Laboratory Committee
Report to BACWA Board

Committee meeting on 04/15/2025
Executive Board Meeting Date: 6/20/2025
Committee Chair: Kristy Fournier, DSRSD

Committee Request for Board Action: None

66 attendees participated remotely, including 42 representatives from 22 BACWA member agencies, the Regional Water Board, a guest speaker from California ELAP, and guests from the CWEA Laboratory Committee.

Committee Acknowledgements and Leadership Transition

The committee thanked Diane Lawver for her service in training committee members over the last few years, and congratulated her upon her retirement. Training materials remain available online (for access, contact BACWA staff). The committee also thanked Kristy Fournier for her service as chair over the last year. Brittany Rossi Worthen (City of Petaluma) will serve as chair for FY26.

Q&A with ELAP

Jen McClaren, Senior Environmental Scientist with CA ELAP, responded to member questions about ELAP accreditation. Information from the Q&A session included:

- **Lab Location Move.** For moving a lab or lab construction, ELAP requires an amendment application. The fee is based on the number of FOAs for the affected methods. Labs should reach out to ELAP and schedule a meeting to discuss their individual circumstances. An onsite assessment (OSA) is required to ensure data quality; the same OSA can be used for an amendment application and/or renewal. The best time to conduct the OSA is after the move once instruments are set up and PTs are available to look at during the OSA; contact ELAP if individual circumstances prevent this.
  Labs undergoing relocation should cease reporting from one location and begin reporting from a new location on a specific, reportable date (i.e., no date overlap is allowed for two locations). Also, if your lab ceases running certain methods for a period due to construction, then ELAP recommends withdrawing accreditation for that specific period.
- **Methods.** ELAP is currently working on implementation of rMUR 2, which EPA finalized in 2024. ELAP will release information to their contact email list as soon as it is available (subscribe here). The process will be similar to the previous MUR. Meanwhile, EPA's public comment period for MUR22 just closed. ELAP will not take an action on implementation until EPA finalizes the MUR and a state agency has made a request for implementation.

  Labs must use the quality control procedures (Standard Methods 9020) that correspond with the version of the method that they are accredited for. ELAP recommends using the newest version of quality control procedures but this is just a recommendation.

  If your lab has two certified methods for the same analyte, separate PT results are required, with no averaging or combinations of the data sets. The PT results reported must originate from the method they were run under.
- **List of ELAP Certified Laboratories.** ELAP has a GIS map of certified lab, but is not able to easily offer an on-demand downloadable database with complete information including contact information and certified FOAs. Note that BACWA has requested a table of FOAs for Bay Area municipal labs, which is available here (July 2024 version).
- **SM 9020B** requires 6-W fluorescent lamps and requires verification of the "proper wattage." For drinking water methods, use of fluorescent bulbs is required; the method may not be adjusted. For non-drinking water methods, it is possible to use a LED bulb and make equivalence

adjustments with verification that the light intensity is equivalent. The equipment supplier (e.g., IDEXX) may be able to provide the necessary verification information.

- **Storing data on laboratory equipment.** TNI Volume 1, Module 2, Section 4.13.1.2-4.13.3 requires laboratory analysis data from equipment such as DO meters, pH meters, etc. to be backed up to the extent that it is technically feasible. Third-Party Assessors have recently made findings about this practice during audits. Labs should make every effort to comply with this TNI requirement, which depends on the capacity of the equipment. For example, if a pH meter offers printouts, the laboratory could store a copy of the printout.
- **FOA Method Checklists.** ELAP has some method checklists that are not posted online due to ADA accessibility limitations. Jen will ask for a list of the template documents to share with BACWA.

Nutrient Analysis at BACWA Member Laboratories

Representatives from two BACWA member laboratories provided information about laboratory methods for nutrients.

Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District. Joga Chizer and Nicole Van Aken shared their laboratory's journey to implement Hach Method 10242, spectrophotometric measurement of Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen (TKN). Link to Slides. The method is used to measure influent TKN as required by the Nutrients Watershed Permit. Their lab implemented some deviations from the EPA-approved method, such as not relying on the auto-calibrate and auto-read functions of the instrument, so they sought approval from EPA Region 9; a formal ATP was not required.

San Jose. Buddhima Mahanama provided a comprehensive overview of her laboratory's methods for monitoring different forms of nitrogen, phosphorus, and organic carbon. The lab's instruments include a flow injection analyzer, ion chromatography system, discrete analyzer, and TOC-TN analyzer. Link to Slides.

Discussion on Reporting Duplicates

Attendees discussed the issue of reporting duplicates that are batch QC requirements. This topic has been discussed at a previous BACWA committee meetings and Regional Water Board staff have, in the past, provided clarification that QC samples do not have to count as duplicates. Link to Permits Committee Notes (Feb. 2019) and Lab Committee Notes (Dec. 2021).

New Resources

- The slides and Q&A responses from John Gumpper's presentation at the April 15th Lab Committee Mtg are now available online: Presentation Slides, Q&A Responses
- Videos from the ELAP 2025 Conference are available at ELAP YouTube Channel

Next Meeting: Tuesday, August 12th, 10 AM, Virtual