

2010 CEMP Partnership of Southcentral Alaska
Business Meeting
February 19, 2010
1:00 – 5:00 PM

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

Partner Updates:

Cook Inletkeeper: 22 volunteers monitoring 18 sites. Moving towards baseline reports at sites with 5 years of 80+ site visits. Prioritizing efforts on all streams to meet baseline goals. In 2009 we did a split-sample at one site, and 2 side-by-sides with volunteers. Need to do split-samples earlier in the year! Newsletters are created and sent to volunteers every couple of months, and a 2007-2008 report was put out in December. Annual volunteer appreciation events were held in July (Splash Bash) and in December (Wine & Cheese). Rachel is presenting at the National Water Quality Monitoring Conference in Denver this April. She'll ask around for pictures from Partners for the presentation. River Rally is in May. Reminder to all groups that there is often money for scholarships to volunteer coordinators to attend these meetings. Definitely try to go if it's possible.

Update on NFQA Recertification: Rachel talked with Delicia at the national USGS lab and then Gary Solin in Anchorage. This will be the last year that we are able to use the USGS NFQA free samples for our recertifications. The bottle order was submitted by USGS for us exactly as it was last year. Rachel will contact Gary to check on address issues with AWC, and be in touch with all Partners receiving these samples to make sure we address concerns and follow through with our end of the agreement we have with USGS. Inletkeeper also submitted an EPA Environmental Education grant in December for funding to get CEMP data online and available through an interactive portal. Rusty Meyers @ APU and/or Birgit Hagedorn, ASET lab manager, may be able to help CEMP Partners out with cheaper options for recertification standards. They can be bought through TTT Environmental. Make sure to record group ranges and means.

Wasilla SWCD: 11 years in CEMP, have 17 sites with data. 16 sites have over 5 years of data. 6 active sites, with 13 additional sites in rotation, and 7 volunteers. Sites are prioritized by location and monitor interest. Nutrients are tested. The QAPP was last revised in 2005 and is currently undergoing a revision. Funding is an issue – CEMP is linked with other programs to get some funding. The CEMP is very important to the Board of Directors, with some of them believing it's their number 1 program. Volunteer recruitment is a challenge – any ideas are welcome! Last year there was a chili cook-off between the Wasilla stream monitors and the Mat-Su Borough lake monitors. Becky, Catherine, and Melanie talked about doing that again.

Mat-Su Lake Monitoring: 10 years of monitoring. 37 lakes have data, and 23 lakes were monitored in 2009. Some lakes have had the same monitor for years, like Seymour Lake with the same monitor for 9 years. 21 lakes have been monitored for 5 or more years. Some lakes have 2 sites or more; Lake Louise is an example of a lake with multiple sites. Currently have 33 active volunteers and 7 new ones. Melanie took over last year working 1,000 hours per year. There are two coordinators working for the program. Liz was out of town this year; hopefully she can participate next year! Trying to get heads above water and getting to a point where they can have time to look at the big picture. Would like more time to analyze data.

Anchorage Waterways Council: Cherie recounted some of the trials and tribulations of AWC over the past year. Currently AWC is in a tenuous spot with lack of funding and no CEMP coordinator. Board of Directors has indicated that CEMP is a #1 priority. Chadeaux is storing CEMP chemicals and volunteers are helping hand chemicals out. There is an intern working out of the ACE office and doing admin work, including receiving datasheets. 26 sites, 22 are active. 36 volunteers. Hoping to work with the Muni more closely to address funding sites that provide them with information under NPDES permits. Laura Noland is the current Board president. Sue stressed that AWC has always been a strong partner and that we should do what we can to help not lose them.

Resurrection Bay Conservation Alliance: 8 volunteers at 7 sites. 2 additional alternate volunteers to fill in. Sampling for the past 2 years. Adding 3 new sites this year. Ami has finished the draft on the 1st 2-year report. They already have 5 new volunteers signed up for spring training – many kudos from the group! Ami is part-time and responsible for finding funding; current funding runs out September 2010. Becky asked about their recruitment strategies. Americorps volunteers held a volunteer fair where they had several people sign up. They have a Technical Advisory Committee and are successful at prioritizing streams and assigning them to volunteers.

General Site Selection: Catherine mentioned that if you have several sites on a stream, the middle one(s) would be a good place to start dropping sites, if needed. Dan suggested that looking at the data would be necessary to help decide what sites to drop. Sue talked about the CEMP Effectiveness Report, available on Inletkeeper's website, and using that to help guide decisions for baseline data and trend analysis needs. Cherie asked about parent/child monitoring teams. Bob had some experience in training kids – need to make sure they can perform the tests on their own. Larry McGee, Wasilla SWCD long-time volunteer, put out an advertisement to recruit volunteers in a retirement newsletter.

DQO Table Update: The DQO Table needs to be updated to reflect the new accuracy value from Hanna for the Hanna meter pH. The new value is 0.05 - this should be changed on data sheets as well!

Grants Discussion

Rachel talked to the Corporate Donations director at the Royal Bank of Canada to understand more about their decision-making process for their Blue Water Grants. RBC is focusing the projects they fund in areas where they have a business footprint - there is no footprint in Alaska. Cherie mentioned that AWC received a small grant for database design from RBC in 2009. The group decided to not re-apply for a large Partnership Blue Waters Project grant in 2010.

All Partners agreed to apply for the Coastal Impact Assessment Program (CIAP) grant in 2010 (due March 12, 2010). Looking back at the 2009 draft that came out of the 2009 Annual Meeting, three previous project goals were to: 1) Develop & implement a regional monitoring strategy; 2) Increase awareness of regional watershed and water quality issues through new Partnership outreach tools; and 3) Strengthen the integrity and credibility of the Partnership through an independent Technical Systems Audit.

After discussion, it was decided that the Technical Systems Audit was still a very valid and important goal. The first goal should be maintained but the language strengthened. The second goal was difficult to assess its success and discussion was had on how to make this a more useful outreach goal (corresponding to the third objective of the Partnership: Raise public awareness of water quality and stewardship through hands-on community involvement). Education was discussed as important to consider in CEMP – we have generally stayed away from educational outreach as part of CEMP. Still need to maintain a firewall between education and CEMP data, but developing educational tools for Partners to use based off the CEMP model would be a great way to outreach. Sue mentioned how Inletkeeper is regularly asked to provide freshwater ecology/monitoring activities for classes in the community, which is difficult to do as we don't have the time to develop classroom activities. Dan talked about the Alaska Stream Team and possibly reviving some of that – it's possible to provide continuing education credits for educators. It was agreed to move the 'public outreach' goal to an environmental education module development for the Partnership that could be used as needed by Partners. Developing a training module that would help bring consistency to all CEMP trainings throughout the Partnership was also discussed.

Three new project goals are:

- 1) Develop a regional monitoring strategy & baseline water quality report library
 - Leverage data already collected - we are ready for baseline reports and really targeting our monitoring for meeting already defined goals
- 2) Create training modules and an educational protocol and work with all Partners to streamline and further unify regional efforts
 - Dan's Stream Team protocols
 - Teacher continued education credits
- 3) Technical Systems Audit

Rachel will work on a first draft and send out to Partners for edits and updates ASAP.

Partnership Memorandum of Understanding

Partners agreed that we would sign a renewed MOU to submit as part of the CIAP proposal. Language needs to be updated, primarily name changes from 'Cook Inlet' to 'Southcentral Alaska'. Ami agreed to do the edits and send out to all Partners to get signatures ASAP.