Summary of SWRCB Responses to the SMBNEP Governance eSurvey

What do you see as the unique strengths and attributes of the SMBNEP Management Conference governance structure?

The key feature of the NEP by design is local watershed-based, broad stakeholder presentation and involvement. The current governance structure of the SMBNEP retains this key feature, which is also its greatest asset.

Are there governance policies and practices that best contribute to achieving the SMBNEP's goals and objectives?

The SMBNEP is effective for a resource-limited program. The effectiveness can be mostly attributed to the collaboration and partnerships among participating stakeholders, including the SMBRC-TBF partnership.

Overall the current structure is still well suited to address the issues and challenges we expect to encounter in the foreseeable future, although modifications can be made in several areas to improve performance and be more efficient to meet CCMP Action Plan Priorities. Modifications can be made to reduce any administrative inefficiencies and procedures in the structure so more staff time can be spent accomplishing the CCMP Action Plan priorities. Improve legislative outreach and outreach for funding. Also improve stakeholder outreach to continue interest and support for the priorities and build collaborative relationships.

Efforts to modify and improve the structure should focus on identifying ways to improve and enhance existing governance pieces rather than starting from scratch or adding many new layers, committees or groups that will require resources to manage, but will likely not add much value or improve the ability to meet the goals and objectives.

Make the best use of the limited staff resources: Identify tasks and activities that are most effective at achieving the program goals and streamline any inefficiencies, reduce or eliminate unnecessary tasks and activities.

Are there new or modified governance policies and practices that could be implemented that could lead to better achievement of the SMBNEP's goals and objectives?

Several elements of the current structure can be modified and improved, including the following:

1). The Chair and Executive Committee should provide a stronger leadership in guiding SMBNEP's work priorities and the agenda of the SMBRC, and play a more active role in raising more funding sources to support CCMP implementation. The improvement of the EC function can be benefitted by regular participation of EC meetings by U.S. EPA and SWRCB representatives, the two primary sponsors of the SMBNEP, adding the two agencies as members of the EC if necessary.

2). The current structure of the Watershed Advisory Council should be revamped as it is no longer productive and effective in soliciting input from, and communicating with the general public. It is also to a large degree duplicative of the public involvement function already built into the structure of the Governing Board and the Board meetings. In addition, the large and overlapping membership of the WAC with the Governing Board causes a lot of confusion and create unnecessary administrative burden on staff and all participating members. Potential alternatives to the current WAC structure include a new Public Advisory or Outreach Committee set up by the Governing Board, similar to the structure of the current TAC, or annual or regular public workshop set up to present information on SMBNEP activities and to solicit public input. The current role of the WAC is to provide input to the GB on restoration in the watershed. This could be better accomplished by setting aside time for the public to engage with the GB during regularly scheduled meetings. The Watershed Stakeholder Group could be open to any stakeholders/members of the public to provide input.

3). The SMBRC-TBF partnership can be further improved and strengthened by amendments to the current MOU and MOA to further clarify the roles and responsibilities of each entity, including the designation and roles and responsibilities of the SMBNEP Director.

4). Develop special committees appointed by GB to: (1) engage the legislature and advocate for funding allocations; (2) identify potential funding sources for grants coordinate fundraising activities, (3) conduct public outreach, engage with the public on disseminating information and informing them of opportunities to engage.

Could you suggest any other changes to the current governance structure or suggestions for future governance?

Other changes/improvement to consider:

- Review frequency of meetings and coordinate schedules. Reduce frequency of meetings, but perhaps lengthen the meeting time. Schedule them quarterly with key objectives at each meeting (e.g., reviewing and discussing draft CCMP and establishing priorities for annual workplan at one meeting, approving CCMP).
- Governance document needs to incorporate considerations for climate change and building climate resiliency.
- Add the Executive Committee to MOU. Include eligibility, appointment, roles and responsibilities, meeting schedule, etc.