



FCEC Partners Meeting
9:30am to 12:30 pm
NOAA Office
501 West Ocean Blvd., Rm 3400

Attendees:

BPSOS:

Khanh Doan
Kathy Vo

Cabrillo Marine Aquarium:

Alfonso Montiel

CDFG:

Cyndy Pourroy

City of Long Beach:

Monica Cardenas

DTSC:

Tim Chauvel

Gilbane (EPA Contractor):

Riz Sarmiento

Heal the Bay:

James Alamillo
Frankie Orrala

Heal the Bay (cont):

Sandy Shimooka
Sarah Sikich

HCC:

Eppie Lau
Rebecca Soong

LACPH:

Cindy Chen

LASD:

Chi-Li Tang

MDRA:

Larry Brown

NOAA/MSRP:

Gabrielle Dorr
Claire Monks

OCHCA:

Mozhgan Mofidi

SMBRC:

Lia Protopapadakis

SGA (EPA Contractor):

Stephen Groner
Tiffany Jonick
Philip Kao

USC Sea Grant

Linda Chilton

USEPA:

Carlin Hafiz
Phillip Ramsey

1. Welcome - Phillip Ramsey, Environmental Protection Agency

Phillip Ramsey opened the meeting by thanking all the partners for their time and energy working on the Palos Verdes Shelf Superfund site (PV Shelf) and helping to protect the public who utilize the Pacific Ocean. Ramsey explained that the PV Shelf is a unique Superfund Site, and that the reliance on Institutional Controls for protecting against human exposures is also unique. The protectiveness of the interim Institutional Control remedy is a result of the outstanding efforts and collaboration of EPA's partners.

Ramsey introduced new people to the group: Carlin Hafiz (EPA) will be taking over for Jackie Lane, assisting with community involvement activities. Cindy Chen will be the new contact for the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health market inspection program. Larry Brown with Marina Del Rey Anglers was new to the Partners Meeting. Lia Protopapadakis attended the meeting on behalf of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission.

Ramsey also highlighted different roles that some partners would be playing. Carrie Tayour with LA County Public Health Toxics Epidemiology will be taking over for Marita Santos. He also recognized Mozghan Mofidi with Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA) and explained the modified role they will be playing in the future. OCHCA's formal involvement with FCEC will be minimized, as they decided not to renew an EPA grant for PV Shelf and therefore will no longer be doing market inspections. Mofidi will continue to be involved in the meetings as time and resources allow and the FCEC and OCHCA will remain in communication on PV Shelf activities and enforcement efforts.

Providing an update on the sediment aspect of the project, Ramsey indicated that EPA has been conducting off-shore sampling of sediment, water, and fish in preparation for a 2015 report. In December 2012 EPA suspended a decision to place a cap on the contaminated sediment. Since then, EPA has been carrying out work to assess if a cap should be placed and how it should be done. A decision on the cap is anticipated in 2015.

Ramsey also provided an overview of the outreach work accomplished by partners by presenting numbers that represent the cumulative efforts of partners ([link to presentation](#)):

- 1,897,752 total impressions (this includes all outreach activities: pier outreach, spot angler outreach, Chinese community outreach, Vietnamese community outreach, angler retail and bait shop outreach, website visits, Facebook reach, as well as YouTube video views)
- 11,678 anglers reached (includes pier outreach, sport angler outreach, marina anglers)
- 678 anglers passing on FCEC information to other anglers
- 1,343 tip cards taken by anglers to pass on to other anglers
- 81 angler retail and bait shops disseminated FCEC materials
- 102 bait shop staff educated on FCEC information
- 11,639 community members reached (this includes outreach events, Vietnamese outreach, Chinese outreach, Filipino outreach)
- 17,081 tip cards distributed to anglers, community members, partners, bait shops
- 5,224 Facebook fans

2. Introductions & Agenda Review - Stephen Groner, S. Groner Associates (SGA)

3. Consumption Study Update - Phillip Ramsey, EPA & Philip Kao, SGA

- EPA provided a status update on the Seafood Consumption Study (SCS). Ramsey explained that the SCS has not been completed as scheduled, as the finalization process has taken longer than anticipated, due to the extensive comments received and due to the technical nature of one outstanding issue. This issue that will be further evaluated outside of the report is the discussion and evaluation of Reasonable Maximum Exposure (RME) consumption rates that are used to assess risks to the most vulnerable - higher volume - fish consumers. This RME assessment will be brought to the PV Shelf Technical Information Exchange Group (PVSTIEG) later this summer for discussion, evaluation, and resolution.
- Philip Kao (SGA) shared some of the recommendations for outreach that came out of the report ([link to presentation](#)):
 - Ideally all outreach team members speak Spanish, and in an ideal world they speak three languages. After English, Spanish language surveys were the most commonly

