Strategic Planning Meeting Summary

Thursday March 26, 2009
9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
NOAA Office

Attendees:

Asian Youth Center (Chinese CBO):
Amy Sun
BPSOS (Vietnamese CBO):
Tiffany Nguyen
Cabrillo:
Alfonso Montiel
CDFG:
John Fallan
Patty Velez
DTSC:
Tim Chauvel
LACSD:
Joe Gully
EHIB:
Alyce Ujihara
Marilyn Underwood
FCEC CRC:
Yolanda Lasmarias
Howard Wang
Heal the Bay:
James Alamillo
Frankie Orrala
Herald Community Center (Chinese CBO):
Connie Kwok
Rebecca Soong
ITSI (EPA Contractor):
Ed Gillera
Tawny Tran
LA County Public Health:
Maria Dalusong
Marita Santos
LB Environmental Health:
Monica Cardenas
NOAA/MSRP:
Jen Boyce
Gabrielle Dorr
Dave Witting
OCHCA:
Robert Curtis
OEEHA :
Bob Brodberg
SMBRC:
Guangyu Wang
St. Anselm's Cultural Center (Vietnamese CBO):
Anh Nguyen
SGA (EPA Contractor):
Elizabeth Anderson
Stephen Groner
Tiffany Jonick
USEPA:
Roberta Blank
Taly Jolish
Jackie Lane
Lori Lewis
Sharon Lin
Carmen White

I. Welcome/Introductions

Roberta Blank (EPA) opened the meeting with a brief introduction and announced the program's receipt of the Citizens Excellence in Community Involvement Award. R. Blank followed this announcement by discussing the status of the OEHHA fish advisory update as well as the inclusion of California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) in the Enforcement program. She illustrated how CDFG's involvement demonstrates the dynamic nature of the program, where monitoring and enforcement activities complement the community outreach components of FCEC. Lori Lewis (EPA) facilitated the meeting and had attendees introduce themselves before walking through the agenda.

II. Clean-Up Plan Progress

A. Palos Verdes Shelf Feasibility Study/Proposed Plan Update – Carmen White (EPA)

Link to presentation

- The feasibility study described four clean-up alternatives:

  - No Action
  - Institutional Controls (ICs) and Monitored Natural Recovery (MNR):
    - MNR monitors DDT and PCB concentrations in sediment, water, and fish.
    - Preliminary Cost Estimate: $22.5 M.
  - ICs, MNR and Small cap
    - The engineering aspect of this alternative would involve covering the 320 acre outfall hot spot with a layer of clean silt.
    - Preliminary Cost Estimate: $57.2 M
  - ICs, MNR and Large cap
    - This alternative would involve covering 680 acres of the areas with the highest contaminants of concern concentrations with silt.
    - Preliminary Cost Estimate: $85.4 M
- Next Steps:
  - Proposed Plan will be completed by the end of April/May 2009.
  - Public meetings are scheduled for May 17, 18 and 19.
  - Interim Record of Decision (ROD) will be issued Summer 2009.

Questions/Comments

- Patty Velez (CDFG) asked if EPA's final ROD will be issued in the summer of 2009. C. White clarified that the ROD issued in the summer will only be an interim recommendation.
- Guang-yu Wang (SMBRC) asked how EPA can meet the expected human health goal of 10^{-5} if the contaminant levels within fish can not be reduced to 10^{-5}. C. White responded that although a 10^{-5} level cannot be met for the high end fish consumers, this goal is achievable for human health through the continued efforts of the Institutional Controls (ICs) program.
- C. White reminded the group of the EPA Open House on March 28th at Cabrillo Marine Aquarium in San Pedro. The Open House will provide community members with the opportunity to learn about the proposed plan for cleaning up the Palos Verdes Shelf.

B. Program Progress – Sharon Lin (EPA)

- S. Lin provided an overview of the history and development of the ICs program:
  - The receipt of the Citizen in Community Involvement Award is not only a reflection of FCEC's accomplishments within the community but also a reflection of the program's long history and continuing development.
  - Heal the Bay played an instrumental role in the development of the Institutional Controls (ICs) program partly as a result of a 1997 Heal the Bay study which found exorbitantly high levels of DDT and PCBs in some white croaker purchased in retail markets.
  - Partly as a result of Heal the Bay's work, EPA took on a great deal of risk and engaged in the unprecedented approach of implementing the ICs program before executing the engineering solutions.
  - Two years after instituting the program, FCEC's goals and administrative efforts were further refined through a series of developments, including:

- Efforts were taken to demonstrate measurable risk reductions in the community through the use of behavior change communication campaigns and more targeted surveys.
- Strategic planning meeting were introduced to help direct program goals.
- Drafting of the Roadmap and the ICs Implementation Plan helped to guide the direction of program administration.

