

CREST
Cleaner Rivers through Effective Stakeholder TMDLs
Steering Committee Meeting No. 8
April 26, 2005
Minutes

Attendees: Cathy Chang (City of Culver City)
Gerry Greene (City of Downey)
James Cowan (City of Alhambra)
Maurice Oillataguerre (City of Glendale)
Donna Chen (City of Los Angeles)
Shahram Kharaghani (City of Los Angeles)
Sheila Brice (City of Los Angeles)
Vijay Desai (City of Los Angeles)
Michele Pla (Consulting Team)
Khalil Abu Saba (Consulting Team)
Hampik Dekermenjian (Consulting Team)
Judi Miller (Consulting Team)
Jagjit Kaur (Consulting Team)
Terri Grant (Los Angeles County DPW)
Ginachi Amah (LARWQCB)
Melanie Winter (The River Project)

Copies: CREST Steering Committee members and Technical Committee members

On Tuesday, April 26, 2005 the eighth CREST Steering Committee meeting was held at 2714 Media Center Drive, Dodgers Conference Room.

MEETING PURPOSE

1. Discuss and obtain input on the draft CREST Workplan.
2. Obtain input on proposed website, and identify volunteers to assist in its development and maintenance.
3. Agree on meeting schedules for future Steering and Technical Committee meetings.

AGENDA

1) Draft CREST Work Plan

- o Overview of cost-loaded Program Work Plan
- o Discussion and comments
- o Next Steps

2) CREST Website Development

- Discuss draft site map

3) Technical Committee Report Out

4) Meeting Schedule

DISCUSSION:

Donna Chen opened the meeting. Donna indicated that future meetings may be held in the downtown location, but it was later decided that the group preferred the Media Center location. Donna noted that Terry Fleming from EPA Region IX will be replacing representing EPA at future Technical and Steering Committee meetings. He will attend in person, when possible, and otherwise join the meeting by phone.

Hampik Dekermenjian served as the meeting facilitator.

1. Draft CREST Work Plan

Overview of cost-loaded Program Work Plan

Khalil Abu Saba gave the Work Plan overview. He indicated that purpose of this overview was to establish whether the Work Plan elements for TMDL development are sufficiently clear to the committee members, and whether they meet they meet the groups' and associated organizations' objectives.

Khalil explained that more effort has been identified for development of the LA River Bacteria TMDL because the Ballona Creek (BC) Bacteria TMDL is on a nearer timeline, and will be reliant on existing data; special studies will need to be conducted after the TMDL is issued. The schedule for preparing the LA River Bacteria TMDL offers more time, and therefore opportunity, to conduct studies prior to drafting the TMDL.

Khalil distributed a summary of comments received thus far on the Work Plan from Terry Fleming, Cindy Lin and Melinda Becker. Melinda emphasized in her comments that the primary driver for the CREST TMDL development opportunities reflected in the Work Plan is the TMDL schedule. Khalil indicated that Terry supported the integration of the LIFE and HSPF models, and encouraged the use of modeling as a predictive tool for water quality benefits of potential projects.

Michele Pla reviewed the development process of the BC Bacteria TMDL Work Plan: The Technical Committee (TC) brought the Work Plan to the Steering Committee (SC); the SC requested some changes; the changes were made and brought back to the TC last week; the TC added more detail and offered additional comments; and, finally, the document distributed at today's SC meeting reflects those changes.

Khalil walked through the LA River Bacteria TMDL schedule in the Work Plan. He mentioned that it might be better to first determine what studies and information is available and then develop the Work Plan.

Discussion and Comments

Gerry Greene asked about the LIFE model and expressed concern about earlier metals modeling that has been conducted.

Shahram Kharaghani explained that LIFE is CH2M HILL's model that can be used implementation planning; other firms have similar models.

Cathy Chang asked whether cost-sharing has been addressed. Shahram responded that cost-sharing discussions have been deferred to the future for the affected municipalities. Once we identify what we want to do, then we can discuss the costs, based on where value is added to the various agencies.

