

Partners Meeting Summary

Thursday February 26, 2009

10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Long Beach Environmental Services Bureau

2929 E. Willow Street

Long Beach, CA

Attendees:

Asian Youth Center:

Max Han

Amy Sun

BPSOS:

Tiffany Nguyen

Cabrillo:

Alfonso Montiel

CDFG Enforcement:

John Fallan

CDFG

Patty Velez

DTSC:

Tim Chauvel

FCEC CRC:

Yolanda Lasmarias

Angelina Nicolas

Howard Wang

Heal the Bay:

James Alamillo

Frankie Orrala

Herald

Community Center:

Connie Kwok

Rebecca Soong

ITSI (EPA Contractor):

Ed Gillera

Tawny Tran

LA County Public Health:

Adolph Cortez

Marita Santos

Aura Wong

LB Environmental Health:

Monica Cardenas

NOAA/MSRP:

Dave Witting

OCHCA:

Robert Curtis

Wida Rahimi

Sea Lab:

Maria Madrigal

SMBRC:

Guangyu Wang

St. Anselm's Cultural

Center:

Anh Nguyen

SGA (EPA Contractor):

Elizabeth Anderson

Stephen Groner

Tiffany Jonick

USEPA:

Jackie Lane

Sharon Lin

I. Welcome/Introductions

Sharon Lin (EPA) opened the meeting with a brief introduction. Stephen Groner (SGA) facilitated the meeting and had attendees introduce themselves before walking through the agenda. S. Groner explained that the emphasis of this Partners Meeting will focus more heavily on the Enforcement component of the Institutional Controls (ICs) Program, and that greater attention will be paid to the Monitoring and Outreach components in future meetings. Before moving on to the presentations, S. Groner announced dates to note, including the Strategic Planning Meeting on March 26 as well as the EPA Open House for the clean up plan on March 28.

II. Enforcement Program Update

A. Overview of CA Dept. of Fish and Game (CDFG) Work Plan – S. Lin

[Link to presentation](#)

- On December 17, 2008 an Enforcement Call was held to update the inspection forms, discuss protocols and serve as a forum for inter-agency collaboration. This call was a result of comments brought forth during the Nov. 19 Partners Meeting. CDFG

Enforcement proposed several ways for increasing collaboration between health inspectors and CDFG wardens.

- On February 5, 2009, CDFG, EPA, SGA and Innovative Technical Solutions (ITSI) met to discuss the CDFG Work Plan. Highlights include:
 - **Enforcement:**
 - In-Water Patrol of Commercial Fishing Operations within catch ban area
 - Land-based Patrol/Enforcement of Commercial Fish Businesses: This will be done in collaboration with the health inspectors
 - In-water Patrol/Enforcement of Sport/Recreational Anglers near catch ban area
 - Land-based Patrol/Enforcement of Sport/Recreational Anglers along the Palos Verdes Peninsula
 - **Monitoring:**
 - White croaker collection at the following two landing locations: Huntington Beach and Terminal Island
 - White croaker collection from anglers along the Palos Verdes Peninsula shoreline areas

Questions/Comments

- Guangyu Wang (SMBRC) inquired as to which public agency possesses enforcement authority with regard to wholesale fish distribution. J. Fallan replied that CDFG possesses full enforcement authority for any commercial fish related business.
- G. Wang also asked about the ability of tracking invoices. J. Fallan answered that CDFG operates a database that tracks wholesaler and distributor information that can be used to verify and track invoices retrieved by health inspectors.

B. CDFG Update – John Fallan (CDFG)

[Link to presentation](#)

- J. Fallan clarified the regulations and complexities pertaining to the lawful distribution of fish to wholesalers, retailers and individual buyers:
 - Fish can only be sold to a particular entity if that seller possesses a commercial fishing license. Sport fishermen are therefore prohibited from selling their catch.
 - Tracking the distribution of commercially bought and sold fish “from water to table” is a highly complicated and technical practice. CDFG does however; possess the means, experience and authority to regulate this commodity chain originating at the wholesale level.
 - J. Fallan narrated a surveillance video depicting the unlawful distribution of fish by sport fisherman to community members.
- In tracking the unlawful sale of fish back to the source, wardens possess full search authority:
 - Wardens may inspect all boats, markets, stores and other buildings, except for dwellings, and all receptacles where fish may be stored, placed or held for sale or storage.
 - Wardens will look for illegal species, undersized and sport caught fish in addition to white croaker during inspections.

Questions/Comments

- J. Fallan informed that anyone can buy a commercial license in response to Frankie Orrala’s (Heal the Bay) question.
- G. Wang asked if the commercial fishing license is species specific. J. Fallan elaborated that a commercial fishing license simply allows for the commercial distribution of fish. Species specific licenses are required in addition to the commercial license.
- J. Fallan explained that CDFG wardens do not require a search warrant when searching for fish or other types of game during a market and vessel inspection in answer to Tawny Tran’s (ITSI) question.
- G. Wang asked if wardens are permitted to collect white croaker between quarters, as sampling is done on a quarterly basis. J. Fallan responded that although white croaker are only collected on a quarterly basis for scheduling purposes, the department is flexible to collect samples more frequently.

