

**Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG)
San Francisco Bay Fish Project Quarterly Meeting
Meeting Notes**

**Thursday, June 14, 2012, 12:00 - 5:00 PM
Elihu Harris Building, Room 9
1515 Clay St., Oakland, CA**

1. Announcements and opportunities for collaboration

Delta Exposure Reduction Program

Janis Cooke from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board announced a meeting on June 21st from 9:30 to 12:30 in Ranch Cordova on the Delta Exposure Reduction Program. The purpose of the meeting is to develop a strategy to reduce mercury exposure to consumers of Delta fish, similar to the SFBFP. For that reason, her group is interested in the signs, testing, and messages developed under the SFBFP. This program is part of the Delta mercury TMDL. Currently, there is a long implementation time frame. Opportunities exist to merge the Delta project with the SFBFP. For more information, please contact jcooke@waterboard.ca.gov.

2. Presentation on Biomonitoring California

Amiko Mayeno from CDPH introduced the topic of biomonitoring, discussing what it is and what we can and cannot learn from biomonitoring studies. She explained that Biomonitoring is a way to measure chemicals in a person's body (most commonly examined in blood or urine, but can also be examined in breast milk, hair and semen amongst other biological substances). She emphasized that by itself biomonitoring isn't able to tell us where those chemicals came from, or at what level they are a health concern. There are a limited number of chemicals where a level of concern has been set by state and or federal agencies.

She also introduced the Biomonitoring California project and explained that the ultimate goals of the project are to study the levels of specific chemicals in the California population, trends in those levels, and to collect data that will be used to help assess whether state chemical policies and education efforts are effective. Through those studies, they hope to raise awareness, encourage healthy behaviors, and guide policy. While the program does not currently have funds to conduct a statewide sample, the program is conducting localized studies and increasing its laboratory capacity.

Sandy McNeel, from CDPH, presented on issues for mercury biomonitoring as they relate to fish consumption. She discussed the three different types of mercury (elemental, organic, and inorganic) their different sources and the different tests used

to measure them in the human body. She noted that organic mercury (methylmercury) is associated with fish consumption and also that, for fish mercury biomonitoring, it is best to conduct blood tests. She also talked about sources of mercury in urine: dental amalgams and skin lightening creams.

Sandy also discussed an ongoing maternal health study, in which only one of the women/infant pairs tested had elevated mercury levels. Those levels weren't the result of fish consumption, but rather an adulterated face cream from Mexico.

She presented the summary results of from Biomonitoring California projects, which found that 61% of those tested had measureable levels of cadmium, 97% had measurable levels of mercury, and 100% had measurable levels of lead and manganese.

The next steps for the Biomonitoring project will be to further examine organic mercury levels using combined blood/urine testing, and to continue to look at levels of PCBs and PBDEs.

Sandy presented on biomonitoring studies from other researchers, which included results from coastal and inland populations (where mercury levels were predictably higher in coastal areas), and umbilical cord blood sampling which indicated that cord blood mercury levels were 70% higher than the mother's blood.

See presentation slides for more information.

Several questions were asked at the end of the presentation:

Q: What type of mercury was found in the woman with elevated levels? A: The blood test measured total mercury which could include both organic and inorganic mercury.

Q: Which face cream was it? A: it was a commercial face cream that had been taken to a pharmacy in Mexico where a "secret ingredient" was added that was supposed to improve its effectiveness at whitening.

Q: Did you test for other chemicals in the face creams that were elevated? A: No. The mercury levels were so high that these creams needed to be removed from the market.

Q: Why were mercury levels in Black women higher than those in Latino? A: We believe they eat more fish. Asian women were not included the comparison.

Q: How many Black women participated in the study? A: We would need to look at the report to answer definitively. These women were accessed through SF General Hospital. Generally speaking, the numbers were small for use in comparing results among ethnicities.

Q: When will the Biomonitoring California study results be released? A: The summary will be released (we hope) by September. The individual studies when they are completed.

3. Final presentations by funded groups

(See power point presentations from funded groups for more information)

A. APA Family Support Services

The goal of APA's project is to increase awareness and understanding of fish contamination issues and reduce exposure from chemicals from eating SF Bay fish through research within the Asian/Pacific Islander (API) population.

