

2012 CEMP Partnership Business Meeting Minutes
February 13, 2012
12:45pm, Anchorage

Present: Rachel Lord & Sue Mauger (Cook Inletkeeper), Melanie Trost (Mat-Su Borough), Ami Wright & Matt Gray (Resurrection Bay Conservation Alliance), Dan Bogan (UAA, AKNHP)

Partners went around the table and gave a re-cap of their 2011 monitoring efforts.

Mat-Su Borough Lake Monitoring: Around 30 volunteers are monitoring appx. 30 sites. Melanie and Lisa are still working part-time. Melanie is working on their QAPP and things are going pretty well. They are currently maxed out on the number of sites due to financial constraints for the lab analysis of samples. Submitted a proposal to EPA with the Palmer Soil & Water Conservation District, with a letter of partnership included from the CEMP Partnership. They are looking into LakeWatch software to help with data entry, management, and reporting. Melanie applied to YSI for a travel scholarship to attend the National Water Quality Monitoring Conference. Rachel encouraged her (and other partners) to submit an abstract to give a talk at the NWQMC if possible. There was a small but great group of monitoring programs represented in 2009 at the conference, and it would be great to see more representatives from the CEMP Partnership down there. Great opportunity for outreaching to other groups for feedback and sharing of methods, equipment, volunteer management, etc.

RBCA: Just got back from Mexico - welcome back to AK! Continuing to monitor their 10 sites, with 12 volunteers. 2012 will be the fourth year of monitoring on most of these sites. Mid-year they trained three new volunteers - Alaska Sea Life Center's Americorps volunteers completing their community service work. Temperature monitoring will continue at 5 sites (fish streams) in 2012 for the third year. Ami is half-time; funding for supplies has been coming in and much easier to find than funding for time. They began bacteria monitoring this past year and have struggled with old volunteers not wanting to add new methods. For spring training this year they will institute it with new volunteers and hopefully get everyone on board. Ami is filling in when needed on these sites.

Cook Inletkeeper: Currently monitoring 10 sites and continuing to close sites out once they have complete baseline datasets. Around 15 volunteers. Rachel brought their 2011 Year In Review, which is available on their website. Ami asked how they do their graphs, and Rachel said she would email her a copy of her Excel spreadsheet so she can look at the graphing. About 5 sites have completed baseline datasets and Rachel is working on 100% QA for them before they are worked up into reports. Two are done - Bidarka Creek and Beaver Creek. For data QA, Rachel takes all of the site data from Access and puts it into an Excel spreadsheet for review. She then goes through each original datasheet and compares it to the entry in the database. If corrections are made the cell is highlighted, and then at the end the Access database is corrected all at once. She said this has worked well for having summer interns help with data QA without handing over the Access database (since Excel is easier to use and most interns are well-versed in it rather than Access).

Rachel asked Dan a QA question regarding site side-by-side and split samples at the same site in the year. This past year she did both at the same time to compare the side-by-side results with the lab results from the split sample. Dan thought that was reasonable, but with more sites would be good to spread around the QA efforts. Currently Cook Inletkeeper is rotating through their sites each year for field and lab QA checks. Melanie asked about the side-by-side with two Quantas in the field, and her and Dan discussed the differences for lakes in their field QA. Suggested sending split samples to the lab for pH and conductance during the year. Rachel does all of the data management for Cook Inletkeeper, Melanie said that Lisa enters their data, checks it, and then Melanie does the final QA check. Dan said it's definitely ideal to have two different people work the data, one to enter and one to do QA.

Cook Inletkeeper has one full-time intern and a part-time intern during the summer months. The full-time intern is part of the Alaska Conservation Foundation's Alaska internship program. They help with a variety of tasks, including macroinvertebrate sampling which is done at five sites, twice a summer. Melanie asked what the Partners thought about summer interns for their program, and possibly recruiting from the college. Sue thought this would be a good fit, with great opportunities for field work. Cook Inletkeeper pays roughly \$4500 for a full-time summer stipend (12 weeks). Not having to find housing/transportation for local students can be a big benefit.