Terri Grant asked whether the CREST was addressing implementation as well as development. Shahram clarified that we were focused on TMDL development – “implementation” is a component of the TMDL; a copy of the CREST Terminology - Water Quality Attainment Strategies vs. Implementation diagram was provided to Terri. (attached)

Cathy expressed that while her City management would be interested in the work that CREST was doing, and possibly even participating, she was concerned about presenting the total bill to her management.

Shahram asked the committee whether they philosophically agreed with paying a “fair share” (to be defined by the Financial Ad Hoc Committee) if we identify a series of tasks that we agree that the consulting team should do.

Cathy believes that some of the work can be done without the assistance of consultants. The stakeholder group can do the work, such as is being done for the Marina Del Rey TMDL. Khalil indicated that the value of these in-kind services provided by the stakeholders can be reflected in the MS Project schedule.

Maurice Oillataguerre felt that most cities are not likely to contribute. The cities are already doing inspections for the Regional Board; they will need to do the implementation projects, and now are being asked to contribute toward the regulatory development. He felt that the \$20K per year that they pay in permit fees should be going toward these efforts.

Gerry indicated that the City of Downey is not expecting to spend a lot, but he is at the table because he wants to make sure that the money is well spent, and wants to know that the expenditures will help them get regulatory relief. He expressed concerns about tradeoffs between regulatory drivers and end use (e.g., river habitat viability.)

Khalil asked that Gerry consider how such policy concerns regarding watershed management could be reflected in the Work Plan.

Hampik asked the Steering Committee to provide comments on specific work plan items. First we need to determine what's important to do, and then we can focus on how we might share the costs of doing them.

Gerry mentioned that he is already being criticized by the development community for requiring infiltration SUSMPs and is concerned about his City management's reactions to future additional requirements that might be imposed to meet TMDLs.

Shahram emphasized that if we all work together and maintain adaptive management approach and communicate to City management and officials that this type of approach provides the most reasonable and cost-effective solutions.

Gerry responded that his City Council does not think in terms of adaptive management and is not supportive of ranges of costs. They are supportive of “reasonably cost-effective,” but it’s not clear what that actually means. For example, they have set up an infiltration bank at a golf course, but don’t know how these activities will ultimately affect the rivers.

Melanie Winter felt that Downey should get “credit” in the TMDL process for what they are doing proactively. Need a regional process where coordinated efforts with the consulting team can help provide those answers, perhaps by modeling an adaptive management strategy. This raises the question of how do we “reward.”

Shahram indicated that the Santa Monica Bay Beaches (SMBB) Bacteria TMDL Implementation Plan is an example of a “cost-effective approach.” This approach was defined, jointly with environmental organizations as well as the Regional Board, through implementing BMPs in decentralized manner. Gerry doesn’t agree that it’s been regionally defined.

Melanie encouraged the committee to think across-budgets with multi-purpose/multi-benefit (air quality, flood control, etc.) projects as represented by those implemented and proposed for Sun Valley. Terri added that this enables the region to qualify for broader grant funding than could single purpose projects.

Next Steps

Khalil shared that Terry Fleming would like to see linkages between the Work Plan tasks and TMDL components; the team was reluctant to make this change to the document for fear that it could steer the process toward a traditional EPA TMDL focused on the water target rather than taking a more holistic approach with a watershed-based TMDL, as the Los Angeles Regional Board has been encouraging.

Do you agree with the approach presented in the draft Work Plan? Are the tasks as we have laid them out embracing a watershed approach? Steering Committee members should provide comments on goals and approach laid out in the overall Work Plan as well as specific comments on th LA River Bacteria TMDL Work Plan by May 3. These comments will be shared with the Technical Committee to address prior to the next Steering Committee meeting.

2. CREST Website Development

Donna notified the committee that in response to requests for access to information in manner other than e-mail, a CREST website is under development. Sheila Brice added that the intent is to further an open and transparent process, in accordance with the spirit of the stakeholder-led TMDL draft strategy that the Regional Board had originally issued, which the CREST program is intended to address.

Donna introduced Rebecca Barrantes, the constulant lead for the website creation. Rebecca distributed a 3-page overview of the website work (attached), and a site map (attached) of the proposed website contents. She ended her presentation with a request for stakeholder volunteers. Volunteers do not necessarily need to attend more meetings; their input is being sought on the website format and content, which they can provide remotely. Melanie volunteered her participation.

