

MSAR TMDL Task Force Meeting Notes

May 19, 2020

PARTICIPANTS

Steven Wolosoff
Lynn Merrill
Kris Hanson
Abigail Gomez
Mike Roberts
Cordell Chavez
Julie Carver
Robert Eland
Menu Leddy
Richard Meyerhoff
Ryan Kearns
Ray Hiemstra
Tess Dunham
Betsy Hunter-Binns
Pat Boldt
Sarah Chiang
Tim Moore
Alonzo Barrera
Abigail Suter
Amy McNeill
Andrea Macias
Rebekah Guill
Richard Boon
Arlene Chun
Cynthia Gabaldon
Kimberly Colbert
Lauma Willis
David Woelfel
Barbara Berry
SueAnn Neal
Amanda Grey
Mark Norton
Rick Whetsel
T. Milford Harrison

REPRESENTING

CDM Smith
City of Rialto
City of Eastvale
City of Fontana
City of Riverside
City of Corona
City of Pomona
City of Riverside
EEES
GEI Consultants
Inland Empire Waterkeeper
Inland Empire Waterkeeper
Kahn, Soares & Conway, LLP
Milk Producer's Council
Milk Producer's Council
OC Public Works
Risk Sciences
Riverside County Executive Office
Riverside County Flood Control & WCD
San Bernardino Areawide Program
San Bernardino County
The Colbert Group for the City of Claremont
Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board
UCR
SAWPA
SAWPA
SAWPA

1. Call to Order & Introductions

The MSAR TMDL Task Force Meeting was called to order at 1:31 p.m. by Rick Whetsel at SAWPA with all participants participating remotely, due to COVID-19 related social distancing restrictions.

2. Approval of the Meeting Notes

Rick Whetsel /SAWPA asked for any comments on the April 22, 2020 MSAR TMDL meeting notes. There were several revisions as follows:

- Add Abigail Gomez, City of Fontana to the list of attendees
- Correct the spelling of SueAnn Neal, Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Correct the agency represented by Bobby Gustafson, City of Riverside
- Move text discussion regarding the addition of the Mission Avenue site to the SAR Regional Bacteria Water Quality monitoring program to item No. 3, Draft 2019 Annual Report - Santa Ana River Watershed Bacteria Monitoring Program

Rick Whetsel will address the revisions and the meeting notes will be deemed acceptable and reposted to the TMDL webpage.

3. Discussion: Revise MSAR TMDLs (Tess Dunham/Kahn, Soares & Conway)

Tess Dunham/Kahn, Soares & Conway presented to the Task Force on the potential next steps to revise the MSAR TMDLs. This included an overview of the following:

- Potential TMDL related revisions
- Potential special study regarding releases from bottom sediments
- Draft schedule
- Timing issues for consideration
- Request for Task Force direction

During the presentation, discussion ensued regarding a number of topics: Related to the proposed Special Study regarding releases from bottom sediments, a question was raised by Mike Roberts /City of Riverside as to how this study could shape the revised MSAR TMDLs. Steve Wolosoff responded that incorporating a source assessment into the TMDL revision, as recommended by this study, would help to parse between the controllable and uncontrollable components of the bacteria load, as Steve noted this was an interest of Regional Board staff.

Tess Dunham /Kahn, Soares & Conway, LLP added that if the goal of this study is to help with the load allocation issues with respect to uncontrollable sources, as far as what the Task Force can do versus what they can't do. She noted that the Basin Plan, as well as the inland surface water plan discuss natural background conditions and controllable versus uncontrollable sources and she sees this as an opportunity for the Task Force to discuss these issues with Regional Board.

Discussion ensued regarding the topic of controllable versus uncontrollable sources. In response to this, David Woelfel /Santa Ana Regional Board noted that Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP) in 2015 did a natural background concentrations of fecal indicator bacteria study of natural reference streams in southern California. David noted that this issue may be resolved through the Natural Source Exclusion policies; however, this study showed that 14 of the 15 natural waterbodies tested showed no exceedences of State standards. These results would make a difficult case to prove that the high levels of bacteria in the Santa Ana River are related to natural background.

Lynn Merrill /representing the City of Rialto noted that recent monitoring at the location where effluent from the Rix and Rialto treatment facilities enters the Santa Ana River shows flow to be sterile.

Pat Boldt/ representing Milk Producer's Council commented that due to the COVID-19 and impacts to the economy that there may be significant constraints on agency budgets moving forward for the next year or so. She recommended the work associated with revising the TMDL focus, at least short term, on what we need to do rather than what we want to do.

Tess Dunham added there is also the question if Regional Board is supportive of reopening the MSAR TMDLs and the timing of this effort. If so, then there is the question of what provisions of the TMDLs does the Regional Board deem essential versus nonessential.

Lauma Willis /Santa Ana Regional Board responded that it is too soon for Regional Board to be having this conversation, as there are a number of other high priorities that need to be addressed first.

Lauma also commented that it is an interest of the Regional Board to initiate the CEQA scoping process in order to get the input early in the process, prior to making a decision as to how to proceed.

Lauma then asked why the Task Force was interested in reopening the MSAR TMDLS?

Tess responded that the Task Force has already achieved compliance with the dry weather conditions required by the TMDLs; however, there are questions with respect to the wet weather condition and some of the assumptions that the TMDLs were based.

Tim Moore /Risk Sciences added that the Regional Board's audit report recommended the need for the County's CBRPs to be updated, and that would first require an update to the TMDLs and even before that the Basin Plan would need to be updated.