- collected surveys. While the response rate for surveys was high at 77%, the reason most people cited for refusing to participate in the survey was a language barrier.
- Half of anglers were relatively inexperienced with less than five years of fishing experience. A key takeaway is that due to the limited experience of anglers, outreach will need to continue until fish contaminant levels have decreased to final cleanup levels.
 - Voice of messaging should fit the audience's age. The majority of anglers are a slightly older audience than before (1994). Message tone, voice, and the message itself should resonate with this demographic.
 - Black anglers, while one of the smallest groups of ethnic anglers, were found to consume locally caught fish at a higher level and they were simultaneously least aware of the advisory. They also were the least likely to believe the warnings were important. This survey information suggests the need for great outreach to this community, which has been initiated.
 - Asian anglers were the only group whose fishing activity significantly increased in the non-summer months (a slight increase was noted for Hispanic anglers). Fishing activity decreased in the non-summer months for the remaining ethnic groups. As a result, it should no longer be assumed that fishing activity decreases in colder months and that both Asians and Hispanic anglers fish at high rates during the winter.
 - Barred sand bass, generally caught off shore from boats, was the most commonly consumed fish. As EPA has included Barred Sand Bass in its 2014 sampling effort, contaminant data from this fish species will be used to update and refine EPA DNC message.
 - Questions/Comments:
 - Regarding Asian anglers increasing fishing activity in the cooler months, Cyndy Pourroy (California Department of Fish and Wildlife) noted that most serious fishermen will target species of fish when they spawn. Sandy Shimooka (Heal the Bay) noted that people fishing for consumption need to fish all year.
 - James Alamillo (Heal the Bay) mentioned that barred sand bass is a complicated species for FCEC given its constant movement in and out of the red zone.
 - EPA will be targeting barred sand bass for sampling to better understand the contaminant levels for this fish, Ramsey said. While water quality and sediment studies happen quickly, fish sampling takes a while. Barred sand bass are one of the DNC species, but there were not a lot of samples collected for that advisory. Charter boat fishing companies have historically targeted this species, so it's important to understand their contamination since this could affect people's livelihoods. Shimooka said barred sand bass is a species that fishermen prize and like to target.
 - In response to a question from Linda Chilton (USC Sea Grant) asking if fish sampling will occur only once or during multiple times of the year, EPA indicated that fish sampling will be conducted during at least two times of the year to assess fish contaminant levels at habitat (feeding) areas and spawning grounds. It is important to understand barred sand bass contamination and the exposure represented by the species in order to work on a better message to sport anglers.

4. Angler Outreach Update

Pier Outreach by Heal the Bay. Frankie Orrala and Sandy Shimooka provided an update on the outreach they carry out with anglers across eight different piers ([link to](#)

[presentation](#)). During the intervention—the fun part—the team is in direct contact with anglers and talk with them about fish consumption issues, portioning, and the Superfund Site. The Heal the Bay team tried fishing sessions at Santa Monica Pier and Venice Pier once a month earlier in the year. During fishing sessions the team would bring a fish tank, fish and display their catch in the tank for people to see. While this provided perfect examples for the public, complications had to do with who the team reached and logistics. At Santa Monica, most of the people the team spoke with were tourists, who are not an FCEC target audience. At Venice hauling in the water to keep the fish alive was a challenge.

Overall, Heal the Bay reached 10,681 anglers between July 1, 2013 and May 31, 2014, surpassing an initial goal of 7,000 anglers. The tip card remains an effective piece with fishermen and is an easy conversation starter. Locals, who often have questions on fish identification, like it because of the fish images. Although the pier signs are up, they sometimes get overlooked by fishermen. So the tip cards are important. Fishermen look at the pictures of the fish and also use the rulers.

Shimooka said the most important part of her job is to develop a relationship with pier fishermen to establish a community of people who are always near the ocean. Fishermen are out there on a regular basis and share information with each other, and with family and friends. They carry more weight than outreach staff. Old timer fishermen she knows will give her a hug when they see her and that creates an impression with the new fishermen. So when she goes to talk with them, they are more willing to share information with her. The information the team is able to exchange with fishermen they've developed a relationship with is important as well. The fishermen are the ones who tell her what fish are running—currently there is a lot of Spanish mackerel. Orrala mentioned that the Russian and Ukrainian fishing communities are increasing, particularly at Santa Monica, Venice, Belmont and Rainbow Harbor.

