



Blue Ribbon Committee for the Rehabilitation of Clear Lake

Technical Subcommittee

1:00 – 3:00 pm

January 28, 2021

Meeting Summary #14

Attendees:

Attendees are listed In Attachment A.

Action Items:

1. Subcommittee members should send any edits for the October 22 summary to CCP by close of business January 29.
2. CCP will circulate the Lake County/Habematolel RFP for water quality data management to the Committee listserv and include it in this meeting summary. (COMPLETE)
3. The Facilitator will resend the Prop 68 funding criteria to the Subcommittee .
4. Ms. Ryan will draft a scoring matrix for on-the-ground projects to be considered for Prop 68 funding, she will send the draft matrix to CCP.
5. Dr. Alpers and Dr. Cortes Cortes will send CCP their presentation slides for distribution to the Subcommittee. (COMPLETE)
6. CCP will update the Annual Report, removing mention of the VELMA model. (COMPLETE)
7. CCP will compile the information presented by USGS and UC Davis to bring to Resources and the Committee for consideration.
8. UC Davis and USGS will work with CCP to develop a 3-4 slide proposal to the Committee.
9. Ms. DePalma-Dow will provide an update at the next Subcommittee meeting regarding the County's measures to address DWR's discontinued in-lake monitoring.

Welcome and Introductions

Sam Magill (Facilitator), Sacramento State Consensus and Collaboration Program (CCP), convened by webinar the fourteenth meeting of the Technical Subcommittee (Subcommittee) of the Blue Ribbon Committee for the Rehabilitation of Clear Lake (Committee). A full list of participants is included in Attachment A. He invited Committee chair Eric Sklar, California Fish and Game Commission, to provide opening remarks for the meeting.

Mr. Sklar thanked the Subcommittee for the invaluable information they contribute to inform the Committee's policy decisions. He acknowledged that, particularly in this funding climate, at times the work feels like two steps forward and one step back, but he remarked that there is a good promise of funding for the next year. He closed by praising the Facilitator for his tireless work behind the scenes to secure funding for the Committee's recommendations.

Confirm Meeting Summary from October 22 Technical Subcommittee Meeting

The Facilitator asked the Subcommittee if they had any proposed edits to the October 22 Subcommittee summary. The Subcommittee did not indicate any edits. He asked the Subcommittee to send any final edits to the CCP team by 5pm on January 29 (**Action Item #1**), after which CCP will finalize and post the summary.

Lake County and Habematolel Pomo Water Quality Database Request for Proposals (RFP)

Angela DePalma-Dow, Lake County Water Resources Department (WRD), announced that WRD and the Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake are partnering to create a water quality data exchange program. The first step in this process is to hire a consultant to create the infrastructure to house existing data and streamline data collection from all entities in Lake County, including the cities and Tribes. The intention is for the database to simplify data sharing and facilitate submitting data to the California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN) and federal Water Quality Exchange (WQX).

Ms. DePalma-Dow said the long-term goal is to create an interface that links all relevant databases, including the existing Big Valley Rancheria database, to make searching and downloading data easier. Once this database and portal are in place, data entered directly into CEDEN, WQX, or any other relevant database, will be accessible through the portal. The RFP will be open from January 28 to February 28 on EnviroBIDNet.com (Bid ID659241 Bid # HLC-21-EN). The consultant will have one year to complete the task. Ms. DePalma-Dow noted that a database was a proposed 2019 recommendation, but the Committee deferred it for further discussion in 2020, as there were many variables to consider before including it in the Annual Report. With the funding shortage in 2020 due to COVID-19, the discussion on the topic was not resumed.

Participants made the following comments:

- Everything in CEDEN automatically goes into WQX already, but CEDEN and WQX do not communicate well. CEDEN requires significantly more information than WQX, with a very specific nomenclature for site names.
- Any contracts or work that the Committee supports going forward should require upload of data in a designated format.
- UC Davis maintains its own public database. The UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center (TERC) is open to working with the selected consultant in whatever way would be helpful.