C. Market Inspection Update and Discussion – S. Lin

[Link to presentation](#)

- Health inspectors from the City of Long Beach (inspecting 15 markets 3 times a year), Los Angeles County (inspecting 29 markets 2 times a year) and Orange County (inspecting 12 markets once a month) will carry out the market inspections and ensure that markets are following the proper protocol when purchasing white croaker from wholesalers.
- The City of Long Beach Environmental Health, in collaboration with ITSI, hosted a market inspector training session on February 3, 2009.
- SGA facilitated the redesign of FCEC’s market posters. The previous posters focused on two audiences: market owners and consumers. The new market posters focus on one audience: market staff. The poster was redeveloped to be more visually engaging by simplifying the text and streamlining the design. Posters are available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese and Chinese.
- The Health Departments provided updates by discussing “what’s working” and “what’s not working” with respect to the successful administration of the program:

What’s working	What’s Not Working
<p>Long Beach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will begin inspections on March 3. - Inspectors have coordinated with ITSI on creating an inspection schedule. - Long Beach has received good support in a timely manner from EPA and its contractors. - The CDFG/market inspector collaboration is in progress. <p>Orange County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The white croaker messages are well received by market staff. - Orange County is interested in expanding white croaker identification training to additional health inspectors not currently 	<p>Long Beach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarification is needed with regard to CDFG and Health Department jurisdictions. <p>Orange County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The inspections are too frequent for the number of fish markets receiving outreach. Inspection frequency should either be reduced or expanded to a greater number of markets.

involved in the program. Los Angeles County: - Will begin inspections in March	
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Questions/Comments

- J. Fallan asked why health inspectors could not expand their outreach efforts to a greater number of markets. S. Lin explained that efforts could indeed be expanded to a larger number of markets in targeted areas if needed.
- LA County assured that additional training was not necessary when asked by T. Tran if they required training before starting inspections.
- Yolanda Lasmarias (Community Resource Council (CRC)) asked where the LA market inspections were taking place. S. Lin answered that the majority of markets are located in San Gabriel Valley.
- Patty Velez (CDFG) asked about Dr. Franklin's background and contract agreements. S. Lin explained that Dr. Franklin is under a contract agreement with ITSI and is a professor of Ichthyology at California State University, Northridge.
- Howard Wang (CRC) commented that the Chinese market posters might better be understood by community members if written in traditional, as opposed to simple Chinese characters.
- Wida Rahimi (OCHCA) noted that Korean markets have requested Korean educational materials and posters. Tiffany Jonick (SGA) and S. Lin responded that a count will need to be taken as to the total number of Korean markets that are included under the current inspection agreement to determine if creating Korean language materials are necessary.
- S. Lin asked the health departments how EPA should request and receive inspection forms. W. Rahimi replied that all inspection forms are maintained under a database and can be sent electronically at EPA's request.
- Marita Santos (LA County Health Department) asked how frequently health inspection forms should be sent to EPA. S. Lin answered that the forms should be sent on a timely basis.
- S. Lin commented that ITSI will create a database for the enforcement program. ITSI will be responsible for entering the inspection forms into the database and maintaining the database.
- M. Cardenas asked about what actions should be taken if white croaker is found in markets outside those delineated by the program. S. Lin noted that capturing this information would be valuable to FCEC and that this issue should be further discussed.

III. Community Outreach Overview

[Link to presentation](#)

A. Chinese Community Outreach – T. Jonick

- FCEC has recently expanded outreach efforts to include Chinese populations residing in the San Gabriel Valley, working with the following organizations:
 - **Asian Youth Center (AYC)** – Amy Sun and Max Han (AYC):
 - Founded in 1989, the Center's mission is to meet the social service and health needs of low-income Chinese immigrants residing within the San Gabriel Valley. AYC serves more than 5,000 youths and families annually.

- **Herald Community Center (HCC) – Connie Kwok (HCC):**
 - Herald Community Center has more than 16 years of experience in providing social and health services to the Chinese community. Since its inception, the center has reached out to more than 100,000 individuals, and operates more than 20 satellite offices in 17 cities world-wide.
 - In 2004, the Herald Community Center collaborated with FCEC and the Chinatown Service Center to conduct outreach to the local Chinese community.

Questions/Comments

- No questions or comments.

