

Cleaner Rivers through Effective Stakeholder TMDLs

Technical Committee Meeting No. 16

April 25, 2006

Minutes

DRAFT

Attendees:

Ginachi Amah (Regional Board)
Penny Weiland (City of Los Angeles)
Donna Toy-Chen (City of Los Angeles)
Sheila Brice (City of Los Angeles)
Lisa Carlson (City of Los Angeles)
Gerry McGowen (City of Los Angeles)
Jonathan Ball (City of Los Angeles)
Zora Baharians (City of Los Angeles)
Gerry Green (City of Downey)
Eric Chau (CalTrans)
Suzanne Dallman (Los Angeles/San Gabriel Watershed Council)
Susannah Turney (City of Arcadia)
Kathleen Bullard (Consulting Team)
Youn Sim (Los Angeles County Department of Public Works)
Allen Nazemi (City of Calabasas)
Jagjit Kaur (Consulting Team)
Darren Hartwich (Consulting Team)
Jessica Hall (Ballona Creek Watershed Task Force)
Kevin Powers (City of Hidden Hills)
Tom Leary (City of Long Beach)
Sherwood Natsuhara (City of Vernon)
Sheila Kennedy (Enfact Solutions)
Alex Anderson (Flow Science)
Cameron McCullough (John Hunter Associates)
Eric Stein (SCCWRP)

Copies: CREST Technical Committee members and Steering Committee members

On Tuesday, March 28, 2006, the fifteenth CREST Technical Committee (TC) meeting was held at 2714 Media Center Drive, Dodgers Conference Room.

Purpose of the Meeting:

- Review the LA River Flow Chart which shows the Technical Committee work flow and how it is coordinated with the Steering Committee work flow over the course of the LA River Bacteria TMDL development
- Review and Discuss Revised TMDL Elements
- Presentation on the SCCWRP work on the inland reference watershed for bacteria, including a questions and discussion.

Key Features Document

Michele Pla gave a Power Point presentation on the Key Features document on the TMDL and its process. This document was discussed by members. A map of the Los Angeles River (LAR) with the reaches delineated was shown.

There was a question as to where the Marine standard applies. Some thought it applies in Reach 1.

Timeline for Development of the TMDL

Darren spoke on the flow chart describing the work to do to complete the sections of the Los Angeles River (LAR) Bacteria TMDL. This multi-page document is a work in progress, and it will change over time. It discusses action items for the TC and the Steering Committee (SC) by month. The timeline and supporting documents were sent out with the announcement for the April TC meeting.

This timeline is a small version of the longer document. Some members want more of a project description with concerns about the data we have, the data needed, and concerns on preparing a document with the best information.

There were a number of justification to move the timeline out. There was a discussion that there is not enough data, more time is needed to allow cities to collect data. In the current sampling event, data is being collected from 10 sites on both Reach 2 and Reach 4. Also, two months to write the implementation plan is inadequate. Consensus was to build more time in flow chart, to decide if we need more studies and data analysis. The consultant team will update the timeline. There was a recommendation to have most studies completed before the TMDL is approved, not as part of TMDL implementation plan. The draft timeline can also state that dates are flexible.

We're starting with the beginning steps of TMDL development, the Numeric Target; the post-TMDL Implementation Plan is not part of this process. Instead, CREST will write implementation strategies. The final document will be the draft LAR Bacteria TMDL, per step seven of TMDL development. It is important that CREST makes progress on this TMDL. Reviewing elements of the TMDL and making a decision on how CREST would want to pursue each of these elements reflects progress towards its development.

There was a discussion of the development of BC Bacteria TMDL method and process. The LAR Bacteria TMDL will be developed using a process different from that used for the BC Bacteria TMDL. That is, for the BC Bacteria TMDL, CREST developed only the implementation strategy. For LAR Bacteria TMDL, CREST will do all steps in a TMDL, including implementation strategy. Additionally, CREST members expressed an interest in having additional studies done on the sources of bacteria before the TMDL was written, rather than a part of the implementation plan in the TMDL.