Ms. DePalma-Dow will consult with Sarah Ryan, Big Valley Rancheria, once a consultant is selected, because of Big Valley's long standing experience collecting and sharing data in the Clear Lake basin. CCP will circulate the RFP to the Subcommittee and to the Committee listserv (**Action Item #2**).

Annual Report Funding Update

The Facilitator informed the Subcommittee that the 2020 Annual Recommendations Report (Report) was submitted to the Natural Resources Agency (Resources) on December 29, to be routed to the State legislature and governor's office. Resources is beginning discussions with the legislature about the budget for funding the recommendations.

In their 2020 Report, the Committee requested a total of \$6.8 million for its recommendations. The first draft of the State budget was released in early January and did not include the Committee's recommendations, however, the Facilitator noted this could change in the budget revision in May.

At its December 9 quarterly meeting, the Committee approved the use of \$3.6 million to fund the development of an upper watershed model and implement a comprehensive monitoring network. The Facilitator shared that Resources has approved \$1.2 million of this request, but will need a funding justification for the Department of Finance to approve the rest of the \$3.6 million; the funding justification memo is under development. Additionally, Resources has requested that the Committee spend the remaining Prop 68 funds for on the ground projects, to align with the intention of Prop 68. During the December Committee meeting, Committee members and members of the public alike had already expressed support for funding a combination of research and on the ground projects.

Prop 68 Projects Discussion

In previous Committee and Subcommittee meetings, Ms. Ryan and Eddie Crandell, Lake County Board of Supervisors, presented on-the-ground habitat restoration and erosion remediation projects on Kelsey Creek and Clover Creek, respectively. The Facilitator explained that these project combined are expected to cost around \$1.5 million. He asked the Subcommittee whether they would recommend to the Committee that the remaining Prop 68 funds be spent on these two projects. He reminded them that the Committee must be the final decision makers regarding how the Prop 68 funds are to be spent. He noted that a special meeting of the Committee might need to be called to decide on the final use of the funds.

Ms. Ryan commented that neither the Committee nor the Subcommittee has produced a formal request for project submissions. She said that while Big Valley would appreciate the funding for their project, there might be more impactful projects that would benefit from the funding. She suggested the Subcommittee develop a structure for project submissions, such as criteria and a timeline so that the Subcommittee can review projects. The Facilitator offered to

resend the Prop 68 funding criteria to the Subcommittee to inform this structure (**Action Item #3**).

Ms. DePalma-Dow concurred with Ms. Ryan and suggested that a submittal sheet could be as simple as a Google form asking for an agency lead, a topic, project abstract, and proposed budget. She has reached out to Supervisor Crandell to support the Clover Creek project, which is in a very early stage of planning and that while the Big Valley Kelsey Creek project is nearly ready to implement, it is not expected to significantly improve water quality. She remarked that while replacing local storm drains with drains that have filters, for example, would be a high-impact project, the implementing agencies lack the planning capabilities and maintenance funding to have the project “shovel ready” or sustainable after implementation. She said there are a large number of potential infrastructure projects that fall into this category. Ms. Ryan pointed out that water quality improvement is not a requirement for the Prop 68 funds, and Ms. DePalma-Dow agreed but noted that it is the central purpose behind Assembly Bill (AB) 707 and the charge of the Committee. Jim Steele agreed that having funding only for shovel-ready projects is prohibitive to implementing these projects.

Ms. Ryan stated that Clear Lake has been neglected and deprioritized by the governments who have been responsible for its care. She acknowledged that everyone in the County is doing the best they can with limited resources, and a project should not be denied funding simply because it is the responsibility of another agency. However, she asked that if the Committee funds works that are the responsibility of other specific entities or agencies, those entities applying for funding and the Committee should be transparent about that fact.

The Facilitator asked if the Subcommittee would be an appropriate group to review potential projects. Subcommittee members made the following comments:

- The Subcommittee should identify the benefits or lack of benefits of a project from a technical perspective, to explain to the taxpayer how and why the funds are allocated.
- This group should weigh in on any decision and at least provide discussion points to the Committee.
- According to our charter, the Socioeconomic Subcommittee may need to review any project proposals, too. That might be before or after the Committee’s review.

