

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION

STAFF SUMMARY REPORT (Heather Ottaway)
MEETING DATE: September 8, 2010

- ITEM: 4
- SUBJECT: **2010 Dr. Teng-chung Wu Pollution Prevention Award** – Presentation of Award in Recognition of Exceptional Accomplishments in Pollution Prevention in the San Francisco Bay Area
- CHRONOLOGY: September 2007 – Award given to Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group for Dental Mercury Reduction Education, and to East Bay Municipal Utility District for collaborative projects with local advocacy groups.
September 2008 – Award given to City and County of San Francisco for FOG (fats, oil, and grease) to Fuel program.
September 2009 – Award given to Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group for statewide and regional No Drugs Down the Drain campaign.
- DISCUSSION: This item is the presentation of the 2010 Dr. Teng-chung Wu Pollution Prevention Award to the wastewater treatment agencies of Marin County for their collaborative public education program. Starting in 2007, the six Marin County wastewater agencies (Central Marin Sanitation Agency, Las Gallinas Valley Sanitation District, Novato Sanitary District, Sewerage Agency of Southern Marin, Sanitary District No. 5, and Sausalito-Marin City Sanitary District) combined their resources to implement a county-wide education program with unified messages. The program educates both children and adults on important pollution prevention topics.
- The program deserves special recognition for its collaborative approach and the many creative strategies it uses to get pollution prevention messages out to all age groups. The “Captain Polluto” puppet show and “Go with the Flow” juggling, comedy, and magic show educate as they entertain kindergarten through 3rd grade students. Children in the 3rd grade also attend an all-day field trip that includes a tour of the Sewerage Agency of Southern Marin’s wastewater treatment facilities, marsh, and bird watching areas. High school students participate in a week-long program in which they audit their own schools and surrounding environment for copper and mercury-containing chemicals and devices, and learn about the chemicals’ impacts and how to properly dispose of them. To reach the community, program staff host outreach booths at local events throughout the year to educate the public about proper disposal of unwanted pharmaceuticals; fats, oils and grease; and mercury-containing florescent lamps; and about other pollution prevention issues.

The program has a proven track record in raising community awareness about pollution prevention. Measuring increases in public awareness is difficult, but the program makes a significant effort by administering short quizzes to both children and adults, and gathering feedback from teachers. To encourage input, the program provides special incentives, such as Starbucks gift cards for teachers and a “Wheel-of-Fortune” kids can spin for prizes after completing quizzes. In 2009, over 4,000 quizzes were completed at thirteen events by both members of the community and those attending events from outside the service area. Recent results show a consistent increase in the percentage of both adults and kids getting perfect scores, and those in the community targeted by the program score higher than those from outside the service area.

Also for this year, the City of Livermore deserves an honorable mention for its creative public outreach. The Livermore Reclamation Plant’s Water Resources Division Manager and marine artist, Darren Greenwood, painted murals of whales and dolphins on East Bay Discharger Authority buildings in Livermore, San Lorenzo, and San Leandro. The mural painted on the Livermore plant captured the public’s attention for the plant’s 50th anniversary open house in 2008, themed “The Ocean is Closer than You Think.” Nearly 800 members of the public attended the event, which provided a behind-the-scenes look at what it takes to keep drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, and recycled water flowing in the City of Livermore. This year, under a grant from the Livermore Commission for the Arts, Mr. Greenwood expanded the Livermore plant mural to a third side of the building and added murals on the plant’s two large circular digester-tanks. The murals continue to provide a tool for the City of Livermore to remind the public about the need to prevent pollution to preserve water quality.

The Board established this award in 2007 to honor the legacy of Dr. Teng-chung Wu, who worked at the Board and was a pollution prevention advocate for decades. The award recognizes innovation, excellence, effectiveness, and collaboration in pollution prevention.

RECOMMENDATION: No action is necessary