The TMDL Elements Summary Document

There was a discussion on whether the items in the problem statement are clearly written. Fifteen reaches and tributaries are listed as impaired; two reaches not listed. These reaches have soft bottoms and POTW effluent dilute bacteria concentrations. For bacteria TMDL, REC-1 or potential REC-1 is listed as the beneficial use for all listed reaches.

Members discussed conducting a use attainability analysis (UAA). It had been done for Ballona Creek (BC) by Regional Board (RB) staff, but that was considered more appropriate by the RB. A UAA can be requested by any agency. UAAs are done on a site-specific analysis. The UAA for BC was originally done in about 1 year, was turned down by RB, appealed to the State Board (SB) and SB approved it. It can be done by anyone, as an open process w/ input from RB and other interested party. However, UAAs are explicitly not part of the CREST mission. This would be done outside of CREST. A UAA is a study defined in federal guidelines to amend the beneficial uses (BU) in the Basin Plan approved by regional and state agencies and the EPA. A UAA can be done on the side, before the TMDL, or during the implementation of TMDL.

Reach 1 is above the estuary. Currently, the BU that drives the bacteria standard is Marine REC-1. As Reach 1 doesn't include the estuary, so why is it not listed as fresh water REC-1?

There was a request by the RB to change p2 pp3, don't write about unrestricted vs. restricted reaches. The goal is to achieve compliance throughout the river. The RB stated that this statement doesn't belong in the mission statement for the Key Features document. This may be described in Section 6, the Strategy. The intent is to clean the whole river, but it can be done in stages.

Table 4 was discussed which delineates the beneficial uses for each reach, and can be used by members as a reference for the LAR.

The key features document will be reviewed again in May. If possible, send in questions and issues in advance. Questions and answers will be sent out to all. Please read the full document. Next month CREST will review problem statement and numeric targets.

SCCWRP Study on Reference Waters

Eric Stein of SCCWRP discussed their Reference watershed study which might provide better data regarding inland reference watersheds. There was a discussion regarding the pros and cons of CREST involvement in the reference watershed study:

Pros and Cons of CREST Participating in the SCCWRP Reference Waters Study

Pro:

Already laid out plans based on existing marine standard. This is a freshwater TMDL; it will need freshwater data that This study will provide.

Con:

It could repeat BC Bacteria TMDL – do studies and other work later as a re-opener. It could be done earlier if the TMDL is moved to 2009.

Joining by May 15 or July 15 may be too soon for agencies to act.

This study will cost money.

Additional questions on CREST's potential involvement in the SCCWRP study include:

1. How will members share the cost, do we need more locations in upper watersheds?
2. Is the study moving too fast?

Eric's first recommendation for a natural background study is sampling on the Arroyo Seco; select sites there, six sites have year round flow. It's gauged, so it has good flow data.

Eric recommends having five sites locally, perhaps using the three sites in San Gabriel River (SGR) already suggested by SCCWRP. The SCCWRP study will have some locations start sampling as part of the SCCWRP program on May 15, 2006, but others may start later. The end dates may be staggered.

The TC recommendation to the SC is that CREST should join the SCCWRP study, either as CREST as a whole or for individual agencies due to the positive reasons stated above. The arguments against joining will be stated as concerns.

SC would recommend the way to participate in five sites. There are four LAR sites, and use one or two from another watershed. The three in the SGR aren't funded yet (correct earlier info). This data set will be useful in other TMDLs in the future.

We should consider that a regional average of all the sites, not just the LAR and SGR sites will be used, could end up be most useful as our reference watershed.

The total cost of the effort is \$33,000 per site, or \$165,000.

CREST has no money set aside for special studies. At this point, only the City of Los Angeles has provided funds for CREST. This includes the EPA grant to the City of Los Angeles.

Action Items:

RB:

State where Marine Standard applies.

Research the BU for the Reach 1.

Send out the UAA for BC to CREST members.

CREST Members:

Work on the problem statement for next meeting.

Please review the copy of map and Table 2. Let us know about any errors.

CREST Administration:

Send Eric Stein's presentation to CREST members.

Next Meeting:

Change of date and location. The Technical Committee will meet on May 23 from 12:30-3 at the Public Works Building, 1149 S. Broadway, Los Angeles, CA. Please see the meeting announcement for parking information.