



# California's Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP) Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program Realignment San Francisco Region Advisory Workshop Notes

Thursday, February 29, 2024  
1:30 PM - 3:30 PM

**The goal of this workshop** is to kick off the SWAMP Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program Realignment Process in the San Francisco Region and listen to participants to understand baseline questions, needs, and concerns with respect to collecting and consuming fish and shellfish in the region.

## Attendees

### Advisory Workshop Attendees:

- Kyle Rabellino, Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria
- Lauren Weston, Acterra: Action for a Healthy Planet
- LaDonna Williams, All Positives Possible
- Arieann Harrison & Tonia Randell, Marie Harrison Community Foundation

### Invited Guests:

- Autumn Bonnema & Billy Jakyl, Moss Landing Marine Laboratories (MLML)
- Peter Vroom, California Water Quality Monitoring Council
- Loren Chumney, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)
- Duyen Kauffman, Biomonitoring California & CA Dept. of Public Health (CDPH)
- Luisa Valiela, US EPA Region 9 (EPA R9)

### Realignment Team:

- SWAMP Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program Realignment Co-Leads
  - Sami Harper, San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board (R2)
  - Anna Holder, State Board Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP)
- San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board (R2)
  - Eileen White, Executive Officer
  - Kevin Lunde, TMDL & Basin Planning Section Supervisor
  - Kristina Yoshida & Rebecca Nordenholt, SWAMP Regional Coordinator
  - Gerardo Martinez, Safe to Eat Workgroup Regional Coordinator
- California State Water Resources Control Board (State Board)
  - Ali Dunn & Tessa Fojut, SWAMP Supervisors
  - Elena Suglia, SWAMP California Sea Grant Fellow
- Stantec Meeting Facilitators: Mike Antos, Atley Keller & Hayat Rasul

## Welcome & Grounding

The Realignment Team welcomed all to the first San Francisco Region Advisory Workshop.

Attendees and the Realignment Team introduced themselves and shared:

- 1) What community/perspective(s) they are representing,
- 2) What knowledge and expertise they are looking forward to sharing with us throughout this process?, and
- 3) One outcome or result they would like to see accomplished throughout this process.

Attendees' descriptions of their knowledge, experience and expertise included but was not limited to: Tribal tradition and culture, regional environmental justice work, grassroots environmental protection work, statewide bioaccumulation/fish contamination monitoring, and public health.

Attendees discussed and approved meeting agreements: to listen, be constructive, be engaged, and be respectful of each other's time.

## Overview of the Realignment Process

The Realignment Team shared an overview of the [SWAMP Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program](#) (Program) and the [Realignment Plan](#) for the San Francisco Region, which included:

- Statewide Program purpose and how data are used to help (1) protect and restore water quality (via the [Statewide Integrated Report process](#)), (2) protect human health (via [OEHHA Fish Consumption Advisories](#)).
- Program Realignment goal to strengthen relationships among the State and Regional Boards (Water Boards), Tribes, community-based organizations, and other partners interested in bioaccumulation monitoring and communication in the region.
- A timeline of the three-year Realignment process, with a focus on the next couple of months.

## Initial Discussion

*A virtual whiteboard tool, Miro, was used to visualize the discussion in real time. Facilitators took notes on the Miro to visualize relationships between answers. See [Miro Discussion Highlights](#) at the end of this document for examples.*

Attendees shared that:

- A CBO is supporting subsistence fishers in Vallejo through a grant from EPA R9 which funds data collection led by the community (more details to be provided in future workshops)
- Congress will fund \$50 million a year for a number of water quality priorities & EPA R9 is interested in replicating programs like the above that were funded through the San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund
- more data are needed on who is experiencing what kind of contamination via consumption of fish and shellfish tissue
- Communities need to be warned of consumption risks in a timely and efficient way

- OEHHA Fish Consumption Advisory signs used to be posted in their neighborhood and now they are not
- more information is needed on the relationship between the San Francisco Bay being a Navy port and the exacerbation of public health issues from that

### Locations of Interest

Attendees discussed the locations of interest for bioaccumulation monitoring. In addition to the locations identified in [Image 1](#) of the [Miro Discussion Highlights](#), it should be noted that:

- A concrete recycling facility in their community that produces a lot of dust
- An environmental impact plan in the San Francisco Supervisorial District 10 should be developed, noting the importance of [AB 617](#) (Non Vehicular air pollution: criteria air pollutants and toxic air contaminants)
- Pier 39 is a location for both crabbing and fishing
- Black and Asian folks fish and consume along piers in the Bay
- There are encampments near urbanized creeks and streams which are fished actively by unhoused people

### Species of Interest

Attendees discussed the species of interest for bioaccumulation monitoring.

