

## California's Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program Realignment San Diego Advisory Committee Meeting 2 Notes

Wednesday, September 1, 2021

### Attendees

Advisory Committee members in attendance:

- Shasta Gaughen, Pala Band of Mission Indians
- Jill Sherman-Warne, Native American Environmental Protection Coalition (NAEPC)
- Sherri Norris, California Indian Environmental Alliance's (CIEA)
- Kelcey Stricker, Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians
- Cristina Torres, Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians
- José Bravo, Just Transition Alliance
- Ray Hiemstra, Orange County Coastkeeper
- Mitchell (Mitch) McKay, Citizens for Coastal Conservancy
- Matt O'Malley, San Diego Coast Keeper
- Amy Smith, California Department of Public Health (CDPH)
- Matt Lucero, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Wesley (Wes) Smith, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)
- Peter Vroom, California Water Quality Monitoring Council & City of San Diego's Public Utilities Department
- Jay Davis, California Water Quality Monitoring Council Safe to Eat Workgroup & San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI)
- Autumn Bonnema, Moss Landing Marine Laboratories (MLML)

Advisory Committee members not in attendance:

- The Honorable Frederick (Bo) Mazzetti, Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians & Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association (SCTCA)
- Heidi Brow, Pala Band of Mission Indians
- Lisa Cumper, Jamul Indian Village
- Kirsten Winter, US Forest Service (USFS)

Realignment Team in attendance:

- David Gibson, San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (R9)
- Chad Loflen, San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (R9)
- Ali Dunn, Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP)
- Anna Holder, SWAMP Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program Realignment Lead
- Corey Clatterbuck, SWAMP
- Brook Thompson, SWAMP

- Mike Antos, Stantec

Realignment Team not in attendance:

- Cynthia Gorham, San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (R9)

## **Welcome and grounding**

- Members of the Realignment Team welcomed all to the second San Diego Advisory Committee Meeting.
- Committee Members reviewed meeting ground rules: be respectful to one another, be constructive, be engaged, and be respectful of each other's time. No additions or revisions were requested by Committee Members.

## **Advisory Committee Member Introductions**

- Advisory Committee members and the Realignment Team introduced themselves and shared what they most want to see accomplished during the meeting. New Advisory Committee members also shared (1) What community/perspective(s) they are representing, and (2) What knowledge and expertise they are looking forward to sharing with us throughout this process?
- Committee Member descriptions of their knowledge, experience and expertise included but was not limited to: Tribal tradition and culture, local, regional, and international environmental justice work, local grassroots environmental protection work, statewide bioaccumulation/fish contamination monitoring, public health, and toxicology history, science, and research.
- Discussion of desired outcomes for this process included:
  - Revitalization of engagement of Tribes and Tribal activities within and outside of the San Diego Region.
  - Open lines of communication among all parties
  - Discussion around how to best communicate advisories to the people most impacted by them
- Discussion of desired outcomes for the meeting included:
  - Committee Members' desire to move forward in the process, including articulation of tangible goals and next steps.
  - Discuss and increase understanding of which species, pollutants, and locations are important for the mission, tradition, culture, and subsistence of San Diego region Tribes and communities.

## **Advisory Committee Survey Results - Big Picture Data and Information Use and Needs**

- The Realignment Team presented the high-level results of a survey shared with Advisory Committee members, including:

- Not all Advisory Committee members were able to complete the survey, and the majority of respondents were representatives of community-based organizations and agencies.
- The awareness and use of data and information produced by the [Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program](#) and [Safe to Eat Workgroup](#) varies.
- Communities and Tribes represented by Advisory Committee members primarily access information through [OEHHA advisories](#) posted at water bodies or online.
- Discussion of the high-level results included:
  - Request for survey results to be shared with Advisory Committee members and acknowledgement that some members may need more time to review the results before sharing their reactions or responses to survey results.
  - Acknowledgment that the most effective way to deliver data and information is through visual media (e.g. fish advisories, videos) that incorporate storytelling.
  - Acknowledgment that more detailed consumptions survey(s) are needed for the region but are outside the scope of the current Realignment process. Note that consumption surveys of Tribal communities have a significantly higher response rate when conducted by Tribes themselves and highlights the need for partnership, collaboration, and open lines of communication among agencies and Tribes.