Questions/Comments

- Tiffany Jonick asked who has been with the program since its inception, relating to a comment that S. Lin had made during her presentation. S. Lin acknowledged G. Wang (SMBRC) and James Alamillo and Mark Gold from Heal the Bay as being active in the program since the beginning.

III. Partner Updates

A. Montrose Settlements Restoration Program – Dave Witting and Gabrielle Dorr (NOAA)

Link to outline

- MSRP will hold a public Symposium showcasing the restoration work the trustees have supported within Southern California over the last several years. The Symposium will be held on March 31 at the Channel Islands National Park Service in Ventura.
- MSRP will begin Phase II Restoration Planning this year. An Environmental Assessment will be drafted and public meetings will be held in early 2010.
- The Belmont Pier reef project should be in progress by June 2009. The next step is to conduct baseline biological monitoring and site evaluation. This evaluation should be completed by December 2009 so that permit applications can be prepared by early 2010.
- The Huntington Beach Wetlands Restoration project is near completion. California State University, Long Beach will conduct acoustic tagging and stable isotope studies to determine the functional recovery of the wetlands as a foraging habitat for coastal marine fish.
- An RFP for outreach mini-grants was released though the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Applications are due April 24, 2009. A total of $30 K will be awarded supporting three projects at $10 K each.
- MSRP is working on a fishing education plan to be implemented when the updated fishing advisory is released.

Questions/Comments

- Jackie Lane (EPA) asked what time the Symposium would be held. D. Witting replied that the Symposium will be take place from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Tawny Tran (ITSI) asked for additional information regarding the fish tagging that will be conducted by California State University, Long Beach to assess the recovery of the Wetlands Restoration project. D. Witting explained that three experts at the university will conduct acoustic tagging and stable isotope studies to investigate the wetland's functional recovery as a nursery and foraging habitat for coastal marine fish, with

particular focus on halibut tracking. T. Tran asked if this tracking method could be applied to white croaker. D. Witting responded that tagging white croaker might be possible, but substantial research would need to be conducted regarding tag retention and survival rates of tagged white croaker before tracking could be implemented.

- D. Witting commented that the restoration projected is an especially interesting study for its unique research opportunities: the wetland is divided into three segments that underwent restoration at three distinct time periods. So the project provides the opportunity to examine long and short term recovery patterns.
- With regard to the curricula RFP, Bob Brodberg (OEHHA) suggested that MSRP could utilize a fish game posted on the EPA's fish advisory website to educate young people on safe fish consumption habits. G. Dorr replied that the EPA game might have been targeted at fresh water fish, whereas the MSRP RFP is exclusively focused on fish caught within local coastal waters. Alfonso Montiel (Cabrillo Marine Aquarium) offered that Cabrillo Marine Aquarium developed a fish game through the MSRP mini-grant that can be accessed by teachers electronically.
- A. Montiel announced that Cabrillo Marine Aquarium will be hosting a "What's the Catch" Teacher Meeting from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. as well as a Grunion Run from 8:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. on Saturday March 28th.
- Marilyn Underwood (EHIB) asked for a definition of a Grunion Run. A. Montiel explained that a grunion is a small fish which lays its eggs in the sand at very high tides. Ten days after the eggs are fertilized; the eggs hatch, releasing a multitude of small fish into the sea.

B. General Outline of the Fish Advisory Update – B. Brodberg

- The presentation was a general overview presentation without specificity on species/advice.
- The new advisory and safe eating guidelines are driven by PCBs and/or mercury levels.
- The new advisory includes:
    - Four species that have advice for one serving per week for all populations across the entire area,
    - Five species that have advice for two servings per week for all populations across the entire area,
    - Nine species that have advice that is population specific,
    - Three species that have separate advice for central area.
- Given the complexity of the advisory's safe eating guidelines, crafting an effective messaging format is a high priority.
    - Some of the advisory's communications/messaging challenges include:
        - The advice does not require "zones,"
        - The advice differs for three species within the more contaminated area,
        - Jacksmelt and topsmelt look similar but have very different advice,
        - There is population specific advice for nine species,
        - Most species are one or two servings per week, but one species can be consumed up to seven times a week and another up to four.
        - The fish preparation/cooking method will be a key to risk reduction.