Ms. Ryan offered to draft and send CCP a scoring matrix for on-the-ground projects to be considered for Prop 68 funding (**Action Item #4**).

Alternative Funding Proposal Discussion

Charlie Alpers, US Geological Survey (USGS), with Geoff Schladow and Alicia Cortes Cortes, TERC, proposed an alternative request for distribution of funds for the Committee’s recommendations. The three researchers first presented about the current monitoring and modeling taking place and additionally proposed in the Committee’s Recommendations 1 and 2. They explained that the monitoring and modeling are all interconnected, and together form a

comprehensive picture of the function of the lake that will ultimately help identify the most effective management practices for Clear Lake.

Dr. Alpers shared that all of the data coming out of the suite of models proposed in Recommendation 1 (distributed model of the upper watershed) could be accessible from a common portal. He also named Tableau as the visualization tool that the public could use to interact with the models. Dr. Alpers and Dr. Cortes Cortes will send CCP their presentation slides for distribution to the Subcommittee (**Action Item #5**). The Facilitator noted that the final Report submitted to Resources contained outdated information about Recommendation 1, including mention of the model VELMA. He will update the Report and resubmit it to Resources (**Action Item #6**).

Dr. Alpers reiterated that TERC's in-lake modeling work and the DWR monitoring are intricately related to Recommendations 1 and 2, and absent State funding, TERC will need to disassemble their equipment starting in April. Therefore, Dr. Alpers suggested that rather than funding three years of monitoring and modeling (Recommendations 1 and 2) with the Prop 68 funds, the Committee allocate the funds for one year of Recommendations 1, 2, 6, and 7 from July 2021 to June 2022. The Facilitator pointed out that the next Committee meeting will be March 18, but an interim meeting could be scheduled in February to get their input on this suggestion since time is of the essence.

Additional Considerations

The Subcommittee asked clarifying questions and discussed additional considerations regarding the funding situation. Dr. Schladow added that Sam Sharpe, a UC Davis graduate student, was awarded a \$250,000 NASA grant for 3 years to use autonomous underwater vehicles, drones, and satellite data to help advance knowledge and predictive ability of cyanobacteria on Clear Lake. If TERC's research is discontinued, there will be no way to support Ms. Sharpe's work there, she will have to move elsewhere, and the Clear Lake community will not benefit from her research.

In response to a question from Mr. Steele, Dr. Alpers shared that the modeling work he manages for the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) remediation of the Sulphur Bank Mercury Mine is on hold because there is not enough data to put into a model. USEPA will eventually hire a consultant and contract a small amount of USGS time for that work. It hasn't been determined whether USEPA would contribute any funding to the greater Clear Lake modeling effort supported by the Committee.

Mr. Steele wondered if there might be funding for special studies investigating specific treatment areas in the lake. Dr. Schladow replied that the monitoring and modeling can be geared toward answering specific questions, and that input from stakeholders for these questions is helpful, but this work cannot be done without funding.

Meg Sparling, UC Davis Office of Research, shared that she and her colleague Christina Adamson were available to answer any financial questions about the administrative process of using the Prop 68 funds for university research activities at the Lake.

Determination to Propose to the Committee

Subcommittee members agreed to ask the Committee to consider the researchers' proposal in an interim meeting. Most members did not advocate for or against the proposal, and requested a proposal showing the benefits and drawbacks to both options.

As the Committee member co-chairing the Subcommittee, Ms. Ryan supported sending the proposal to the Committee for review. She stated that she understands the need to have definite funding sources for the in-lake modeling and for the monitoring plan, but only guaranteeing one year of funding means they will be back in the same funding position at the end of 2021. Dr. Alpers acknowledged that only one year of funding for any of these projects would not be useful. He asked if there is potential for more Prop 68 funding, and the Facilitator expressed his understanding that Resources is only allowing these funds to be used for planning for Recommendations 1 and 2.