The Realignment Team noted that the Program usually monitors the skinless filet of the fish, and asked Attendees to let the facilitators know if community members may be consuming other parts of the fish (e.g. skin, head, etc).

Attendees shared that communities consume:

- fish, including: catfish, cobia, cod, croaker, grouper, mackerel, Pacific saury, rockfish, salmon, sea bass, striped bass, sturgeon, tilapia
- shellfish, including: oysters, clams, crab
- bottom-feeders, including: sharks, despite known risks of mercury
- other species, including: sea urchin
- spotted monkey fish is a new fish that subsistence fishers are colloquially naming because they discovered them near Treasure Island

Attendees also noted:

- curiosity as to whether communities are eating snails, frogs, or turtles.
- the relevance of results from Biomonitoring California's Asian/Pacific Islander Community Exposures (ACE) studies of metals and perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFASs) in Asian/Pacific Islander adults living in the San Francisco Bay area (see [ACE 1](#) [Chinese adult participants]; [ACE 2](#) [Vietnamese adult participants])

### Fish Health and Consumption Information Discussion

Attendees shared that they get their information by:

- word of mouth

- surveys on women and infant health related to climate change
- OEHHA Fish Consumption Advisory signs posted near water bodies but noted:
  - signs are often missing
  - signs have a short lifespan and are in need of caretakers - without care and maintenance, they will get vandalized, shot at, rusted, and removed
  - there are data on where signs are needed, but there are no data on the signs that get posted but then get lost in the landscape

Attendees added that trust-building is needed between community members and agencies.

## **Next Steps & Action Items**

The Realignment Team welcomed all recommendations and noted that federal recognition for Tribes is not a requirement to engage in the Realignment process.