Questions/Comments

- L. Lewis asked if there was a mechanism in place where partners could ask questions about the updated advisory. B. Brodberg commented that questions can be asked through the workgroup.
- Alyce Ujihara (EHIB) asked if there is typically a comment period before the final advisory is issued. B. Brodberg replied that for the newly updated advisory, there will not be an interim comment period unless additional information to be brought forward would warrant a revision to the current draft.
- Ed Gillera (ITSI) noted that the format in which the advisory is presented seems to indicate that men under the age of 45 are not at risk for contamination. B. Brodberg clarified that men are simply grouped into one age group under the advisory.
- G. Wang asked if the advisory is only being internally reviewed, and if so, who is in the internal review group. B. Brodberg relayed that the advisory will also be given to EPA, but that the number of individuals reviewing the advisory will have to be limited to reduce delays.
- G. Wang asked why the species in the advisory were not revealed. B. Brodberg explained that the species were not given to maintain focus on the communication aspect of the presentation. G. Wang replied that the species would impact the messaging approach. B. Brodberg noted that when A. Ujihara tested communications strategies, her focus was also on the concepts behind the advisory's message.
- T. Jonick asked if partners would be notified of the species in the advisory before May. B. Brodberg answered that a working group will be created to finalize the format, at which point that working group will learn of the species detailed within the advisory.
- Gabrielle Dorr commented that all of the partners would have an opportunity to review any materials developed by the workgroup before it is finalized.
- T. Jonick described the purpose and participants of the messaging work group: advisory information will be formatted into outreach materials so that FCEC can utilize this information to create behavior change. Currently the work group consists of G. Wang, Tim Chauvel (DTSC), SGA, Heal the Bay, J. Lane, and G. Dorr. The formatted advisory would then be reviewed by a technical committee, comprised of EHIB, CDFG, NOAA, and OEHHA.
- Marita Santos (LA Public Health) asked how the members of the advisory messaging work group were selected. S. Lin explained that work group members were selected according to outreach and communications expertise. The goal is to keep the work group process moving forward with a manageable number. Anyone who is interested in participating in the work group should notify T. Jonick. A representative from the local county health department is welcome. M. Santos expressed interest in the Health Departments' involvement in the messaging process.

C. Delta Fish Advisory Risk Communication Experience – A. Ujihara

Link to presentation

- As a part of the Fish Mercury Project, California Department of Public Health (CDPH) undertook evaluative efforts to explore how target audiences perceive and understand sport fish consumption advisories.

- Some highlights of findings include:
  - Barriers:
    - Consumers consider advice in terms of their beliefs, so consumers are often skeptical of advice that contradicts their beliefs. Practitioners of risk communication should therefore never give advice without an explanation.
    - Terminology: some terms, such as "women of child bearing age" and "Omega-3 fatty acids" were poorly understood.
    - Visual tools: images are extremely influential, but can also be easily misunderstood.
    - Formatting: The layout can confuse the message when ineffectively organized.
  - Communication methods that could be used to convey advisory information:
    - Avoid technical terminology.
    - Utilize visual information.
    - Utilize effective layout/formatting strategies.
- Participants in the focus groups expressed different reactions as to how they intended to use information, ranging from: rejecting the advice, accepting the advice but not making changes, to accepting the advice and making changes.

Questions/Comments
No questions or comments

D. Heal the Bay Signage Update – James Alamillo (Heal the Bay)

Link to presentation

- Piers within the red zone (Cabrillo to Lunada Bay) exhibit a substantial lack of signage.
- Current pier signage is unevenly distributed:
  - Pier J, which is not a pier, has the most warning signs of any fishing location: one sign every 150 feet (10 signs total). Additionally, a permit is needed to fish in this location.
  - In contrast to Pier J, there is very little signage along shoreline fishing locations which attract an extremely high proportion of anglers.