Other Subcommittee members provided the following comments:

- A lack of funding for needed sustained monitoring is a constant barrier in Lake County, which is why the State legislature formed the Committee.
- If this choice goes to the full Committee, we must provide them with very clear pros and cons for consideration, because the Committee has not been in the in-depth discussions about monitoring and modeling we have had over the past two years.
- The highest priority is to continue the in-lake monitoring that DWR has been conducting since the 1960s.
- The Committee should review this in an interim meeting. March 18 will be too late to make a decision since, in the absence of funding, TERC must begin to disassemble research stations in April.
- The alternative proposal should be supported. It would be a shame to waste all of the effort put forth by the researchers in the past two years.
- We should put more pressure on our legislative representatives to seek funding.

In response to the final comment above, the Facilitator noted that Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry is working diligently to secure funding for these recommendations and has lost committee assignments in the legislature, perhaps as a result of her steadfastness to this cause. Their state senator's office is aware of the situation, as well.

Next Steps

CCP will compile the information presented by USGS and UC Davis to bring to Resources and the Committee for consideration (**Action Item #7**). Reviewing his presentation proposal, Dr.

Alpers noted that the cost of funding all programs for a single year would be less than the cost of funding just the monitoring and modeling for three years, and perhaps another year or two of monitoring could be funded. He will work with the TERC team to revise the proposal with a few alternatives before sending it to CCP for distribution. The Facilitator asked that they develop a 3-4 slide proposal to the Committee (**Action Item #8**).

Ms. DePalma-Dow shared that by the next Subcommittee meeting, she expects to be able to present precise data about nutrient sources loading from urban areas in Lake County, to contribute to the models. She noted it does not account for all of the land in Lake County, only what is required for the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board's Total Maximum Daily Load limit (TMDL). Dr. Alpers replied that that data will help substantially with calibrations for the models, particularly the spatially referenced regression on watershed attributes (SPARROW) model. He said that the more places that data can help calibrate the model, the more it will help with predictions for other areas in the Clear Lake basin.

Ms. DePalma-Dow added that by next year she should have data from the County's urban monitoring plan for both cities and the nine other municipalities that flow into Clear Lake. The urban monitoring plan is currently in review by the State. Ms. DePalma-Dow offered to provide an update at the next Subcommittee meeting regarding the County's stop gap measures to address DWR's discontinued in-lake monitoring (**Action Item #9**).

Adjourn

As co-chair of the Subcommittee, Ms. Ryan thanked everyone for the great discussion. She said she is interested in entertaining multiple scenarios to find a way to make the modeling and monitoring work in the climate of budget uncertainty. She said she looks forward to working together on this over the next month. The Facilitator thanked the Subcommittee and adjourned the meeting.

ATTACHMENT A: Roster of Participants

Subcommittee Members & Staff		
First	Last	Organization
Charlie	Alpers	United States Geological Survey
Alicia	Cortes Cortes	UC Davis, Tahoe Environmental Research Center
Joe	Domagalski	United States Geological Survey
Angela	DePalma-Dow	Lake County Water Resources Department
Alex	Forrest	UC Davis, Tahoe Environmental Research Center
Sarah	Ryan	Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians
Dina	Saleh	United States Geological Survey
Geoff	Schladow	UC Davis, Tahoe Environmental Research Center
Eric	Sklar	Blue Ribbon Committee, California Fish and Game Commission
Jim	Steele	Lake County resident
Broc	Zoller	Lake County Farm Bureau
Sam	Magill	California State University, Sacramento
Sophie	Carrillo-Mandel	California State University, Sacramento
Danaka	DeBow	California State University, Sacramento

Guests & Members of the Public		
First	Last	Organization
Christina	Adamson	UC Davis Office of Research
Ryan	Carey	Lake County Water Resources Department
Meg	Sparling	UC Davis Office of Research
Michelle	Stern	United States Geological Survey
Brett	Walkton	Circle of Blue water news