

Watershed Working Group

May 18, 2016

8:30-10:00am

BECQ Conference Room

Attendees:

BECQ (Jihan Buniag, Ariele Baker, Jonathon Arriola (WEEC/BECQ), Rachel Carlson (EPA/BECQ), Katie Graziano, Kathy Yuknavage), Jerry Turnbull (NMC/CREES), Emanuel Borja (HEC), Gus Kaipat (DLNR – Secretary’s Office), Britta Baechler (DLNR - DFW), Jojo Cruz (MINA), Frank Ada (DLNR - Forestry), Pamela Aguon (USDA-NRCS), Augustin Aguon (DLNR-DOA), John Furey, Steven McKagan (NOAA), Dana Okano (NOAA).

Tasks and Major Updates:

- WWG meetings will be **held every 2 months**, instead of every 3 months.
- Must revisit CAPs to help identify priorities for the group.
- WWG needs representation from more agencies, especially CUC and DPW.
- The Reef Report app has launched, it’s a great tool for our agencies and for the community, everyone should try it out! (*see links below*)
- Steve McKagan’s coral resilience study has significant management implications and can be referred to for future prioritizing, grants, management decisions, etc. Check out the land based sources of pollution results! (*see attachments*).

Dates to Remember:

Upcoming Watershed Working Group Meetings: 8:30-10 am at BECQ Main Conference Room

- **July 20th, 2016:**
 - Dana and Ryan Okano will present initial findings: *Influence of submarine groundwater discharge on biological communities in the lagoon.*
 - Katie Graziano will provide a brief overview of the status of each CAP, for a discussion about how we can use the existing CAPs as a way to focus the interagency effort of the WWG.
- **September 21st, 2016:** Open to suggested/interested speakers.

Meeting Notes

OPENING AND INTRODUCTIONS

- Review group’s mission, establish goals, and discuss the best format for the continuation of a productive working group.
 - *Who has participated in the working group in the past? What has been the most effective?*
 - Working group is a good forum to keep track of CAP and planning updates.
 - Updates are helpful all around.
 - *What changes could be made? Who else should be represented at the table?*

- Opportunity to better engage with DPW, storm water projects could be a focal point that would require a lot of participation with DPW.
- Also need representation from CUC
 - Email John Riegel john.riegel@cucgov.org
- DPL representatives come sometimes
- Mayor of Saipan reps – come sometimes.
- *What can be a focal point moving forward?*
 - Development and planning
 - Keeping track of CAPs and the different agencies that are involved in implementation.
 - The Lao Lao CAP is not complete
 - The Garapan CAP is barely touched
 - Need to revisit the CAPs – who is working on what part of the CAP?
 - What part of the CAP might be ripe for working on as a group?
 - Use LaoLao as a success story.
 - How to address manure from pig farms
 - Get NMC CREES involved
 - West Takpachao is a big one – upper watershed farmers not using BMPs.
 - EQIP has to be easier for farmers to use (working internally at BECQ to remove the \$200 fee that is a barrier).
 - It would be good to coordinate with DOA about piggeries.

PRESENTATIONS

Steve McKagan (NOAA: steven.mckagan@noaa.gov)

- CNMI Reef Resilience Work:
 - <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0006320715300926>
 - http://data.nodc.noaa.gov/coris/library/NOAA/CRCP/project/204/CNMI_Resilience_Maynard_et_al_CRCP_Tech_Memo_22.pdf
 - See powerpoint (attached in email).

Rachel Carlson (EPA, working with BECQ: rachel.r.carl@gmail.com)

- “Reef Report” is the new BECQ smartphone app for reporting violations such as illegal dumping, unpermitted development, coral breaking, feeding fish, etc.
 - The current version can be found by searching "Reef Report" in Google Play, or by scanning the QR Code posted [here](#). The [desktop version can be accessed here \(link\)](#).
 - A promotional flyer is attached to the email, and [YouTube user guide can be found here](#).

ROUNDTABLE UPDATES

Jihan (BECQ): Working on implementing the “watershed education” elements of the CAPs, through the Watershed Warrior Program (4th grade, Garapan Elementary School, 50 students) and other outreach efforts. Also working with CNMI Forestry for ‘Ridge to Reef’ field trips, where students plant trees in the Lao Lao revegetation site. Anyone interested in joining field trips or outreach activities can contact Jihan Buniag jihanbuniagbecq@gmail.com

Rachel Carlson (BECQ/EPA): Introduced the Reef Report app, more about that below and in attachments. Steve M. suggested connecting with practitioners in Guam, who could use this type of app for tracking an upcoming bleaching event.

Also working on digitizing the permit system, as a way for CRM to get advice from technical experts in other agencies.

Jerry Turnbull NMC/CREES: Wants to be incorporated into the group, looking for opportunities to be involved.

Manny Borja (Hofschneider Engineering) – from the private sector, wants to be able to represent the working group goals in the work done with clients.

Gus Kaipat DLNR – DLNR is committed to helping whatever projects there are. Requests minutes from previous meetings and copies of CAPs.

