

North Bay Watershed Association Board of Directors Meeting - Draft Summary

March 4, 2022 | 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

NO PHYSICAL MEETING LOCATION

Zoom Meeting

www.nbwatershed.org

1. **Welcome and Call to Order—Directors or Member Representatives Present Included:**

Michael Boorstein – Central Marin Sanitation Agency	Cheryl Howlett – Marin Municipal Water District
Jason Dow – Central Marin Sanitation Agency	Andy Rodgers – NBWA
Leon Garcia – Napa County Flood Control and Water Resources	Sabrina Marson – NBWA
Erica Warren – City of Sonoma	Sandi Potter – NBWA
Cory Bytof – City of San Rafael	Susan Stompe – Marin Conservation League
Gustavo Goncalves – County of Marin	Sasha Harris-Lovett, Ph.D., – UC Berkeley
Chris Choo – County of Marin	
Jack Gibson – Marin Municipal Water District	
Larry Russell – Marin Municipal Water District	
Rick Fraites – North Marin Water District	
Tony Williams – North Marin Water District	
Jean Mariani – Novato Sanitary District	
Pamela Meigs – Ross Valley Sanitation District	
Megan Clark – Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District	
Ryan Gregory – Napa Sanitation District	
Elizabeth Patterson – Solano County Water Agency	

Eleven NBWA board members attended the meeting comprised of 22-member agency staff, stakeholders, partners, and interested members of the public.

Call to Order – Director Gibson called the meeting to order at 9:31 am via Zoom.

2. **General Public Comment - None**

3. **Agenda Review and Approve Past Meeting Minutes**– Director Gibson asked for any Board members to speak up if there were requested changes to the agenda. No comments.

Director Patterson moved to accept the agenda. Director Meigs seconded. Unanimously accepted.

Director Bytof moved to approve the past meeting summary. Director Garcia seconded. Unanimously approved.

4. **Treasurer's Report**

Director Russell moved to accept the Treasure's Report - Director Clark seconded. Unanimously accepted.

5. **Guest Presentation— COVID-WEB: Monitoring Wastewater for SARS-CoV-2 in the Bay Area** *Sasha Harris-Lovett, Ph.D., Berkeley Water Center, UC Berkeley*

Sasha provided an overview of a collaborative Bay Area wastewater monitoring program that analyzed concentrations of coronavirus RNA in order to inform local pandemic response efforts. She described the ways in which wastewater can be a valuable resource for public health data and discussed the current state and future of the program.

- Overview of wastewater-based monitoring for public health: Wastewater monitoring isn't new; however COVID-19 proved the immediate public health value of wastewater monitoring.

Public health application:

- Rapid response: test, trace, isolate, reward and reinforce.
 - Compare trends across neighborhoods: Allocate resources (testing, contact tracing, vaccination outreach), engage community.
 - Inform mass communications, relax/increase restrictions, confirm low prevalence, integrated regional decision making.
- COVID-WEB (COVID Wastewater Epidemiology in the Bay Area)
Wastewater-based epidemiology at UC Berkeley: Partnerships
 - 47 Sampling sites (sampled 1-4x per week)
 - 24 Wastewater agencies and facilities
 - 11 County & city public health agencies and state
 - Locations:
 - Prisons, residences for the elderly, university student housing
 - Neighborhoods
 - Wastewater treatment facility influents
 - >5000 samples processed to date

North Bay sites:

Las Gallinas Sanitary District, Novato Sanitary District, Central Marin Sanitation Agency, Sausalito-Marín City Sanitary District, Sanitary District No. 5, Sewerage Agency of Southern Marin, City of American Canyon, City of Yountville, Veteran's Home, California Medical Facility, San Quentin

Wastewater provided early warning of Omicron in Marin

- Wastewater monitoring going forward
Other cool possibilities: Detecting variants of SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater.

Detecting variants: PCR-based assays

- Specific, sensitive, quantitative
- Fast sample-to-results turnaround time
- Long lead time for development/optimization
- New reagents required

The Next phase of CA's COVID-19 Response

- CA NWSS program launched at CDPH
- Governor Newsom included wastewater as part of the SMARTER plan
- CDPH launching wastewater lab, which will process California samples
- Continued research & collaborations:
 - Develop improved methods and monitor additional pathogens
 - Combine data streams to improve pandemic preparedness and health equity
- Our lab will close for routine monitoring at the end of May

Questions/Comments

Director Gibson: Does this testing help in facilitating regulations for using recycled water for domestic purposes?

Harris-Lovett: The team at UC Berkeley have been involved with direct potable reuse pathogens studies. The Wastewater Surveillance team at the CA Dept of Public Health have been evaluating the studies. She hasn't heard any updates on using this information for how this can inform recycled potable water use. They're still in disaster mode.