Other Steering Committee members interested in participating in the website development work should notify Sheila Brice by May 11th. Anyone interested in sharing suggestions for the website should contact Rebecca Barrantes at rbarrantes@thesierragr.com.

Rebecca expects that if the website is kept fairly simple, it should take 60 to 90 days to create. Greater complexity and graphics would extend the time, but these could be added later, if desired. Rebecca also felt that this is the right time to get the site set up to share information and seek additional involvement since the CREST process has now been established and there has been a lot of content already developed. The website composite should be ready in around 60 days for review.

Melanie mentioned that Oscar Amaro, a graphic artist with the City of LA's Watershed Protection Division, has many images from LA River campaign.

Rebecca described the metatags list that Vijay Desai had begun (metatags are key words that will draw internet searches to our website.) **This initial list will be circulated to the Steering Committee for additional suggestions.**

Rebecca indicated that we will not put links to stakeholders' websites without permission, and are seeking input on other suggested links. **The website development team will prepare a schedule for the specific work elements** (this is tied to who will actually be creating the website.)

Hampik suggested that we also start the process of getting the CREST website linked back from each City's website.

Comments due to Sheila on the following website issues by May 11th:

- a) approval of linking to CREST stakeholder organizations' websites;**
- b) approval of listing of individual stakeholder representative (name/contact info);**
- c) site map comments; and**
- d) metatag suggestions.**

Gerry suggested that project links be added to the site map with brief descriptions (e.g., Sun Valley, Rio Hondo Golf Course, etc. It could provide information on both what worked well and lessons learned on related projects.

3. Technical Committee Report Out

Michele Pla reported on the discussions at last week's Technical Committee meeting (on April 19.) The two topics covered were:

- 1) Ballona Creek Toxics TMDL, which is out for Public Comment right now; and
- 2) Ballona Creek and Estuary Bacteria TMDL work plan details.

Ballona Creek Toxics TMDL

Rebecca Cristmann from the Regional Board identified the differences between Preliminary Draft TMDL that CREST Stakeholders had seen and the one that was ultimately issued as a Draft by the EPA.

The Technical Committee discussed studies that participants in CREST might want to reflect in their own response letters on the Draft TMDL. The list of suggested special studies for committee members to consider in their individual comments was revised based on suggestions from this meeting and distributed to CREST members.

Ballona Creek and Estuary Bacteria TMDL Work Plan

The Steering Committee had approved moving forward with conducting the Ballona Creek Bacteria TMDL Work Plan at the last Steering Committee Meeting on March 22nd. Some adjustments to the Work Plan were recommended by Technical Committee last week and are reflected in the tabulated summary that was distributed at today's meeting (CREST Ballona Creek Bacteria TMDL Work Plan - Subtasks and Schedule Revision 1, attached.) These include using a start of May 1, and combining task 3.1 into tasks 2.1 & 2.2.

Michele clarified that we are not looking for raw data, but rather for information that has already been analyzed. **Steering Committee members are asked to provide information on relevant studies to Don Schroeder by May 11th.**

Terri asked what will happen with this work product. Michele responded that it will get folded into the Regional Board's drafting of the Bacteria TMDL that Ginachi Amah is preparing. CREST is developing information for the Implementation portion of the TMDL (i.e., in CREST terms, crafting the "Water Quality Attainment Strategy.")

Terri expressed concern that there will be resistance to the Regional Board being prescriptive about TMDL compliance strategies. Michele responded that the Regional Board will largely be relying on the same approach that was applied in the the SMBB Bacteria TMDL (i.e., reference system/anti-degradation approach). CREST is not focusing on these earlier sections of the TMDL that are like the SMBB Bacteria TMDL (i.e., Problem Identification, Numeric Targets, Source Assessment, Linkage Analysis, Allocations) but rather on the Water Quality Attainment Strategies sections (i.e., Implementation and Monitoring.) The Technical Committee will brainstorm implementation options at the next meeting scheduled for May 24th.

