

**Laboratory Committee –
Report to BACWA Board**

Laboratory committee meeting on February 14, 2023
Executive Board Meeting Date: March 17, 2023
Committee Chair: Samantha Bialorucki, City of Palo Alto

Committee Request for Board Action: None

Regular meeting: 37 attendees via Zoom representing 24 agencies, the Regional Water Board, and CWEA

Planned Changes to CWEA's Technical Certification Program for Laboratory Analysts

Norah Duffy, CWEA's Director of Certification, presented on planned changes to the [Technical Certification Program for Laboratory Analysts](#). Her slides are available [here](#), and her presentation included the following:

- CWEA is in a cycle of revising all of its certification programs. They are currently revising the Laboratory Analyst certification, including the exams and other qualifications. A new handbook with information about the revised exam will be available in **April 2023**. The last day to register for the exam in its current format is February 28th and the test must be taken by June 30th. After March 1st, new qualifications will be in effect for the test, which will be applicable to tests taken after July 1st.
- This process has involved participation from BACWA member agencies throughout the State. It did not involve any ELAP participation, which is entirely separate.
- Under the revised minimum qualifications, it will still be possible for experienced analysts to skip Grade 1 and obtain a Grade 2 certification. It will no longer be possible to skip Grade 2 or 3 under any circumstances.
- The Technical Certification Program committee has considerable flexibility when it comes to interpreting the requirements for supervisory experience (such as the requirement for Grade 4 analysts to have 1 year of experience supervising others in a related field). Provide plenty of contextual information with your application, and if denied, it is possible to file an appeal.

Agency Reports and Group Discussion

- Samantha Bialorucki (Palo Alto) reported on a recent TNI-2 gap analysis audit conducted by Brad Meadows. Some of the audit findings were that anything posted as an instruction, including a reference guide (such as the IDEXX MPN table) needs to have a reference ID; documents need to be secured in such a way that pages are not able to be removed or replaced without authorization; and sample preservative lot #s need to be traceable to each sample.
- Angela Brodeur (CCWD) reported out on a recent TNI-2 audit by PJLA Accreditation; the findings were mostly related to their quality manual and record-keeping.
- Members discussed requirements related to Heterotrophic Plate Counts (HPC) and the inconsistencies with auditors. One auditor required purchasing a Quebec colony counter for HPC even if the method was used for air blank purposes only and Simplate was their accredited method.
- The group discussed the need for additional guidance or a checklist from ELAP regarding compliance with TNI-2 by January 1, 2024. Feedback from ELAP has been that an official TNI-2 audit is not required before that deadline (see [2/8/23 email from ELAP to Palo Alto](#) for January 31, 2024 expiration date..
- The group discussed that it would be nice to have information compiled about agencies who are going through or have gone through new or renovated laboratory buildings to share positive insight and challenges.
- Members shared memories about former lab committee chair [Noel Enoki](#), who passed away in late 2022.

End of COVID-19 Emergency Declarations

- The governor's declaration of a state of emergency for COVID-19 ends on February 28th, while the federal state of emergency ends on May 11th. Laboratories should resume clean hands sampling for mercury, as the waiver will no longer be applicable after February 28th.

BACWA Updates:

- For the NPDES permit amendment to monitoring requirements ([R2-2021-0028](#)), note that beryllium monitoring is no longer waived. It was previously waived under the 2016 Alternate MRP.
- For the [Hg and PCBs Watershed Permit](#), agencies should use the "PCB Template" version of the PET tool version circulated by James Parrish (and re-circulated after the meeting on February 14th)
- Nutrient data from October 2021 to September 2022 are now available in the [Group Annual Report](#)
- Data from Phase 2 of the PFAS Regional Study is not yet available. EPA's [draft Method 1633](#) will be finalized by the end of 2023. A 3rd draft of the method with draft quality control criteria for wastewater is available now.
- The Statewide Toxicity Provisions may be approved by USEPA as early as March 2023. The Regional Water Board plans to slightly modify the requirements for species sensitivity screenings to avoid permit re-openings.
- At this time, the [chlorine residual basin plan amendment](#) is not expected to receive USEPA approval.

TNI Training and Implementation

- The next TNI training session will be hosted February 21st by John Gumper of ChemVal, Inc., and will focus on toxicity testing. The March 21st session will be led by Diane Lawver and will cover Module 4. Recordings of previous sessions are available through the [BACWA website](#) (password required).

Next Regular Meeting : Tuesday, April 11, 2023, 10 AM on Zoom