Regarding macroinvertebrates, Dan asked about what we were seeing in the streams. Sue mentioned two sites where they have seen changes in macroinvertebrates following the large floods of 2002 and then changes in the invertebrate community following the establishment of a beaver dam. Sue asked Dan if he thought it would be okay to take the bottom bar off of their standard D-frame net since the streams are so small and it's difficult to bury the bar to the standard depth. He thought that would be fine, but you would probably get more sediment in the net. However you wouldn't miss the bugs going under the net. Rachel mentioned their outreach to teachers to encourage the education-level bug monitoring with Stream Team protocols in Homer. A local teacher attended the summer training & field monitoring and then borrowed equipment for fall sampling with her high school class. Matt asked for more information on the trainings – the protocols are available online Dan used to have funding to do 1-credit Continuing Education classes for teacher trainings on macroinvertebrate sampling with students and would be willing to come to Seward if there were at least 6 teachers interested in the training. Dan does annual trainings for volunteers in the spring in Anchorage and will email Matt and Ami when they happen in 2012. John Hudson is doing a guide for family-level aquatic insects of Alaska– Sue will see him in Juneau and ask about its publication. Melanie said they send their volunteers out with field guides to invasive aquatics, but that it can be hard to identify. Rachel suggested contacting Tammy Davis with ADF&G if in doubt about something. Dan said that *Elodea canadensis* had taken over Chena Slough up in Fairbanks, and had been found in 2 Anchorage lakes (Sand and Delong). A lot of room for education, and concern about potential spread via boats and float planes.

Melanie talked more about their EPA grant proposal. Called Wasilla Soil & Water Conservation District to find out the status of their CEMP data (their CEMP closed in 2011). Current staff weren't sure of its status. Rachel has a copy of the database and can send to Melanie. She had worked with Catherine Inman before she left WSWCD, trying to prioritize sites that had full baseline datasets. All Partners agreed it would be good to work towards some funding to hire someone to work up these datasets into useful products/baseline water quality reports for the larger community. Sue suggested Mat-Su Fish Habitat Partnership could be a good source of this funding. Rachel will work with Melanie and Sue to look into this for the fall 2012 call for proposals.

On funding, Rachel noted that the ADEC ACWA solicitation had included citizen monitoring as part of its Environmental Ed small grants. This was pretty big, as the state hasn't funded citizen-based monitoring with EPA money since 2004. Unfortunately, funding for these grants did not come through at the state-level. Brock Tabor, ADEC Project Manager for that piece of ACWA, said he was still going to work towards finding funding for citizen-based initiatives. Seems like there is a lot going on in Southeast. Sue will meet with some folks when she's down in Juneau for a conference. Rachel said that Brock was talking about a guy who is trying to coordinate/bring together citizen-based monitoring in Southeast. (Follow-up note: Mike Goldstein from the Alaska Coastal Rainforest Center).

Partners discussed the letter of resignation received from Anchorage Waterways Council. Ami asked if anyone had responded to them. Sue and Rachel had decided to wait until the meeting to discuss the letter and formulate a response from all of the partners. Although the letter indicated that current AWC staff and board didn't know about the Partnership prior to 2010, Sue and Dan both said that AWC was one of the original partners, and was one of the strongest and most active partners for many years. Rachel said that she will work to get all of the past minutes from Partnership meetings up on their CEMP website, since maybe all partners don't have copies. She has minutes that go back to 2000. The original MOU was created in 1999; Rachel has copies of the original signed 1999 MOU between UAA, Cook Inletkeeper, and AWC as well as the 2004-2009 MOU which included all of the current partners on the 2010-2015 MOU. Ami said she didn't think RBCA would have a CEMP without the support of the Partnership, and Melanie echoed that the Lake Monitoring program gets a lot of energy, feedback, and support from the Partnership. It was suggested that a letter of response be drafted that includes the perceived value of the Partnership by the current partners, and that leaves the door open for AWC to re-join if they find it something that could be useful in the future. All partners will review the meeting minutes and contribute to the draft, which will be sent along to AWC from partners present at the business meeting.

Matt asked what the Partnership could do to improve its oversight in the future. Rachel said that they have applied several times for funding for a technical systems audit that would be performed by an independent consultant that would visit each partner and review their program. There hasn't been funding granted for this, though, and so it hasn't happened. Really the Partnership is one of mutual good-faith effort towards common goals and 'regulation' of individual groups is not the goal. Melanie suggested a checklist that partners could bring that

would indicate they had been entering data, doing QA checks, and creating reports. Dan said that should be covered in everyone's QAPP. Each group has to be responsible for following their QAPP; the Partnership is there to help everyone accomplish that goal.

The primary 2012 goal for the Partnership is to find funding for someone to work up the Wasilla SWCD CEMP data so that it doesn't get lost and can become a useful product.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00pm.