Among the activities that were conducted under the project were:

- Conducted research to identify/survey at-risk ethnic groups
- Developed and translated educational materials in API languages
- Provided training to at community partners/staff
- Conducted bilingual workshops with APIs
- Conducted follow-up services (long term assessment) at-risk API participants who are impacted by fish issues.
- Develop Community-Based Social Marketing Campaign in partnership with San Jose State University
- Community and social events

Successes and Accomplishments:

- Successfully trained 8 Interns (most volunteers due to interest in the topic)
- Fish awareness in the API community, promoted SF Bay consumption
- Identify other community needs, other health concerns (diabetes, cancer, etc.)
- Strengthened community relationships
- Successful active outreach
- Research with "at-risk" individuals

Conclusions:

- Validated – APIs aren't aware of advisory but change in behavior is feasible
- Understood what motivates API groups to eat fish
- Advisory vs. fishing regulations – made clear what is the difference
- Health benefits outweigh risks if individuals follow advice on number of servings and species individuals can safely eat.

Next Steps

- Information about the advisory – works if mixed with something else (example: workshop for the youth: healthy choices, nutrition/obesity education)
- Will continue participating in cultural events, with information and games related to fish consumption

B. Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice

The goals of this project were to (1) increase awareness and understanding of the May 2011 Fish Advisory information, contamination issues and benefits associated with consuming fish from San Francisco Bay and (2) reduce exposure to PCBs and mercury linked to consuming fish from San Francisco Bay.

Project Activities:

- Conducted outreach and education with fishers at fishing locations in Southeast San Francisco – reached 200 fishers at the piers.
- Conducted presentations on fish contamination issues with mothers, pregnant women, and women of childbearing age through health clinics and hospitals in Bayview Hunters Point – reached 100 at risk-mothers.
- Conducted outreach and education with residents in Bayview Hunters Point and Southeast SF – reached 1000 resident and community members
- Conducted media outreach by writing news stories about this issue for the community papers - 2 newsletters and 1 newspaper article.

Marie Harrison commented that the staff from Greenaction really enjoyed conducting these activities. They had a letter of introduction from CDPH to show the clinics they were working with CDPH on their project. The letter “really opened some doors for them”. Also, it took a long time to ask evaluation questions to presentation participants but Greenaction staff had patience and the participants answered all the questions. In terms of the numbers they reached, they think they did pretty well.

Successes / Accomplishments:

The activities related to interviews and education were very successful. Their numbers speak by themselves. The materials they produced (trifold brochure in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.) worked well at piers and hospitals. The Tongan workshop and the Fish Bingo game were also very successful.

Conclusions:

- Surfperches were a commonly eaten fish people didn’t want to stop eating them
- Family an important theme; older people were less likely to change but were concerned about health of youth
- Financial need was a reason for eating contaminated fish

Recommendations and lessons learned:

- People are not eager to change but are willing to share information.
- People are willing to select different fish and remove the skin.
- They are willing to protect their families.
- People are fishing out of necessity

C. Kids for the Bay

The goals of this project were to:

- Deliver the Watershed Action Program (WAP) to 6 elementary school classes.
- Train and assist 6 classes to lead Safe Bay Food Consumption Presentations to family members and school peers.
- Train and assist students to interview and deliver SF Bay fish advisory information to anglers fishing on SF Bay piers.

Project Activities:

- Recruit participating classes
- Deliver Watershed Action Program
- Conduct Safe Bay Food Consumption Presentations
- Conduct student-led angler interviews

Other Project Activities:

- Update Safe Bay Food Consumption Project curriculum and materials
- Take-home family interview assignment
- Train 6 teachers to teach the WAP to future classes

Successes / Accomplishments:

- WAP/SBFCEPs - 6 programs, 177 students reached
- 7 presentations by the students
- Potentially reached 203 bay or delta fish consumers/168 at-risk consumers - 177 "Advisory Guides" brought home, 66 post-surveys completed
- 50 take-home interviews completed
- 24 anglers interviewed
- Updated curriculum and materials
- 7 teachers trained in program

Conclusions:

- SBFCEP is empowering and engaging for students
- SBFCEP is a unique way of getting information out to families and anglers through schools
- There is a need to get the fish advisory information out to people who eat Bay fish
- SBFCEP is a worthwhile project and it should be continued

Next Steps:

Kids for the Bay is planning to continue delivering the WAP in the upcoming school year to new teachers

Recommendations and lessons Learned:

- Continue teaching the programs

- Continue communication with SFBFP for possible future partnership
- Select other grade elementary classes for future fish consumption related programs

D. California Indian Environmental Alliance

The goals of the project were to (1) empower SF Bay families to eat fish while avoiding Hg & PCBs by providing education to those most at-risk about the health risks of these chemicals and (2) increase NAHC WIC capacity to better identify at-risk patients, provide SF Bay Advisory and fish consumption advice, track client knowledge/behavior changes, and put policies and procedures in place to institute these changes.

