



**Delta Methlymercury TMDL Nonpoint Sources Workgroup**  
for Managed Wetlands and Irrigated Agriculture

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Thursday, May 24, 2012; 9:30 am – 12:30 pm**

**Ducks Unlimited offices: 3074 Gold Canal Drive, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670**

Conference Line: 559-546-1200; Meeting ID: 463-443-967#

Internet: <https://www.freescreensharing.com/meetings/463-443-967>

**Facilitator:** Stephen McCord, MEI

**Attendees (Teleconference & On-line)**

<b>First</b>	<b>Last</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Beatrix	Treiterer	USFWS - Stone Lakes
Matt	Gause	Westervelt Ecological Services
Wes	Heim	CDFG – Moss Landing Marine Labs
Petra	Lee	DWR
Sally	Liu	The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
Tom	Maurer	US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Stephen	McCord	McCord Environmental (MEI)
Kevin	Petrik	Ducks Unlimited (DU)
Julianne	Clark	DWR
John	Brodie	Delta Water Quality Coalition
Tim	Stevens	CDFG
Diane	Beaulaurier	CV RWQCB
Fred	Guis	DWR
Stefanie	Hedlund	State Water Contractors
Nirmal	Sandhar	SWRCB
Janis	Cooke	RWQCB
Michael	Mosley	US Bureau of Reclamation
Greg	Yarris	CVJV-FWS
Aaron	Will	DU
Brian	Cary	CDFG
Mark	Stephenson	CDFG MLML
Harry	McQuillen	BLM CRP
Mike	Wackman	San Jo Co. & Delta WQ Coalition
Claus	Suverkropp	LWA, representing Sacramento Valley WQ Coalition
<b>Teleconference &amp; On-line</b>		
Brian	Currier	Office of Water Programs, CSUS
Steve	Blecker	Delta Science Program
Kari	Fisher	CA Farm Bureau Federation
Paul	Buttner	CA Rice Commission

## **I. Introductions**

New Steering Committee members include: Petra Lee and Carol DiGiorgio (DWR), Mike Wackman (San Joaquin County and Delta WQ Coalition), and Tom Maurer (USFWS).

All expected Cooperating Entities reported their participation to the Regional Board that they are participating in the NPS Workgroup: Ducks Unlimited, Delta WQ Coalition, Sacramento Valley WQ Coalition, CA Rice Commission, The Nature Conservancy, Westervelt Ecological Services, CA DFG, CA DWR, US Fish & Wildlife Service, US Bureau of Reclamation, and US BLM.

## **II. Land Use Survey Results (Kevin Petrik, DU)**

DU reviewed the GIS analysis presented previously in the February meeting. Land use revised from 9 to 8 main categories (combined Pasture with Grain and Hay), with 33 specific crops ID'ed based on DWR 2007 survey for the "legal Delta" and DWR 2008 survey for Yolo County. Irrigated pasture, hay & grain largest area (181,266 acres); field crops next (129,830 acres), and truck & berry third largest (55,071 acres); distributions vary among TMDL Delta subareas [see presentation for maps of distribution]. Corn (103,369 acres) remains the largest field crop, mainly in the Sacramento River and Central Delta subareas. Corn is also rotated with truck & berry crops. Crop trends compared from 1990s to 2007: largest acreage increases in vineyards and rice; largest decreases in safflower, sugar beets, tomatoes, and asparagus. Mike Wackman noted that long-term data comparisons do not capture annual variability driven by markets.

Managed wetlands total 18,600 acres distributed by subarea: 6,800 acres in South Yolo Bypass, 6,200 acres in North Yolo Bypass, 2,900 in Sacramento River, 2,000 in Central Delta, 500 in Mokelumne River subarea, and 200 in West Delta. Very little managed wetland area is found in the San Joaquin River, West Delta, or Marsh Creek subareas. Permanent wetlands are approximately 15% of the managed wetlands, as per the Yolo Bypass and Cosumnes River Preserve data. The 2009 National Wetland Inventory totaled 24,250 acres of unmanaged wetlands, with the largest percentage in the West Delta and South Yolo Bypass. Managed wetlands typically involve some type of hydroperiod management, whereas unmanaged wetlands are tide- or rainfall-driven. Floodplains are not included in this assessment. Organic carbon data are now mapped. Sulfate content data are insufficient to map at the Delta scale.

Stone Lakes NWR now has a water infrastructure map available that can assist managers as we move towards evaluating potential water management practices.

The Water Use Survey had 12 respondents. No responses from Central Delta or Marsh Creek subareas. Wetlands varied between rapid and slow drawdowns. DU plans to summarize irrigation data from UC Davis regional crop surveys for major crops and to complete data from public wetlands managers.

Harry McQuillen (and other wildlife managers) stated that we need to include wildlife use data in the Knowledge Base Memo. The wildlife refuges and preserves are managed to meet wildlife needs and create habitat; there needs to be a more systematic acknowledgement of the competing needs. Greg Yarris mentioned several data sources of potential use: DFG's island-specific midwinter surveys and Audubon's or PRBO's data from Cosumnes.

