

2011 CEMP Partnership of Southcentral Alaska
Business Meeting
February 11, 2011
1:00 – 5:00 PM

Present: Rachel Lord (Inletkeeper), Sue Mauger (Inletkeeper), Ami Wright (RBCA), Matt Gray (RBCA), Catherine Inman (Wasilla SWCD), Melanie Trost (Mat-Su Borough Lake Monitoring), Cherie Northon (AWC), Dan Bogan (UAA-ENRI), Birgit Hagedorn (UAA-ENRI)

Review of agenda and overview of the structure of the Partnership and trainings. Currently only Dan Bogan and Joel Cooper are certified to do Level 5 training (“Training the Trainers”). It would make sense to have someone else certified to conduct this training.

Partner Updates

Cook Inletkeeper: 20 volunteers monitoring 10 sites. In 2010 we closed out 2 sites that had full baseline datasets from over 7 years of monitoring. Temperature monitoring is done at 6 sites from May – October, and bioassessment is conducted at 5 sites in June and again in August. Rachel & Sue presented the draft baseline report for Beaver Creek as a template for the content. Design work is still in process, and any comments or suggestions from the Partners would be welcomed. Inletkeeper hopes this template will be useful for other Partners with baseline data sets.

RBCA: 12 volunteers monitoring 10 sites. 5 streams have temperature loggers. The database is working well for them, and they’ve been okay with a ½ time coordinator position.

Mat-Su Borough: 27 lakes that get 5-6 site visits during the ice-free season. They are funded through the Borough, and budget cuts can be a concern. Next year they may move to sampling sites with 5+ years of data only 3 times per year to save on costs. The monitoring program has a new lab space that is exciting. Melanie is holding 3 trainings for recertifications, and they are getting on top of record-keeping. Melanie brought in their 2009 Lakes Report, compiled in large part by Lisa. All Partners were impressed with the effort put in to this informational and attractive summary of their sampling efforts!

Wasilla SWCD: Catherine joined us with the sad news that Becky McNeil resigned this winter. They currently have 5 volunteers monitoring 4 sites. One site at Hatcher Pass has 3 volunteers covering it. They are hoping to hire a new coordinator by late-spring/early-summer. Sue offered that Partners could provide letters of support if it would be helpful in obtaining funding for the District. Catherine will send out some language to Partners for letters of support if that seems appropriate.

AWC: 22 volunteers. Cherie reported that they’ve spent the past year brushing up on records, coordinating volunteers, and getting things generally up-to-speed. There is no funding for a CEMP Coordinator position at this time. Currently they have developed a network of volunteers

to oversee CEMP, with different tasks delegated to volunteers and board members. Bob Mitchell oversees training and recertification. Dan offered to help with training and recertification if they were interested in his assistance. They held a monitoring appreciation event, and have been scanning and archiving data sheets on the computer. Grants for various projects are helping to fund purchases of CEMP supplies.

There was some discussion about photographs at sites. Melanie said the disposable cameras weren't working out well for the Lake monitors, and most Partners agreed they are less-than-desirable. RBCA bought 4 waterproof cameras and that has been working well. Inletkeeper has volunteers use their personal cameras, and has 2 old donated ones for check-out if needed. Rachel developed a protocol for filing photos and uploading them onto Flickr – she will share it with the Partners. Suggested that any new photo-taking protocols include photo points to aid in comparisons between pictures taken across time.

Funding

We are currently out of the running for CIAP funding, following the removal by BOEMRE of monitoring-based projects from the Alaska CIAP plan. There is a possibility that the 10 cut projects (the Partnership one included) may have an opportunity to re-submit under the CIAP at a later date, pending review by the Commissioner of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development. Rachel will let the Partners know if we hear anything on this front.

QAPP & Databases

Ami asked for some feedback on updating their QAPP. Rich Heffern, the ADEC QA officer, signs off on QAPPs for the state. He's expressed reluctance to spend time on the RBCA QAPP. Sue said that as it's very unlikely any Partners will get state funding for citizen-based monitoring in the near future, so approving new QAPPs might not be a big DEC priority. RBCA is still working under an approved QAPP. Partners can focus on updating old QAPPs. Dan noted that 'conductivity' should be changed to 'specific conductance'.

ADEC has a new template, based in MS Excel, for uploading data into EPA's STORET. Tim Stevens is working on a template for CEMP data.

DQO Table

AWC had raised some concerns about the Hanna meter pH data quality objectives. There was discussion for clarity on the definitions of 'accuracy' and 'precision'. pH 'precision' requirements on the Partnership DQO table do not reflect true precision, as the sampling method uses pseudo-replicates. Partners agreed that 0.02 was still acceptable for a 'precision' DQO, with the understanding that this strives to maintain data collection quality given our methods. There was discussion about the difference between readings that are bouncing around a value versus reading that are drifting up or down. If the readings are drifting in one direction, it is likely that more patience is needed for the meter to hone in on a final value. According to the manufacturers of the Hanna meters, if the outside temperatures are below freezing, the meters should not be used. Partners can change their Hanna SOPs to direct volunteers to bring buckets inside to a warmer location to take Hanna meter readings if outside

temperatures are below freezing. Inletkeeper continues to have success collecting all Hanna meters quarterly for calibration, cleaning, and inspection. It's imperative for all Partners to recognize bad meters and remove them from circulation as soon as possible.

Shipping Costs

Becky (from WSWCD) alerted Rachel at Inletkeeper about dramatic increases in shipping costs for hazardous chemicals from our regular vendors. New regulations require that all hazardous materials be shipped via air, and with increased paperwork that has jacked up prices. A regular order of CEMP reagents (1 bottle of each reagent) was quoted with a \$200 shipping charge through LaMotte. Dan said the University may be able to help under the Partnership MOU, he and Birgit will look into it. All Partners will send an annual reagent inventory to Rachel ASAP.

Baseline Reports

Sue and Rachel presented a draft template for baseline reports. These reports include data summaries from all years of sample collection, GIS maps of land cover, ownership, impervious surfaces, invasive species maps (if known), and suggestions for future monitoring. Inletkeeper is moving towards closing out sites and developing these reports for all sites once they have completed baseline data sets. Partners gave positive feedback, saying they liked the idea and format. One suggestion was to include one or a couple of sketches from data sheets into the report.

The 2011 meeting concluded with a quick roundtable discussion of the overall value of the Partnership, including what Partners gain and what do they contribute towards this effort. A summary of the feedback:

- The Partnership provides Partners with credibility, standardization, and training
- Gives coordinators an opportunity to share ideas and network, "compare notes" and learn about Alaskan and Outside resources relevant to volunteer monitoring
- The Partnership can inspire others & provide the capacity to begin and continue local CEMPs and helps capture institutional knowledge.
- Partners are autonomous organizations that operate under a Memorandum of Understanding that outlines a desire to work towards collaboration and standardization of methods to provide Southcentral Alaska with high quality baseline water quality data through volunteer monitoring