for budget)
    - Operational Expansion
        - Data management for marsh veg monitoring
        - This is how the CDMO has grown and expanded. It is not a barrier
    - Important considerations
        - QA/QC done by data collectors, repeated training workshop, standardized protocols, communication with partners
        - NOAA provides 70 percent of funding
    - Questions
        - Do you know if other fed or state agencies "use" or tap into the data collected?
            - Yes, a lot of other agencies coordinate, interact with CDMO
        - A collaborative study ("Regional monitoring programs in the United States: Synthesis of four case studies from Pacific, Atlantic, and Gulf

Coasts") from 2016 that compares a number of regional monitoring programs across the country: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2352485515000742

        - 20% management costs clarification
            - Important thing to remember is that CDMO takes on an advisory role when new monitoring programs come online. Extra grants are used as well
            - 20% is related to monitoring data collection
- Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program - Jenna Judge, Puget Sound Partnership
    - Salish Sea, collaborate with Canadian partners, and Columbia River
    - Non-regulatory
    - Chart the course, manage shared measures, support partners
    - Progress Measure Framework
        - Activity Progress Measures
        - Intermediate Progress Measures
        - Vital Signs and Indicators
    - Puget Sound Vital Signs Revision
        - Focus on biophysical goals
        - Vital signs have 36 indicators
    - PSEMP is collaborative network
        - Works with partners
        - Increase collaboration
        - Support adaptive management
        - Communication
    - Leverages TONS of in-kind contributions
    - Coordination of Steering Committee, Work Groups, links to other programs
    - Don't have staff out there collecting data
    - 2 FTEs
    - Contracts to support Working Group Coordinators ~$40k per WG
    - Vital Sign and indicator reporting + PSEMP products and forums -> Storytelling that makes meaning and connects to decision-making
    - Relationships, coordination, and communication are key to supporting use of the best available science for decision making
    - psp.wa.gov/psemp-overview

- Group Q&A

Desired Outcome: Learn and engage about monitoring programs that act as relevant models for the WRMP.

- Routine monitoring vs. competitive project based monitoring
    - Work to take existing data to make better use of that information. Not enough to fund on the ground monitoring
    - Competitive process focused on reporting of indicators for State of the Sound report
    - WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife got supplemental funding
    - Beach monitoring program competed to get funding – this is an ongoing need
- How do you use your money most efficiently?
    - The work of synthesizing and centralizing – want to go through that effort in SF Bay
    - Lessons learned from Puget Sound would serve us well
    - There are already forums for the work groups where we can get better sense of who is covering what, where
    - Multiple reporting leads – what funding and capacity needed? Helpful to have roles that combine data sources
    - This is often missing in monitoring programs
- Any comments about developing our funding model from presenters?
    - CDMO: Make sure it doesn't become too top-heavy. Important to keep the on the ground work funded and involved
    - Bay RMP: If you can have that solid base funding, it is really helpful. Always can strategize what you would bring in with additional funding. This is helpful for prioritization
    - Puget Sound: Reason we have had success – part of National Estuary Program. State appropriations, people advocating the importance of this program and connecting it to regional and state goals. Program audited and then asked for more funding for monitoring
    - As the program is built, think about community needs, community involvement. From the ground level, this is missing from Bay RMP. Use this as an opportunity to include community and incorporate those perspectives
- Highlights important connections and need for raising our profile w/CA Wetland Monitoring Workgroup. Likely not much funding though
- Feel free to reach out with questions to Heidi, Kelly, and/or Aimee