Project Activities:

- Developed a fish consumption questionnaire that was given to Native American Health Center Women, Infants and Children Program (NAHC WIC) clients to identify consumers of San Francisco Bay (SFB) fish. At the conclusion of the survey, conducted a brief educational session with information about fish contamination
- Conducted fish consumption training for NAHC WIC staff
- Developed an educational curriculum on fish contamination for WIC clients, which includes information about the advisory for SFB.

Other Activities included the following community outreach events:

World Breastfeeding Week, on 8/11, NAHC Running is My High, on 3/12, and Give Love, Give Life, on 6/12.

Successes/ Accomplishments:

Their evaluation demonstrated that participants showed increased in knowledge of commercial advisories, intent to increase fish consumption, increased knowledge of SFB advisory, increased access to information, intent to change behavior (eat less bass, sturgeon, surfperch) and intent to share information.

Conclusions:

- 6% of interviewed WIC clients (or ~180 if extrapolated using a monthly case load of 3000 clinic clients) are eating SFB fish and 23% are eating sport fish based preliminary numbers (not all surveys have been tallied). This does not include other household members who may also consume fish.
- Educational intervention is needed to support behavior change
- The fish curriculum was successful (women want longer classes, more information, feedback was positive). We were able to reach many in WIC participation in the class was mandatory.
- WIC staff need to be supported. They need training on safe fish consumption and ways to communicate this information to clients

Next Steps:

- Expand the curriculum to other programs (example: prenatal program).
- Integrate other advisories (example: Delta)
- Report project results to the community.

Recommendations and lessons learned:

- Integration of exposure reduction plans for SF Bay and Delta
- More coordination of activities across groups

E. Update on SFB sign posting and media activities

Ian Walker reviewed progress on the media activities that were discussed at the last SAG meeting in March. These activities include:

- Press release
- Educational video
- Media events

CDPH handed out a press release that was developed with input from the SAG media subcommittee. The press release will link to a webpage that will include descriptions of the funded group projects, the advisory brochures, the SF Bay sign, and a video. CDPH will use a shortened version of the press release.

We are working with San Francisco to do a media event. We envision a small scale event where we will invite the media to a SF pier. During the event, we'll post a sign and be available to answer questions. Funded groups and the SAG will be invited to attend. Ian asked if the other counties would be interested in hosting a similar event. Alameda Co. thought the City of Berkeley might be. CDPH has already been in contact with Berkeley about an event but they have not responded.

Ian showed the group the near-final video. The video started as a 60 second video but it was expanded to a 90 seconds to show the names of the funded groups and their websites over the last 30 seconds. The video does not try and give the entire advisory. Instead it gives a simplified version that is presented by the 4 funded groups. The intent was to give the viewer one idea that he/she can hold onto and then direct the viewer to where to go for more information. Regarding the production of the video in other languages, the entire script was taped in Chinese (with help from APA) so a Chinese versions could be compiled with a minimal effort. We could possibly create a Spanish version with in-house bilingual staff but this would take a bit more work.

Comments:

- Several SAG members said they really liked the video
- Add the project website and/or the website on the SFB sign
- OEHHA would like to explore adding their contact information

F. Review accomplishments to date, report back on possible future activities, discuss next steps for the project

Alyce Ujihara presented a review of SFBFP accomplishments from the past 18 months. Aida Negrón reported back on the future activities exercise. She presented a summary of themes of activities that have been recommended (see presentations on accomplishments and future activities).

Alyce surveyed the group about their desire to continue to meet on a less frequent basis. The CBO groups indicated that they have interest in meeting, but may be prevented by conflicting demands on their time. Angela Berry-Philips said that CIEA would be most interested in discussions that addressed overlapping issues with the Delta. Erica Yelenski (EPA) inquired about the possibility of representatives from the PV Shelf returning to present on their activities; Marie Harrison expressed an interest in farmed fish issues and non-chemical concerns (parasites, bacteria).

End of Meeting

Meeting attendees:

Aida Negrón	SFEI/CDPH
Alyce Ujihara	CDPH
Amiko Mayeno	CDPH
Angela Berry-Philip	California Indian Environmental Alliance
Cynthia Bartus	Alameda County Department of Env Health
Daniel Wilson	Alameda County Department of Env Health
Erica Yelensky	US Environmental Protection Agency
Farmmary Saephan	APA Family Support Services
Geoff Brosseau	Bay Area Stormwater Management Agencies
Ian Walker	CDPH
James Frank	East Bay Regional Park District
Jonah Landor-Yamagata	Kids for the Bay
Kelsie Scruggs	CDPH
Lino Anchetta	Contra Costa Environmental Health
Luisa Valiela	USEPA-Region 9
Margy Gassel	Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
Marie Harrison	Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice
Rebecca Cohen	CDPH
Rona Hampton	CDPH
Stephen McCord	McCord Environmental, Inc.