Questions/Comments
- M. Underwood asked if Heal the Bay researched whether or not anglers frequenting piers with significant signage were any more aware of white croaker contamination than those frequenting piers with little to no signage. J. Alamillo replied that it would be difficult to measure this indicator given the large quantity of anglers that Heal the Bay has reached through its many years of outreach (i.e., it would be difficult to separate the sources contributing to the anglers' contamination knowledge).
- A. Ujihara commented that in the Delta project, EHIB collaborated with local jurisdictions to help post signage. J. Alamillo noted that Heal the Bay is relying on the assistance of local, state and federal government agencies in rectifying the signage issue.

- Tim Chauvel (DTSC) asked if the posted signs contain contact information, and if so, is this contact information still relevant? J. Alamillo replied that the signs contain various, and oftentimes outdated, contact information.
- Joe Gully (DTSC) inquired if the signage should be expanded beyond white croaker warnings. J. Alamillo replied that in the short term, the focus should be on posting white croaker signage. Once a mechanism for posting this signage is established, Heal the Bay hopes to expand messaging efforts to other fish species.
- A. Montiel commented that Cabrillo Marine Aquarium developed signage for the Cabrillo pier but it was soon vandalized. For this reason, Montiel questioned the effectiveness of signage from a funding perspective, especially in shoreline areas which are especially prone to vandalism due to decreased foot traffic.

IV. Institutional Controls

A. FCEC: Take Home Fish Assessment – Tiffany Jonick (SGA)

Link to presentation

- Utilizing Community-Based Social Marketing tools, the objective of the Take Home Fish Assessment (THFA) was to change angler behavior in order to reduce the number of white croaker entering the community.
- Results showed that FCEC was, indeed, able to affect angler behavior:
  - After outreach, the percentage of the fish leaving Rainbow that were white croaker decreased by 44 percent, while Belmont exhibited a one percent increase over pre-outreach figures.
  - During the post-outreach period, the proportion of anglers leaving with white croaker reduced dramatically at both sites; by 13 percent at Belmont and by 56 percent at Rainbow.

Questions/Comments

- M. Underwood asked if there is seasonality to white croaker. T. Jonick answered that white croaker is more plentiful in the summer to mid-fall.
- R. Blank asked if the study questioned anglers whether they had caught white croaker but did not take it home. T. Jonick responded that the study did not ask this question.
- B. Brodberg asked how many anglers were surveyed. T. Jonick replied that 57 anglers were surveyed in the follow-up study.
- S. Lin asked if the 57 follow-ups were evenly distributed between the two piers. T. Jonick answered that the follow-ups were evenly distributed between the piers.
- A. Ujihara asked how the intervention was administered. T. Jonick explained that the intervention was based on the tip card. In distributing the tip card, Heal the Bay emphasized the recommended behavior with anglers: catch and release white croaker. Heal the Bay also discussed the health risks associated with the consumption of contaminated white croaker, a history of the contamination and strategies to protect one's health through one-on-one contact with anglers.
- M. Santos asked if the tip card was evaluated for reading level. Santos offered that outreach materials developed by LA County Public Health are usually based on a 6th grade reading level. T. Jonick replied that the material was not formally tested. However before conducting the intervention, SGA asked anglers at various piers if the material was

comprehensible, appealing and informative. A. Ujihara commented that for the Delta study, rather than formally testing the material for reading level, the team held focus groups to assess the brochure.

- M. Underwood commented that the front of the tip card can not be utilized for its said purpose of identifying potentially contaminated fish since information on the contaminant levels for each listed fish are not provided.
- Y. Lasmarias noted that the front of tip card is not wholly effective in helping to identify white croaker because it is merged into the larger fish group. Lasmarias suggested that the card would be more effective if the white croaker stood out so that anglers could more easily identify the fish.
- P. Velez advised that the tip card should have included the multiple names for white croaker (e.g. tomcod, kingfish, etc).
- P. Velez commented that the tip card should have been evaluated by a technical review committee before implementation. T. Jonick said that D. Witting and G. Dorr reviewed the tip card prior to implementation.

B. Monitoring/Enforcement – S. Lin

Link to presentation

- S. Lin provided an update on the patrol work conducted by CDFG, trainings and market inspections conducted by the health inspectors, and the amount of white croaker collected for contaminant level analysis.