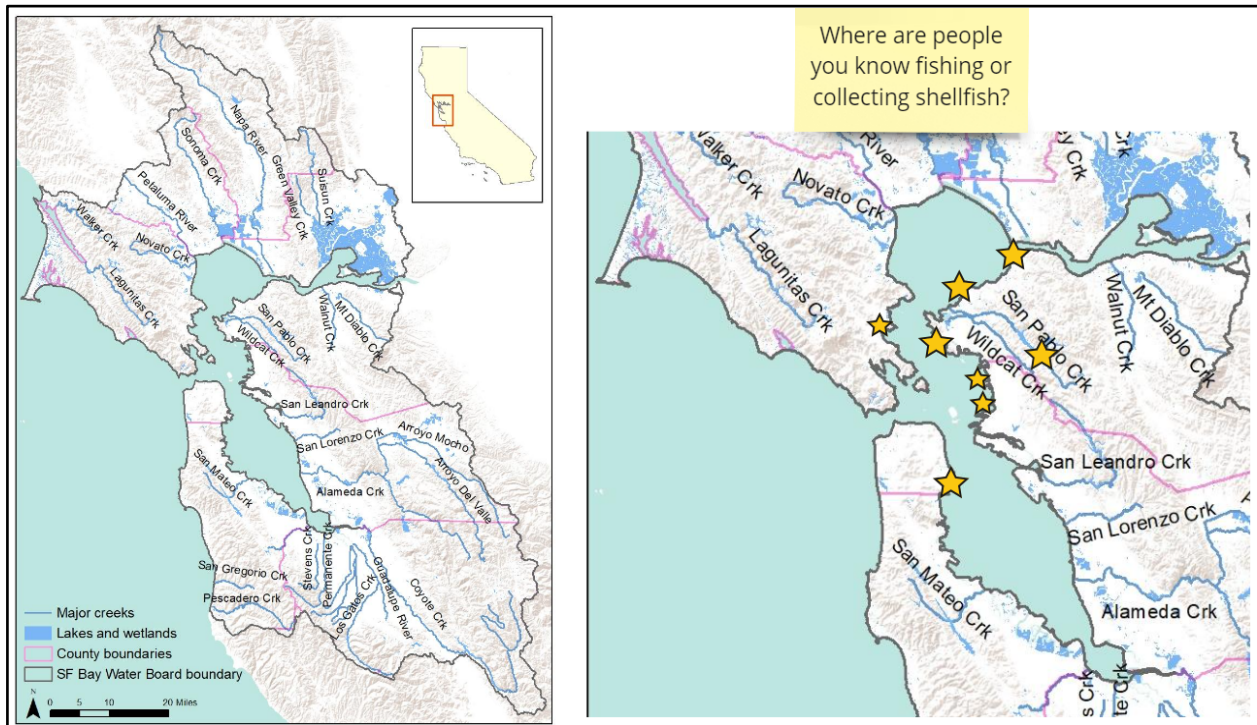
### Realignment Team

- Initiate honorarium process for Attendees
- Share the following with Attendees for review and feedback:
  - Workshop Notes (including slides & recording for reference)
  - [San Francisco Realignment Survey](#) (data & information needs)
- Add new contacts to email list & future workshop invites
- Post finalized Notes on [Realignment Page](#)

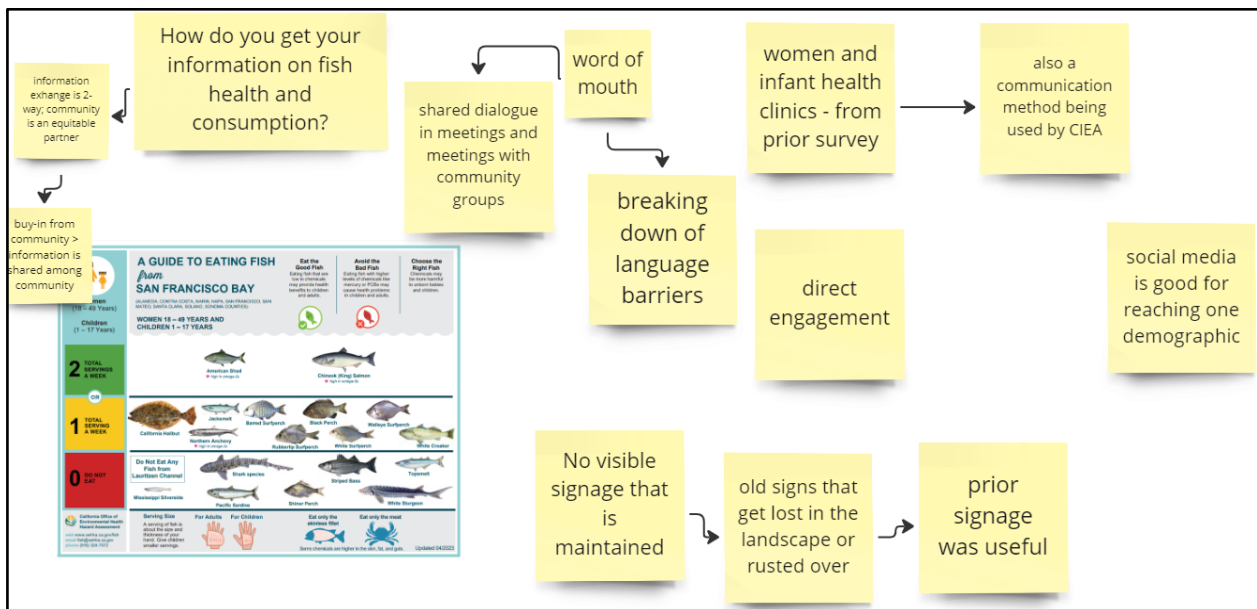
### Advisory Workshop Attendees

- Respond to email regarding honorarium process
- Review and provide feedback on Workshop Notes
- Complete and/or distribute the [San Francisco Realignment Survey](#)
- Initiate introductions for those who you would like to be included in future Realignment conversations or send contact information to [anna.holder@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:anna.holder@waterboards.ca.gov) and the Realignment Team will reach out and cc recommenders.

# Miro Discussion Highlights



**Image 1.** Workshop Attendees shared their locations of interest within the San Francisco Regional Water Board’s boundary (left). Facilitators marked locations of interest with stars as they were shared (right).



**Image 2.** Workshop Attendees shared the ways in which their communities get their information on fish health and consumption, documented in each of the pale-yellow squares.