Khalil noted that, in discussion with Water Board staff after the TMDL implementation workshops in April, Melinda Becker clarified that numeric wasteload allocations are translated to BMPs during the MS4 permit re-issuance process.

Gerry raised the concern about citing the use of sand filters in the metals TMDLs, i.e., that this doesn't address the distinction between dissolved and particulate metals.

Michele also mentioned that during at the March 15 Technical Committee meeting, the question of drain ownership had come up and it was suggested that the Steering Committee consider developing a white paper to address jurisdictional issues related to implementation responsibilities. **This will be addressed as future Steering Committee agenda item.**

4. Meeting Schedule

Some stakeholders, including EPA Region IX representatives, have suggested that the Steering Committee and Technical Committee meetings be held on the same day.

Sheila reminded the committee that while the Steering Committee meetings are held bimonthly, or possibly even less frequently over time, the Technical Committee will need to meet more frequently.

Melanie suggested that since the Steering Committee meetings are less frequent, the meetings should be held on the same day, and it is still possible for different individuals to attend each meeting.

Cathy agreed with Melanie that it is preferable to hold them on the same day, but expressed concern that there would not be adequate time to get input from management.

The primary benefit of doing this is to reduce travel time.

Drawbacks include:

- a) potentially diluting the committees, i.e., not keeping the focus of each committee as planned,
- b) allowing time between meetings to document the outcome of one meeting, and make adjustments to working documents if possible, prior to considering at the following meeting
- c) allowing time between meetings to obtain input from management
- d) commitment of an entire day for those who do participate in both committees.
- e) concern that we don't rehash the same info at both meetings.

Mitigation:

- a) Manage the meeting to achieve desired the results; a good example is today's agenda, which listed specific goals, which were achieved. (Terri)
- b) Steering Committee meeting addresses issues from the prior Technical Committee meeting so that there is time to obtain input between meetings. (Cathy)
- c) Hold Steering Committee meeting in the morning, and Technical Committee meeting in the afternoon. (Khalil)

Cathy added that we should make sure the all tasks that are conducted during this process provide the best bang for the buck. The agencies can do much of this on their own.

Michele clarified that we expect the future Technical Committee meetings to be working sessions needing involvement from all of the participating stakeholders, rather than a presentation format, and perhaps should more appropriately be called workshops. CREST meetings will be held

The committee agreed that their preferred location is the Media Center, but that this decision would be circulated via e-mail by Sheila to the other committee members for further consideration.

The next Technical Committee Meeting (Workshop) will be held on May 24, 2005 at the Media Center.

On June 28, 2005, the Steering Committee will meet in the morning, and the Technical Committee will meet in the afternoon. Tentative location is the Media Center.

ACTION ITEMS

Comments to Sheila Brice by May 3, 2005:

- Provide comments on goals and approach laid out in the overall Work Plan as well as specific comments on th LA River Bacteria TMDL Work Plan by May 3.
- Provide feedback on holding SC and TC meetings on the same day.

Comments to Sheila Brice by May 11, 2005:

- Volunteers interested in participating in the website development work
- Approval of linking to CREST stakeholder organizations' websites
- Approval of listing of individual stakeholder representative (name/contact info)
- Comments website Site Map
- Metatag suggestions

Comments to Don Schroeder (schroederdj@cdm.com) by May 11, 2005:

Provide information, references (including contact info) on reports and studies related to Ballona Creek (BC) and Estuary. This information gathering is part of the Ballona Creek Bacteria TMDL Work Plan for developing of TMDL implementation (water quality attainment strategies.)

Specifically, CREST TC is seeking reports, studies, data (preferably summaries vs. raw data), mapping on:

- BC and Estuary Watershed characteristics (physical, land use, drainage system, habitat/biotic resources)
- Flow information (dry and wet weather)
- Water quality (bacteria, general chemical)
- Watershed plans
- BMP plans/studies

Ongoing:

- Suggestions for the website should be sent to Rebecca Barrantes at rbarrantes@thesierragr.com.
- Website team to develop schedule of website development tasks.
- Stakeholders to start the process of getting the CREST website linked back from each stakeholder's website.
- Consider developing a white paper to address jurisdictional issues related to implementation responsibilities at the next Steering Committee meeting.