Britta (DFW) – No updates, just recognizing the connections between her MPA work and the WWG, learning about the projects that are going on within the WWG and potential connections with MPA work.

Jojo (MINA) – Closing out the DOI funded project – Schools for Environmental Science. 6 Schools participated, the theme was watersheds. Some made effective rain gardens, there is a mangrove restoration project in Tanapag that will be spearheaded by Kodep (and the schools) with cooperation from BECQ. Recycling program, food scraps are donated to pig farms, plastic bottles are recycled, reduces litter on campus.

Frank Ada (Forestry) – Assisting BECQ with forestry needs, supplying plants for revegetation and outreach efforts.

Pamela Aguon (NRCS) – Kendall Hicks is no longer with the Saipan Field Office (moved to Flagstaff, AZ). Ms. Aguon is acting in his place. Many EQIP applications came in, but there was not enough funding. CNMI was outranked by Hawaii and American Samoa. The issues in CMNI are not just piggeries, there is also pasture and cropland that can be addressed by EQIP program. Each island district (Saipan, Tinian, Rota) will have a local working group meeting to discuss local priorities, represent local needs. Those are submitted to state office and incorporated into the program criteria so that more of CNMI's needs will be funded next year. Those that are not funded in fiscal year 16 are deferred to next year. The Local Working Group meeting will be on June 14th, 9 am at the BECQ office. Contact Pamela Aguon for more information (Pamela.Aguon@pb.usda.gov)

Gus Aguon (DLNR/DOA)- checking up on farms to monitor pesticide application, stop illegal or unpermitted use of pesticides. Working with forestry for planting, has seedlings that can be used in your backyard for free! Contact him if you want some seedlings (gusaguon@gmail.com).

John Furey – Was involved with the NPS program 15 years ago, the watershed working committee developed a textbook that has been used by public school systems. A lot were damaged by the typhoon. Suggestion to print an updated second addition, it would take about 2 years to revise and print. It is a powerful tool for education, needs to be updated with current information. Suggests using the WWG as an advisory body for the textbook. Funding needs to be secured to work on the book, and need to find a source of grants for printing. Kathy suggests electronic versions.

Steve McKagan (NOAA) - wrapping up creel project, which is a project prioritized in the Talakhaya CAP. The planned Coral workshop (to identify non-lethal impacts on coral, joint with UOG) was not actually funded, so still looking for funding for that workshop.

Arielle Baker (BECQ) – There is a grant for ecosystem services, funded by FEMA for building climate change resilience, that is currently open for applications.

Dana Okano (NOAA) – On Talakhaya, Rota, NOAA had been funding a UOG sediment loss study. The 1st phase of that assessment will wrap up in about a year, year and a half. Meanwhile, Forestry on Rota will finish planting the Talakhaya badlands by next year, they are almost completely finished this planting season (which will run June – September). After this phase, they will return in a few years to plant trees over the established vetiver grass.

In Garapan, there has not been enough info on water quality in the lagoon, no nutrient information. So there was a baseline study done, with 9 points in the lagoon at discharge sites. The water quality samples were shipped to UOG for testing nitrogen and phosphorous. Currently analyzing data, and will present at the next WWG meeting.

It would be good for CUC to be present at the next meeting for that presentation, because they were trying to get more customers in Garapan hooked up to sewers.

Water Quality also wants to do source tracking to figure out the source of pollutants in the lagoon.

Regulatory – When training staff for permitting, staff is trained on BMPs but have not been applying what they learned in training. The barrier is that staff are not storm water engineers. So, an engineering firm has been contracted through NOAA for consulting about BMPs. NOAA is billed for any hours.

Everyone can and should take advantage of this!

Incentives – CRM just put together proposal, mostly funded by NOAA but also EPA, to look at existing rules and find places where you can incentivize applicants to use BMPs. Difficult to get developers to adopt BMPs without forcing them every time. Project is still in preliminary stage, but wants to get DEQ involved with what CRM is planning. Rachel R. suggests that there is research that EPA has done on incentivizing BMPs.

Kathy (BECQ)- working on the 305b 303d Integrated Water Quality Report, which is mandated as part of the Clean Water Act, to be written every two years. Currently analyzing data from 2014 and 2015. In the past, all agencies have contributed relevant studies such as benthic habitat from marine monitoring, fish consumption (WERI), etc. Anyone who would like to contribute a recent study (in the last 2-3 years), please contact Kathy kathyjuk@gmail.com.

Jonathon Arriola (BECQ) – first time at WWG. Works on permitting and inspections. Currently beefing up inspecting, fining certain developers. Big project also on Isa Drive, on the Capital Hill curve.

Katie Graziano (BECQ) – coordinating implementation of projects in priority watersheds (Talakhaya, Garapan, LaoLao). RFP was released for Garapan Field Surveillance Project, DOI funded project. MINA was the chosen applicant – project will have 2 rangers walk around Garapan to bolster enforcement, outreach and education in priority areas, and to do barrier removal activities (installing trash bins, etc.).