

PROJECT CLEAN WATER
2002 CLEAN WATER SUMMIT
Science and Technology Issues Track
Summary of the Afternoon
June 21, 2002



Afternoon Session:

- I. Jon Van Rhyn introduced the afternoon session and gave a brief presentation on history and accomplishments of the Science and Technology Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and its function within Project Clean Water. He reviewed the nine specific action items previously developed and the progress of the TAC toward completing them. He stated that the purpose of the afternoon session was to determine the TAC's priorities and direction for the coming year.

- II. Invited speakers contributed their ideas:
 - A. John Helly-

John indicated that there is a need to better correlate short-term regulatory processes and long-term system understanding. Regulatory programs are focused on enhancing water quality while the scientific community is focused on a more fundamental understanding of how the system behaves. John's recommendations included the following:

 - 1) Establish a Countywide sensor network to collect water quality measurements using future and current technologies in a cost effective manner.
 - 2) Set up a data distribution system so all interested parties can have access to this information to bring about better coordination within watershed systems.
 - 3) Correlate the paper universe to measurements.

 - B. Ken Schiff-

Ken commented that the TAC action items are very similar to those that SCCWRP and other groups have identified as priorities on a Southern California regional scale. He suggested that we find opportunities to leverage funding to achieve common

goals. Ken commented that the current efforts in Mission Bay have put us on the right road.

C. Art Barnett-

Art indicated that the TAC's future efforts should include providing input into the Basin Plan review process. Recently, the scientific community has identified inconsistencies in beneficial use protection and the establishment and utilization of water quality standards. Many standards are established on a national or semi-regional basis and do not always apply to the unique aquatic environments of Southern California. For example, nutrients and the assimilative capacity of aquatic systems should be studied at the local level to bring about a better understanding of their potential for impacts.

Bioassessment is another area that should be researched from a local perspective. The organisms studied are used as a measure of stream impairment. We cannot assume that our streams function the same as those in other parts of the state otherwise, we could spend tremendous resources trying to achieve an unobtainable endpoint.

Art also noted a need for increased coordination and communication between the different groups developing hydrologic models. This will allow the best overall use of different modeling approaches in water quality assessment and tracking in our region.

D. Khalil Abu-Saba

Khalil works mainly in the San Francisco Bay area and was able to provide an outsider's perspective with his comments. He encouraged the TAC to focus on working within the established regulatory framework of the Clean Water Act and water quality standards. He noted that a staged water quality program is really simple if one can get into the "language of water quality standards". There are three simple pieces; 1) naming the beneficial uses, 2) naming the objectives, and 3) thinking of ways to prevent degradation. The Basin Plan is a living document that embodies water quality standards. Chapter 2 names the beneficial uses, Chapter 3 defines the objectives to protect the beneficial uses, and Chapter 4 designates the implementation plans for the objectives. He recommends that we frame our action items in the "language of water quality" so that these

issues can be broadly communicated to decision-makers such as the Board of Supervisors, City Councils, etc.

- III. Following the comments of the guest speakers, the group discussed future priorities for the Science and Technology Technical Advisory Committee. These comments were distilled into four priority issues:
 - a. Basin Planning
 - b. Linkages to TACs
 - c. Data sharing
 - d. BMP information