Director Russell: How much does a sample cost to process?

Harris-Lovett: \$350 per sample. Their lab is processing the sample at cost (not making money from testing). Wastewater agencies have volunteered the collection of samples so there are no costs there.

Director Russell: Is it a complicated process to collect?

Harris-Lovett: No.

Director Garcia: How, if at all, does the information connect with mask mandates?

Harris-Lovett: Public Health Dept has various points of data to consider and weight to come up with a judgement for the best course of action for their county.

Director Russell: Water treatment plants are heavily regulated, but Wastewater plants aren't as much. Do you see these studies as an opportunity for regulating wastewater? What about requiring hospitals to disinfect their wastewater discharge?

Harris-Lovett: In terms of Sars, there's been no discussion about treating it at the wastewater treatment plants, it's not infectious after going through the digestion tract. Wastewater monitoring is part of a bigger movement to look at it as a resource. As for the hospitals, she has no information or knowledge about this.

Director Gibson: Have there been examples of dramatic findings that has resulted in community action/change of procedure?

Harris-Lovett: In Marin, their Public Health Department allocated their contact tracing resources based on the wastewater data. She sees the biggest impact at the buildings, such as the prison they monitor, the medical officers are heavily tracking the data closely to help inform programs and responses.

Director Patterson: Can you detect nutrition issues like diabetes?

Harris-Lovett: There is increasing interest in tracking bio markers of disease and chronic disease in wastewater, and in using wastewater to better track health inequities. She doesn't know what can and can't be monitored.

Rodgers: What are the next steps for the program and what are you connecting it to?

Harris-Lovett: at the end of May, they will focus more on research and understanding what other things can be tested in wastewater to help health inequities and public health outcomes and moving away from processing labs.

Director Mariani: [Directed at Director Russell] she doesn't understand where the discussion about pathogens and recycled water came from, or his concerns about hospitals into the waste stream for recycled water. They are constantly testing for pathogens and have tools in place for safety. Where did this come from? Where are you getting your information?

Director Russell: He was asking a question. In a conference call with the state water resources control board and the NWRI there was a conversation of direct potable reuse standards (the information is on the regional board website, and he would send the link out if requested) there was a question on whether hospitals should be treated differently because of the level of activity. He was asking the presenter the questions but didn't have a direct opinion on it. The conference call was specific to updating the state on the standard for direct potable reuse.

Director Mariani: She wanted more clarification that recycled water providers treat and check water carefully and there are many safety systems in place.

6. Executive Director Report

Andy Rodgers, Executive Director

Andy provided an update on active projects, including the April 8 conference, recent meetings, communications, committees, activities, and developing initiatives since the February 4 Board meeting. Andy outlined ideas for next and future Board meeting topics and solicit feedback.

Updates since last meeting

In support of developing the Conference Program, met with numerous local, regional, state, federal and international experts and advocates on a wide range of NBWA-interest topics and initiatives

Administrative Activities

- Coordinated with Board Chair, Deputy Director, Finance Manager
- ***Progressed Agreement for Drought/FireSMART campaign***
- AR – Membership dues
- AP – Subconsultants
- Updated website and meeting packet information

Communications

- Distributed Quarterly newsletter Winter 21/22
- Met with member agencies on Feb 10, 11, 17 and 24
- Updating member contact lists
- Board members and member agency staff
- Regional partners
- Subject matter experts and speakers

Committees

- Met with 2022 Conference committee on February 8
- Met with NBWA Deputy Director and staff to develop priority initiatives

Quarterly Newsletter: Forward us newsworthy items for next issue. Help us expand distribution

- Partner agency contacts
- Funding agency staff
- Other department staff
- Information officers/communications

2022 NBWA Conference

Conference Save the Date: Download the PDF Flyer at www.nbwatershed.org/conferences

Conference Date: April 8, 2022 from 9:00am-3:00pm

Status: Save-the-Date distributed, program developed, participants engaged

Title: Climate Change(d) – Weathering Extremes Together

Format: Virtual

Cost: Free

Sponsorships: Soft solicitation i.e. prior sponsors, current partners, and requests
Sponsorships applied to cover conference costs and fund small grants program

Donations: Volunteer option on registration page

Donation funds applied toward NBWA small grants and scholarship program

Conference Program (still in draft and pending final confirmations)

Welcome: U.S. Congressman Jared Huffman

Overview/Orientation

Panel Session 1: **OneWater OneBay**

California Department of Water Resources, San Francisco Estuary Institute, Water Education for Latino Leaders, San Francisco Estuary Partnership

Panel Session 2: **WatershedSMART**

Lawrence Berkeley Lab Earth and Environmental Sciences, Stanford Woods Institute, UC Merced, Agriculture Representative

Panel Session 3: **Sea Level Rise and Freshwater Drop**

Sonoma Land Trust, Multicultural Center of Marin, Pure Water Soquel

Panel Session 4: **Resiliency Workforce Development**

Bay Area California Community Colleges and Apprenticeships, Workforce Alliance of the North Bay

Convene Land Use/Housing Agencies and Water/Wastewater Service Agencies

NBWA is working with local government to convene a workshop on land use/housing nexus for strategically coordinating infrastructure improvements associated with housing development.