Acknowledging the need to update the various plans, Lauma suggested that the earliest the Regional board could initiate discussion was August 2020.

Lynn Merrill recommended, based upon what we are hearing from the Regional Board, it is best for the Task Force to defer any decision on providing direction to the consultant team as to how to proceed with updating the TMDLs. This was generally agreed upon by the Task Force.

With discussion regarding the next steps by the Task Force to update the MSAR TMDLs deferred to late summer, discussion circled back to the proposed special study and having the consultant team prepare a scope of work detailing the work. It was proposed that the remaining funding available on the GEI Task Order to conduct the MSAR Synoptic Study be used to prepare a scope of work for the suggested Special study to assess controllable and uncontrollable sources of bacteria. The decision to move forward with this study will be deferred until there is appropriate discussion with the Task force and Regional Board staff.

A motion was put forward by Lynn Merrill/representing the City of Rialto and seconded by Mike Roberts/representing the City of Riverside. The motion was approved by the Task Force, and abstained by RCFC&WCD.

Rick Whetsel will coordinate with Richard Meyerhoff /GEI Consultants to assure the appropriate agreement and funds are available to initiate this work.

4. Update: Homelessness Assessment of Impacts to Water Quality and Riparian and Aquatic Habitat (Richard Meyerhoff/GEI Consultants)

Rick Whetsel /SAWPA reminded the Task Force that the study on the impacts of homelessness on water quality and riparian and aquatic habitat is funded by SAWPA's Prop 1 IRWM Disadvantaged Community Involvement grant. It is not funded in any way by the MSAR TMDL Task Force, but is being presented here to share information regarding any proposed bacteria related monitoring that may be recommended from this effort.

Richard Meyerhoff/GEI Consultants followed by providing a brief update on the project to stakeholders. Task 1 of the project entailed information gathering. This task focused on collecting information on homeless camps located in natural water bodies in the upper watershed, above Prado Dam. This included gathering information from local entities, as well as, from around the State of California and outside of the State based upon available budget. A draft of this report was submitted to SAWPA back in January. A key finding was that although it is obvious to see the impacts due to homelessness, there is very little quantitative information available. Task 2 requested a recommendation for, if you were to design a monitoring program, what would that program look like and what would it cost. CWE has prepared a draft of this preliminary monitoring plan. Richard anticipates submitting the draft monitoring plan to SAWPA for review and comment in about a month.

Richard also noted that the plan is for him to provide a full presentation on the outcome of the project at our next MSAR TMDL Task Force meeting or when appropriate.

5. Update: Bacteria Reduction Implementation Activities

a. RCFC&WCD

Amy McNeill /Riverside County Flood Control & WCD reported on a number of efforts the District is working on with local partners.

- Phoenix Avenue Stormdrain to Sewer Diversion Project – District is partnering with City of Riverside. Design is complete and construction is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2020.
- Sewer Diversion Project - District is partnering with City of Eastvale and Jurupa Community Service District. Preliminary evaluation of sewer system and wastewater treatment plant capacity, based on a 1 CFS peak flow, have shown there is capacity in the system and that the project is viable. The next steps are to revise the estimated project costs, TDS levels and then take the project to Western Riverside County Regional Wastewater Authority (WRCRWA) for approval.
- Magnolia Center Area Outfall Monitoring Plan – District is partnering with City of Riverside to investigate bacteria monitoring sources in the Magnolia Center area. This site was determined to be a high priority site by the recent MSAR Synoptic Study. Monitoring has been delayed due to COVID-19 and they are planning to start, once the restrictions are lifted.
- Cucamonga Creek Study – District is partnering with SBCFCD on their project to implement a 10-week bacteria monitoring study. This project will add monitoring at the Eastvale MDP Lines A and B. It was noted that these lines were included in the 2012 Tier 1 study, but were not included in the recent 2019 MSAR synoptic study as they had been re-classified by the Task Force as Tier 2 sites. Some anecdotal field reports have observed that these outfalls may now be dry or have minimal flow but neither has been consistently monitored since the 2012 study.

b. SBCFCD

Arlene Chun /SBCFCD informed the Task Force that the District is doing their 10-week monitoring study of Cucamonga Creek. This will be the 4th iteration of this effort and noted that RCFC&WCD will be partnering with them to conduct monitoring at the Eastvale A and B sites. Arlene also informed the Task Force that the 404 and 401 permits for the Chris Basin Project have been approved. The District is still awaiting approval by CA Dept of F&W and in the meantime will be conducting their baseline monitoring.

c. Orange County – No updates to report.

d. Pomona & Claremont

City of Pomona - Julie Carver /City of Pomona informed the Task force that the City of Pomona is working on committees for the development of regional projects with Measure W funding from the Safe Clean Water program.

City of Claremont – No updates to report.

e. Agricultural Operators – No updates to report.

6. TMDL Task Force Administration (SAWPA Staff)

Rick Whetsel /SAWPA had nothing to report and there were no questions/comments from stakeholders.

7. Other Business

Lynn Merrill /representing the City of Rialto was complimentary of SAWPA’s efforts to conduct these meetings in a virtual format. He noted the saving in both time and cost for travel and suggested that we consider maintaining the virtual capabilities into the future. He also suggested that we look into any available tools to allow us to conduct stakeholder voting through the virtual platform.

8. Schedule Next Meeting

The next meeting of the MSAR TMDL Task Force is scheduled for August 18th at 1:30 p.m. as a virtual meeting.

9. Adjourn

There being no further business for review, the meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.