## Discussion and Prioritization of Data and Information Needs

- The Realignment Team presented the detailed survey results pertaining to areas or water bodies of concern or importance to survey respondents, species of concern or importance to respondents, and pollutants or toxins of concern or importance to survey respondents and compared those survey results with what the [Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program](#) has monitored historically.
- Committee Members discussed results and recommended initial priorities for the purpose of guiding the development of a sampling plan for 2022, but noted that more time is needed to digest the results and consider what should be added before the Advisory Committee can finalize their prioritized recommendations.
- Discussion of **areas or water bodies** for consideration in 2022 sampling included:
  - Consideration of 18 potential sample locations:
    - 7 locations are currently sampled during Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program monitoring (primarily lakes and reservoirs in the southern half of the region)
    - 1 location is outside of the region (Salton Sea, which is in the Colorado River Region)
    - 10 new locations (primarily coastal areas)
  - Initial priorities include:
    - Locations that are not already sampled during Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program monitoring activities

- Locations that do not require a license to fish (i.e. piers and jetties along the coast/lagoons)
    - Locations regularly frequented by People of Color, Indigenous peoples, and low-income communities
    - Lower urban rivers
    - Seasonal rivers that are dry for part of the year and are only activated by moisture and rain events are a low priority for sampling.
  - Acknowledgment that fishing occurs at locations that are legally closed to fishing, and anglers do consume fish from these locations and should still be informed on whether fish in those water bodies are safe to eat. Therefore, communication to the public at those locations should be either (1) these areas are closed to fishing OR (2) these areas are closed to fishing and the fish are unsafe to eat.
- Discussion of **species** for consideration in 2022 sampling included:
  - Species already prioritized and sampled during Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program monitoring activities:
    - Lakes: Largemouth Bass, Catfish species, Carp
    - Bays: Spotted Bay Bass, Perc species, Topsmelt
    - Ocean: Kelp/Sand Bass, Rockfish species, Mackerel species
  - Initial priorities include:
    - Species that are included in Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program monitoring activities (e.g. Basses, perch, smelt, mackerel species)
    - Shellfish (e.g. mussels, Pacific oysters)
    - Prey species (e.g. anchovy, sardine)
    - Species that are NOT protected (obtaining collection permits of protected species in our existing timeframe is unlikely)
  - Note that selections of species will depend on selected sampling locations.
- Discussion of **pollutants or toxins** for consideration in 2022 sampling included:
  - Pollutants or toxins already prioritized and sampled during Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program monitoring activities, including: Mercury, Selenium, PCBs (Polychlorinated biphenyls), OC (Organochlorine) pesticides
  - Initial priorities include:
    - Pollutants or toxins that are included in Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program monitoring activities
    - Additional contaminants of interest expressed in survey and during the meeting include: PFAS, microplastics, E. coli/biological contaminants
- Discussion of **sample preparation methods** for consideration in 2022 sampling included:
  - Current Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program monitoring preparation methods include: skin-off fillets for larger species, or whole fish for smaller species
  - Acknowledgement that the tissues included in the preparation method greatly impacts analysis results (e.g. inclusion of fat dilutes mercury concentrations,

whereas OC pesticides and PCBs accumulate in fat and are therefore higher in whole fish samples).

- Acknowledgement that consistency in preparation is needed for consistency in messaging to the public statewide. If we start to analyze different parts of fish or shellfish, the results may change but the actual fish have not changed, and we therefore need to be very clear about how we communicate/message results.
- Acknowledgement that the assumption of consumption of skin off fillets in fish advisories does not capture exposure of those who consume fish differently (e.g. whole fish, skin-on fillets, etc.).
- Initial priorities include: samples that include tissue, skin, and organs, or whole fish

### **Next Steps & Review Action Items**

- Realignment Team Action Items:
  - Post approved meeting notes on the [Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program Realignment Webpage](#), in the “Products” section ([Meeting 1 notes posted](#))
  - Write up meeting 2 notes, share notes and slides with Advisory Committee for review and feedback
  - Send scheduling poll for Nov/Dec mtg; send calendar invitation & agenda
  - Draft brief sampling plan for 2022; send to Advisory Committee for review
  - Initiate compensation process for new Advisory Committee members/orgs
  - Report progress to Safe to Eat Workgroup (Next meeting on Oct 27th)
- Advisory Committee Members:
  - Review meeting 2 notes, provide feedback/corrections
  - Complete Nov/Dec scheduling poll
  - Review draft sampling plan, provide feedback
  - Introduce Anna to additional Tribal and Community-Based Organization representatives

### **Meeting Reflections & Adjourn**

- Skipped reflections during the meeting due to lack of time, but encouraged Committee Members to share reflections via group email.