Purpose

The workshop will present current housing development incentives and regional housing targets. Planning staff and utility staff will discuss challenges and approaches to meeting these goals and exploring regional infrastructure partnerships.

Status

- ✓ Coordinate with participating NBWA member agency staff
- ✓ Research current housing mandates and growth projections
- ✓ First Workshop will be held remotely in Late May or Early June

2022 Board Meetings

- April 1 – *cancelling for conference preparations*
- April 8 – **9:00-3:00 NBWA conference!**
- May 6 – Board meeting – Consider FY22/23 workplan
- June 3 – Board meeting

Topics in development:

Conference speaker outreach has produced a remarkable list of potential future speakers and collaborations!

Urban Scale Carbon Sequestration Initiatives, Regulatory Compliance Partnerships, Baylands Strategies, DroughtSMART/FireSMART, OneWater OneBay Strategic Initiatives, DWR & SWRCB Drought Assistance Programs and Resources, Collaboration-Based Funding Opportunities, Water Management & Conveyance Innovations, Capital and Natural Assets Management, What's Next in Environmental Education, Small Grants and Scholarship Program, New Members!

Questions/Comments

Director Gibson: What are the plans and activity around the small grants program?

Rodgers: There is a lot of interests in starting this program back up. A proposed framework is being drafted for the board/steering committee to consider.

Director Russell: Suggested there be a donation amount encouraged, like \$25.

Director Fraites: In support of it staying completely free without the donation option.

Rodgers: [polled the members] He will take this to the conference committee. The registration platform only has three option: Free, donation, fixed costs.

Director Patterson: [regarding Convene Land Use/Housing Agencies and Water/Wastewater Service Agencies] She brought in a nationally recognized economist to speak with the City of Benicia and the public about how to think about infrastructure; it was an accessible presentation. She will send the link to Sandi.

Director Meigs: Ross Valley Sanitation District created a policy for hookups for nonprofit or low income to reduce costs. She will send Andy the policy.

Director Gibson: There has been discussion regarding the NBWA coordinating with the North Bay Water Reuse (NBWR). This will come back to the board in great detail soon.

Rodgers: He is in chats with NBWR and defining what a partnership would look like. He will bring a proposal to the Board to consider when ready.

7. Board Information Exchange and Drought Updates

Director Meigs: They won a couple of awards, Transparency Certificate of Excellence for their district by the Special District Leadership Foundation, and a Condition Assessment Supervisor won, the Redwood Supervisor of the Year award goes through the Water and Environment Association.

They are still taking surveys until March 10 for the Larkspur Property which is cleared by the EPA as public surplus land. Their headquarters building has also been approved.

Director Gibson: Their water supply has been in the paper recently. What isn't in the paper is that they have an ongoing with County Flood Control where they are looking at significant infrastructure changes at Phoenix Lake, like additional piping, which can help increase potable drinking water and provide flood water benefits.

They are in partnership with Golden Gate National Park Conservancy to creating guidelines on managing the recreational aspects of the watershed. They are having first of several virtual public workshops on water resiliency, March 9. The kastania pump operation will increase the amount of water they can take from Sonoma Water, which is adding to their water supply.

Director Patterson: The management for the quagga zebra mussels in Lake Berryessa. There has been a program that has increased over time that checks boats as they come in. Solano County has now hired permanent staff. There was a presentation at a recent conference that staff are looking at to develop a response plan should quagga zebra mussels be introduced. She is working in coordination with Napa for developing a response technique.

Director Clark: Have they been looking at using dogs that are trained to sniff quagga zebra mussels?

Director Patterson: She doesn't know but will find out and email Andy. On another non board item, Senators Hurtado and Cortese introduced Bill SB1219, State Water Resources Control Board dissolution. If anyone wants more information, let her know.

Director Boorstein: Back in the summer they had their digestors covers inspected, but then a week later one ripped. One digester was offline, but recently went back on. Their cogen engine is being repaired and is offline.

Director Clark: They got their second clarifier online and it's been successful. They have a new architect that can help save money in the construction of their admin building

8. Announcements and Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 11:08 am

Next Meeting: March 4, 2022, Zoom

SUBMITTED BY: Andy Rodgers, Executive Director, NBWA