B. Vietnamese Community Outreach – T. Jonick

- In collaboration with Boat People SOS and St. Anselm’s Cross Cultural Community Center, FCEC continues to successfully conduct outreach to the local Vietnamese community, reaching a total of 403 community members since September.
- An in-language brochure outlining Vietnamese fish fillet recipes was developed to encourage community members to consume the fillet.
- A conference call was held on Jan. 12 to address a number a fish consumption questions faced by the CBOs during outreach. St. Anselm’s, BPSOS, Robert Brodberg (OEEHA), Marilyn Underwood (CA Department of Pubic Health Environmental Health Investigations Branch) and M. Santos participated in the call.
- The Vietnamese CBOs discussed some of the challenges and successes that they have experienced in the administration of the Community Outreach program:

Successes	Challenges
<p>BPSOS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participants are thankful for the information and oftentimes request additional educational materials to share with friends and family. - Clinics are also appreciative for the information. One clinic in particular suggested creating a video presentation that could be displayed continuously in the waiting room. <p>St. Anselm’s:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow-up surveys indicate that community members are engaging in safer fish preparation and consumption habits by eating the fillet and broiling, baking and grilling their fish on an increased basis. 	<p>BPSOS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is difficult to obtain follow-up surveys from respondents due to incorrect contact information or unwillingness to respond on the part of participants. - Some of the health clinics are apprehensive in allowing outreach to be conducted to their clients. <p>St. Anselm’s:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is difficult to engage community members in health clinics as many of these potential participants are ill and are therefore unwilling to engage in educational outreach. - Persuading community members to modify their fish consumption and preparation habits is extremely challenging as these behaviors are deeply influenced by Vietnamese cultural norms.

Questions/Comments

- No questions or comments.

C. General Outreach Update

[Link to presentation](#)

- FCEC has and will be participating in several events this spring:
 - Feb. 10: M. Santos and Y. Lasmarias educated approximately 60 parent leaders at the District 8 CEAC & ELAC Event.
 - Mar. 7: Sustainable Seafood Day at the Long Beach Aquarium of the Pacific.
 - Mar. 14: Los Angeles Environmental Education Fair at the LA County Arboretum
 - Mar. 28: EPA will be hosting an Open House at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium Library
- CDFG’s On-Line Fishing Guide was updated to include FCEC’s fish consumption advisory information.
- T. Jonick also provided an update on website statistics including the google search results for “fish contamination.”

Questions/Comments

- W. Rahimi asked in what order the FCEC website appears when entering the phrase “white croaker.” T. Jonick responded that this particular search term was not explored.
- S. Lin inquired as to what factors influence the order of google search results. S. Groner and T. Jonick replied that the relevance of the search term as well as the number of visitors entering the site influence the search order.
- Tim Chauvel (DTSC) suggested that FCEC create a Facebook group to further engage community members.
- H. Wang suggested that FCEC host a booth at California State University, Fullerton’s Health Fair on April 18, as was done last year.

IV. Angler Outreach Program Update

- Due to time constraints, the Angler Outreach Program presentation was not covered. The Angler Outreach team discussed some of the challenges and successes that they have experienced in the administration of the Angler Outreach program:

Successes	Challenges
<p>Heal the Bay:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heal the Bay has successfully conducted outreach to an extremely large and growing number of local anglers. Despite the fact that angler outreach has been going on for quite sometime, there’s still always new anglers who haven’t heard about the contamination. - F. Orrala shared his fascination with the multitude of changes that have occurred with regard to fishing regulations over the decades at local piers. - F. Orrala shared an anecdote he was told by a local angler who recounted diving for Abalone off of Pier J. 	<p>Cabrillo:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cabrillo discussed the need for adequate and updated signage warning anglers about white croaker contamination. <p>Heal the Bay:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Echoed Cabrillo’s concerns that adequate signage warning of local white croaker contamination is lacking.

Questions/Comments

- With regard to Cabrillo and Health the Bay's signage concerns, S. Lin commented that posting additional signage relies on a host of factors, including the completion of the updated fish advisory. However, given the recent partnership with the health departments in administering the program, the current landscape is more amenable to posting updated signage than it was several years ago.

V. Partners' Updates/Announcements – All Partners

- Dave Witting (NOAA/MSRP) reminded partners that on Mar. 31, from 9 am to 4 pm, NOAA will be hosting a symposium in Ventura at the Channel Islands National Park office:
 - The symposium is open to the public and will unite the numerous decision makers and stakeholders interested in NOAA's collective restoration efforts.
 - Speakers will present on a variety of topics ranging from bald eagle preservation to wetland restoration.
- D. Witting announced that the fish contamination curriculum funded by a NOAA mini grant has recently been completed:
 - This curriculum, based on the "What's the Catch?" comic book, has been published and will be distributed to local schools shortly.
- D. Witting shared that two bald eagles have hatched in the wild on Catalina Island for the first time since the 1940s. This achievement marks the first year that the restoration project will allow the parents to raise their offspring without human intervention.

VI. EPA Activities Update – Sharon Lin

- Due to time constraints, the EPA Activities Update was not covered.

VII. 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:

- Partners noted the apparent disconnect between the 40,000 pounds of white croaker that are landed annually with the relatively small number of white croaker that have been observed at the distribution level. Identifying a mechanism to track this movement "from water to table" will be a key instrument in ensuring the success of the program.

VIII. Future Dates

- Strategic Planning Meeting: Mar. 26 at the NOAA Office in Long Beach
- EPA Open House: Mar. 28 at Cabrillo Marine Aquarium
- FCEC Newsletter: April
- Agency Call: May 28, 2009
- Partners Meeting: June 25, 2009