Level 2 Assessment Committee of the
California Wetland Monitoring Workgroup
Role and Responsibilities

Background

California's Wetland and Riparian Area Monitoring Plan (WRAMP) recommends a 3-level framework for comprehensive monitoring and assessment of wetlands and wadeable streams throughout the State. Level 1 consists of maps and inventories of aquatic resources. Level 2 consists of field-based, relatively rapid and inexpensive methods to assess the overall condition or health of aquatic resources, meaning their likely ability to provide high levels of their expected ecosystem services. Level 3 consists of quantitative measures of those services, and may also include research to understand how the services might be improved.

In 2010, the California Water Quality Monitoring Council (CWQMC) directed the California Wetland Monitoring Workgroup (CWMW) to create a Level 2(L2) Committee to coordinate the review, development and implementation of L2 tools, in the context of WRAMP. The L2 Committee functions under the CWMW Charter to:

- Help the CWMW reach its stated goals, and actuate CWMW recommendations regarding L2 concerns;

- Support the broader goals of the California Water Quality Monitoring Council;

- Support the State Wetland and Riparian Area Protection Policy (WRAPP);

- Support or implement additional efforts as identified or assigned by the CWMW.

Figure 1. The organizational structure of the WRAMP.

Mission
The primary role of the L2 Committee of the CWMW is to coordinate the review, development and implementation of Level 2 assessment tools as integral components of the CA Wetland and Riparian Area Monitoring Plan (WRAMP), and other environmental monitoring and assessment plans and programs.

Activities

The primary activities of the L2 Committee include, but are not necessarily limited to; the following:

- Develop an L2 Committee Charter including criteria for membership;

- Develop L2 Committee staffing plans and operational budgets;

- Create and maintain standard procedures for developing L2 methods, including modules of CRAM;

- Create and maintain standard procedures for training L2 practitioners and trainers;

- Steward the development of statewide and regional L2 data management capacities;

- Create and maintain standard procedures for analyzing, interpreting and reporting L2 monitoring and assessment results;

- Advise and review L2 applications as requested by the CWMW or members of the L2 user community;

- Coordinate with other Committees of the CWMW, with other workgroups of the CWQMC, and with other wetland monitoring and assessment interests to maximize the value of L2 tools;

- Serve as the forum for identifying common regional and statewide priorities for developing new L2 capacities;

- Provide regular reports to the CWMW on the status of L2 tools and capacities plus recommendations for their improvement.

L2 Committee Organization and Membership

Workgroup Chair and Tenure
The L2 Committee will be chaired by a technical staff member of the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) who is directly involved in statewide or inter-regional implementation of wetland, stream, and riparian policies and programs. This individual is designated by the State Water Board in collaboration with the CWMW and L2 Committee. Tenure will be for a period of two years, with the possibility of extension by vote of the CWMW. A co-chair from a federal agency may also be assigned.

Membership

L2 Committee members will serve to represent the state of the science for aquatic resource protection.

The L2 Committee roster should include technical staff from state and federal agencies with regulatory or management responsibility for the health of aquatic resources in California, as well as wetland scientists from academia, scientific NGOs, and the private sector,

All members must be active participants that contribute time and/or resources to the activities of the committee.

Meeting Frequency and Location

Quarterly meetings of the L2 Committee will be coordinated with the quarterly meetings of the CWMW, in terms of times and locations. As much as practicable, the L2 Committee will meet just prior to the CWMW meeting, such that its reports to the CWMW are timely and up-to-date. The quarterly meetings of the L2 Committee can be held online.

The L2 Committee will hold an annual meeting during late-fall to review all requests and suggestions for changes to L2 tools, training, QAQC, guidance documents, etc., that are received by any and all L2 Committee members during the time since the previous annual meeting, or that are held over from that meeting. The purposes of this annual meeting can include, but are not limited to, calibration of L2 Trainers and development of an annual of workplan for CWMW review and approval.

Meeting Agendas

A standing list of L2 meeting topics will be identified on an on-going basis by the L2 Committee members and maintained by the Committee Chair. This list will be the basis of L2 Committee meeting agendas. Any member requesting to add or revise an agenda topic can do so by sending an email to the Committee Chair or designated support staff; these requests or suggestions will be recorded in draft agendas In collaboration with the Committee, the Chair will prepare a final agenda for each meeting and will send that to all Committee members prior to the meeting being held.

Meeting Management

The L2 Committee Chair, or a Committee member designated by the Chair, will conduct meetings according to their final agendas, and will also facilitate conversations, discussions, and decision-making during the meetings.
The person conducting a meeting will designate a scribe or secretary who will be responsible for recording the salient points of any discourse relative to each item of the meeting agenda, including especially any decisions that are made. All Committee members will be review the draft minutes of a meeting and the Committee will approve the final minutes in the subsequent meeting.

L2 members are encouraged to attend meetings in person, but if that is not possible, then attendance by conference call is encouraged.

Decision Making
The members of the L2 Committee intend that their meetings foster new ideas, open dialogue, and constructive debate on L2 issues and concerns. The meetings will be open, informal and consensus driven. Discussions will be informal and collegial.

All decisions of the L2 Committee will be based on a simple majority opinion of the Committee members, as evidenced by their verbal votes, when called for by the person conducting the meeting. All decisions and strongly held dissenting opinions evidenced in a meeting will be recorded by the designated meeting scribe or secretary.

To the extent practicable, all decisions of the L2 Committee should be made during its regular meetings. However, decisions can be made or modified at any time based on additional discourse and voting by a majority of the Committee membership outside of a regular meeting. These decisions can be facilitated via conference call, online meetings, or other technological means so long as they do not constrain discussion and so long as a clear consensus among the majority of the Committee members is evidenced by a verbal vote and is recorded and reported in the minutes of the subsequent regular meeting.

L2 Committee members should recuse themselves from voting on issues for which they may have a conflict of interest. For the purposes of the L2 Committee, a member has a conflict of interest if they have a direct financial interest in the outcome of their vote.

The L2 Committee will serve as a forum for discussing how public policies are being served or might be better served by L2 tools, but the L2 Committee will focus on the technical aspects of the L2 tools and will not assess policies or recommend changes in policy, except with regard to the appropriate application and interpretation of L2 tools and results.

Ongoing communication among group
L2 Committee members are encouraged to communicate with each other, colleagues in their own or other organizations, potentially interested parties, and possible new Committee members, especially regarding Committee work assignments.

Communication to the CWMW and Other Groups
The Chair of the L2 Committee attends scheduled meetings of the CWMW on behalf of the L2 Committee and reports on L2 activities. L2 Committee members may also attend meetings of the CWMW.   If the L2 Committee Chair is unavailable for a CWMW meeting, then the Chair of the L2 Committee or the Chair of the CWMW can appoint an L2 Committee member to represent the Committee at the CWMW meeting. .

The L2 Committee Chair presents any recommendations of the L2 Committee to the CWMW, which subsequently decides to approve, disapprove, or table the recommendations. If a recommendation of the L2 Committee is approved by the CWMW, it is deemed adopted by the L2 Committee. If a recommendation is not approved, it is also not adopted by the Committee. Recommendations that are tabled

must be decided during a subsequent meeting of the CWMW. Recommendations that are not approved or that are tabled can be revised and resubmitted by the L2 Committee for reconsideration by the CWMW.

In general, the L2 Committee should only be represented outside its meetings by the Committee Chair or by someone designated by Committee Chair or by the Chair of the CWMW.