Questions/Comments

- M. Underwood asked if the health inspectors and/or CDFG tag every white croaker that they encounter at the markets. M. Santos explained that inspectors ask the vendors for the invoice for each white croaker found. If an invoice from an approved source is not approved, then the white croaker is tagged. S. Lin commented that white croaker is sometimes taken solely for testing purposes.
- S. Lin noted that CDFG will be conducting outreach to shoreline anglers as a part of its scope of work.
- M. Underwood asked why sport fisherman would be cited for catching white croaker within the catch ban area. C. White replied that a bag limit for white croaker (10 per day) caught is still in place from Dana Point to Point Dume. Violating the bag limit would result in a citation.
- S. Groner commented that there should be a regular call for members of the enforcement group. S. Lin replied that SGA will coordinate this standing call for enforcement group members.

V. PV Shelf Strategic Thinking Cafe – All Partners

- L. Lewis led the group through a series of conversations to allow FCEC to strategically analyze internal and external macro-factors that may affect the PV Shelf project and what that means to the project. The purpose of looking at these factors is to continue the ICs strategic planning cycle that started in 2005. EPA would look at the input and adjust the ICs program road map if necessary:
    - Notable events and accomplishments in the IC's Program and the PV Shelf site:

- FCEC has increased public awareness.
- The program is now a well-oiled, fully comprehensive machine.
- Winning the Citizens Excellence in Community Involvement award solidifies the program's continued community outreach success.
- CDFG's involvement in the enforcement and monitoring programs.
- The program includes a variety of stakeholders offering a broad spectrum of expertise.

- In the past one to three years, FCEC has learned:
  - Engaging in an array of outreach and educational methods leads to increased awareness.
- Trends (social, environmental) and factors (economic, political, governmental, technological) that might affect the work of the program:
  - There is reorganization occurring at the varying governmental levels. At the federal level, environmental issues are a higher priority, lending to increased funding for environmental projects. However at the local level, funding has decreased substantially, affecting a range of social and environmental programs across the board.
  - The recession might force markets and commercial fishing operations to take more chances with regard to white croaker in order to increase their income.
  - The recession might increase the number of subsistence fisherman.
  - There is greater public awareness and concern for health-related issues, which might make the public more amenable to FCEC's message.
  - The contaminants of concern are shifting from DDTs and PCBs to other contaminants.
  - Other areas of environmental concern are becoming increasingly more important such as water and air quality.
  - Advances in technology allow for the increased dissemination and democratization of knowledge, thereby increasing public access to FCEC's message.
  - Advances in technology (i.e. use of the FCEC website) help to connect partners and increase stakeholder participation.
- Program strengths:
  - Comprehensive nature of the program in terms of the variety of stakeholders, expertise and outreach activities.
- Potential threats to the program:
  - Budget cuts at the local and federal level.
  - By potentially increasing the scope of the project beyond white croaker and DDT and PCB contamination, FCEC might lose focus and/or cohesion.
- What this information means to the program:
  - Thinking strategically about the program means better protection for the public.
  - This information also shows that although the program has overcome many obstacles, there is still a great deal of work ahead.
- Ways FCEC could adjust work to better reflect external reality:
  - The program could learn from outside efforts and models to more effectively reduce risk.

- In the next one to five years, the following characteristics will define success:
  - There will not be any contaminated white croakers found at the market.
  - All anglers will catch and release white croaker caught in the red zone.
  - The cap will be in place.
  - The ICs program will be fully integrated and stabilized into the remedy.
  - The program will have crafted a successful communications strategy for the updated advisory, resulting in demonstrated behavior change.
  - Identify the pathway between the landed white croaker from water to table.
  - An abundance of edible white croaker will be found in the marketplaces.
  - A similar program will be put in place for other contaminants of concern.

VI. Parking Lot

- Several issues were brought up that produced considerable discussion, but could not necessarily be resolved during the meeting. These issues were "parked" for the time being, but noted for the future:
  - If you would like to participate in the messaging workgroup for the updated fish advisory, please contact T. Jonick and/or S. Lin.
  - CDFG will provide all inspectors with warden phone numbers to provide additional assistance during market inspection emergencies.
  - SGA will coordinate a regular and on-going conference call for members of the enforcement group.

VII. Future Dates

- FCEC Newsletter: April 2009
- Agency Call: May 28, 2009
- Partners Meeting: June 25, 2009