

**Laboratory Committee –
Report to BACWA Board**

Laboratory committee meeting on: December 13, 2022
Executive Board Meeting Date: January 20, 2023
Committee Chair: Samantha Bialorucki, City of Palo Alto

Committee Request for Board Action: None

Regular meeting: 24 attendees via Zoom representing 20 agencies

Member Reports on Recent Audits and Certifications

Members shared lessons learned from recent TNI audits and ELAP certifications.

- Mark Koekemoer (CMSA) reported on a recent TNI-2 audit. To prepare for the audit, the CMSA lab first conducted an internal audit and gave themselves 11 findings, which they corrected. The external auditor reviewed the internal audit and also spent two days in the lab. The auditor identified 9 new findings, which included findings about temperature exceedances. No temperature exceedances are acceptable; if there are exceedances, they need to be noted in the laboratory report. In response, CMSA adjusted its temperature monitoring to longer intervals between readings for devices such as the coliform incubator. The temperature logs are saved in the LIMS system and used to qualify data. Members discussed other best practices for temperature control and monitoring, such as putting a large thermal mass in the incubator.
- Blake Brown (Central San) discussed their recent ELAP renewal application. They received feedback from Steve Boggs that acute toxicity control charts must include the laboratory name and species name. They also received feedback that all results – both valid and invalid – need to be reported in self-monitoring reports per [the acute toxicity method](#) (§9.16.2). Regional Water Board staff instructed Central San that a discussion in the cover letter was acceptable for reporting of invalid bioassays. Attaching the reports and/or entering the data into CIWQS with an “invalid” comment was not required or necessary. Contact your permit writer to confirm these instructions, as reporting preferences may vary.
- ELAP is conducting additional training of third party assessors with respect to bioassays, so ELAP staff may be present at third party assessments.
- Members reported that third-party assessors and auditors are able to provide reports within 30 days. When ELAP staff conduct audits it generally takes longer than a third-party assessor (several months). For third party assessors, the laboratory visits need to be scheduled at least a few months in advance.

Members discussed workload and staffing impacts of TNI. Some agencies are adding a QC officer job classification (either in planning stages or already approved), while others are shuffling job duties so that one of the existing job classifications includes QC officer duties. One agency is creating a limited-term position while the long-term impacts of TNI are still being figured out. Members should add additional details to a Google sheet survey that was distributed by email on December 19th.

Other Announcements

- The Division of Drinking Water is circulating a survey about Metal Detection Limits for purposes of reporting (see email forwarded from Josie Tellers, December 12th). Responses are due by Dec 23, 2022.
- [ELTAC](#) held a meeting on December 5th. An ELTAC subcommittee is preparing a New Methods Validation Guide that should be finalized by the end of 2023; it will apply to constituents without approved methods. Also, there is a position opening up on the ELTAC board (replacing Josie Tellers).
- [CWEA](#) is planning to modify the eligibility requirements for the laboratory analyst technical certification program. Beginning July 1, 2023, CWEA will not allow members to skip grade 2 or 3 (Grade 1 can still be skipped). Committee members plan to coordinate with CWEA to obtain more information, as this plan may stall the progression of members through the certification levels.

BACWA Updates:

- [The Mercury and PCBs Watershed Permit](#) was adopted by the Regional Water Board at its December meeting. Agencies should use the “PCB Template” version of the PET tool version which is available [here](#). The “PCB Template” version has the correct method of reporting PCB congeners and their co-elutes.
- Nutrient Data have been compiled for the Group Annual Report, which will be finalized by February 1st.
- Data from Phase 2 of the PFAS Regional Study will be available in early 2023. EPA’s [draft Method 1633](#) will likely not be finalized until the end of 2023.
- The Statewide Toxicity Provisions may be approved by USEPA as early as February 2023. The chlorine basin plan amendment is also under review by USEPA but there is no timeline for approval (mid-2023 at earliest).
- The State Water Board recently released a statewide strategy for monitoring CECs in aquatic ecosystems (see [Draft Report](#))

TNI Training and Implementation

- The 18th TNI training session with Diane Lawver is December 20th. Recordings of previous sessions are available through the [BACWA website](#) (password required). January and February will feature training sessions on microbiology and toxicity testing by John and Kathi Gumper of ChemVal, Inc.

Next Regular Meeting : February 14th, 2023, 10 AM on Zoom