Tim Stevens stated that beneficial uses for the different wetland/land uses should be identified and considered in evaluating various management practices. Tim volunteered to draft the table for the workgroup. Claus Suverkropp felt the CS Guidance provided a good grounding for

considering beneficial uses. Janis Cooke stated that the Regional Board wants documentation of all potential impacts (cost-benefit to ag, negative environmental impacts) as part of the Control Studies. The current Regional Board members are very conscientious in considering these impacts.

TO DO by June 8:

- Verify crop trends in last 15 years (as stated in February presentation)
- Characterize irrigation types for major crops. Note how irrigation varies in different Delta subareas (e.g., rice)
- Define flooded winter irrigated agriculture acreages.
- Separate the seasonal from the permanent managed wetlands (as stated in February presentation? Or just explain why assuming 15%)
- Aggregate all land use data into the six land use types used in the synthesis and MPs memos (including floodplains). Provide both summary data (acreage for each type in each subarea) and map (with pie chart) of entire Delta.
- Look into readily-available wildlife GIS layers. Identify relevant knowledge gaps for doing a beneficial use assessment. [not necessarily by June 8]
- Write a brief summary of GIS analysis and surveys for the knowledge base memo for review by the NPS Workgroup.

### **III. Synthesis Report (Stephen McCord, MEI)**

A few commenters provided extensive input. Additional comments were editorial in nature. New information includes effects on biota. The knowledge synthesis section was re-organized into bullet points for current knowledge and knowledge gaps. All relevant questions raised in the Control Study Guidance document are addressed as well.

All NPS Workgroup members are asked to review the final draft synthesis and provide comments to Lisa by June 8.

### **IV. Management Practices (Mark Stephenson, DFG)**

The project team does not know much about these proposed management practices (MPs) and each MP must be uniquely evaluated for each land use type. The land use types are also very general and people should recognize there is a broad range of wetlands and ag land use types within each of the 6 categories. The MP rankings in the draft memo are a first cut and intended to stimulate and focus conversation. Each NPS Workgroup member/group (wetlands managers, agencies, agricultural managers, etc.) should perform their own ranking given their own knowledge.

There are three different categories of MPs: biogeochemistry, hydrology, soils & vegetation. MPs were described for each of the 6 NPS land use types.

Mark asked for workgroup member input. Discussion covered what criteria should be, whether to have number ranking (1-5), weighting, summation, etc. It was decided that a simple symbol set (+, 0, -) would be more useful at this time. Tim Stevens emphasized the need to consider the beneficial uses and is taking the lead on developing a Beneficial Use criteria set. Beatrix Treiterer suggested cost, impacts to wildlife, impacts to other plans (e.g., mosquito abatement).

Harry McQuillen emphasized their existing management plans and that managers should meet first to ensure they use the same evaluation rating so that there is consistency in responses among managers of a particular type.

To Do:

- NPS workgroup members: Suggest criteria to evaluate the MPs. Provide to Stephen McCord by June 6.
- Stephen McCord: Work with ILRP managers regarding appropriate agricultural criteria and the utility of the Farmed Island study for defining criteria.
- Wes/Mark: Update MP matrix for subgroup ranking

## V. Control Study Workplan Development

The NPS Workgroup will submit one Control Study Workplan. The Workplan will identify project sites and MPs to be studied. Priority will be given based on site representativeness and MP ranking. The Workplan will include guidance on developing sampling & analysis plans and QAPPs. In particular, it will include guidance on developing a holistic cost-benefit analysis to consider impacts on all beneficial uses.

The Workgroup's Workplan will be submitted for regulatory/TAC review and approval. Site-specific project proponents will be responsible for developing project-specific workplans. Site-specific Workplans could be appended or submitted separately.

The TAC has offered to review Workplan "conceptual proposals" submitted by August 17 (meeting to discuss Sept.19-20), although those dates could slip by a couple of months [NOTE: The TAC facilitator is inclined to keep that meeting date]. The NPS Workgroup will submit a Conceptual Proposal.

## VI. Wrap-Up

Upcoming meetings:

- June 6, 1-2pm: Steering Committee meeting to review draft MP ranking matrix, schedule of events, action items
- June 13, 11-noon (on-line / call-in): Preview MP rankings table
- Mid-July: Submit Knowledge Base memo
- July 12, 9-noon for wetlands & 1-3pm for ag (DWR, rm. 119; 3500 Industrial Blvd, West Sacramento, CA 95691; free parking): Finalize MP matrices and MP rankings.
- August 14, 12:30-4:30pm (Cosumnes R Preserve): DTMC Meeting
- August 15, 11-noon (on-line): Review Control Study Workplan "concept proposal" to be submitted to TAC
- August 17: Workplan concept proposal due to TAC
- Sept. 19-20: TAC reviews at Regional Board in Rancho Cordova.