Questions/Comments:

- The 10,681 anglers reached includes anglers that have been reached before. This information was prompted by a question from Gabrielle Dorr (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/Montrose Settlements Restoration Program). Shimooka noted that the team still checks in with anglers they've spoken to previously to see what they caught and if anything is new.
- Tim Chauvel (Cal-EPA Department of Toxic Substances Control) asked if Heal the Bay keeps a log of the information they receive from anglers. Shimooka said she keeps notes, but nothing formal as in a survey.
- Shimooka suggested adding signs with more pictures of fish and a ruler. That way fishermen could compare their catch with the images and post pictures to Facebook.
- Reflecting on the point about creating a community of fishermen on piers, Larry Brown (Marina Del Rey Anglers) said perhaps a similar group of sport anglers could be developed—a network of sport anglers where mutual trust was established to help share and disseminate information.
- During Chinese community outreach, Rebecca Soong (Herald Community Center) said she came across a fisherman who was going out once a month on a private charter boat who knew nothing about the contamination and was surprised that the charter boats did not provide any information. Kao (SGA) said boating livelihoods depend on people catching and eating fish, so there may be reluctance to provide information to their customers that may undermine their business.

- Soong also asked if FCEC should be educating charter boat companies. Kao explained that while charter companies are educated about the issue and are open to the outreach, resistance comes from the boat captains.
- Lia Protopapadakis (Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission) suggested getting in touch with the Recreational Fisheries Information Network (RecFIN) when talking to captains. Ramsey noted that the program needs more information on barred sand bass before going to captains; however, the current DNC message is still appropriate. Brown concurred with Ramsey and emphasized that there are two species that boat captains are concerned about: barracuda and barred sand bass. He suggested that messaging be focused in the right way—focusing on portion size, preparation methods and who can/cannot eat the fish.
- Dorr asked if data was still being collected on the fish people take home and how effective the outreach is. Ramsey explained that at one point SGA was conducting surveys for effectiveness on a yearly basis. However, message effectiveness surveys will now be on a 3-4 year cycle to coincide with EPA's post-remedy Five-Year Reviews.

Pier Outreach by Cabrillo Marine Aquarium. Alfonso Montiel provided an update on the outreach carried out at Cabrillo Pier ([link to presentation](#)). His team focuses on one pier and has an established relationship with Cabrillo fishing community. Fishermen who fish there usually go every week and know the Cabrillo team by name. At Cabrillo, 1057 adults received outreach and 273 children received outreach. There were 729 anglers who received outreach for the first time; while 593 were repeat anglers. 138 anglers said they would pass along the tip card to 321 anglers. It's easier for Cabrillo to carry out the fishing sessions, and Montiel carries these out once a month and provides information on DNC fish. During the sessions he's come across rockfish, sardines, fringeheads (not very common) and mackerel, just to name a few.

Question/Comments:

- Dorr asked if the number of children who received outreach reflected children doing the fishing. Montiel said it was a combination. He also mentioned that while he carries out the fishing session another staffer conducts outreach around the pier.
- Montiel said he hasn't see much white croaker when asked by Ramsey about the prevalence at Cabrillo. Montiel has seen more mackerel than white croaker. There was one instance when a fisherman brought up a white croaker, saw the pier sign and then threw it back. A lot of Cabrillo's anglers throw back white croaker when caught.
- Brown asked Montiel to what extent he thought anglers were not catching white croaker because it's not prevalent vs catching and releasing white croaker. Montiel said from his experience and from talking with California State University Long Beach Professor of Biology Christopher Lowe, it seems like white croaker is harder to catch.
- Ramsey noted that the white croaker population is in decline based on information presented to EPA
- Brown noted that in the past, sport anglers valued white croaker as bait for yellowtail and bass.
- Protopapadakis said that the water temperature has been lower, which has been affecting behavior of fish.
- Shimooka mentioned that she has not come across white croaker on the piers since last summer.

Sport Angler Outreach by Marina Del Rey Anglers. Brown presented on the outreach carried out by Marina Del Rey Anglers ([link to presentation](#)), a recreational fishing club whose primary purpose is to catch fish. As a part of its mission, the group introduces responsible salt water sportfishing to people in the community. MDRA recognizes that they have a responsibility to protect the ocean, and create the next generation of fishing.

To help FCEC reach the Sport Angler audience, MDRA collected 270 commitment letters, provided more than 200 photos of sport anglers engaging in best practices, and published more than 50 Facebook posts. MDRA is able to reach the sport angling community in a more successful way because MDRA has an existing, established connection with the community. A lot of sport anglers are upset with closures because they feel the best fishing spots have been taken away from them. As such, they have been suspicious about government organizations. MDRA is able to connect with fishermen because they are fishermen too. They are very cognizant of how they frame the message to sport anglers, focusing on what sport anglers can do. MDRA tells fishermen that they can fish, there are a few fish that can't be eaten, but there's a lot more fish that you can eat. They tell fishermen that if they want to fish and take it home, you don't want to take it home to daughters and wives of child bearing age.

Through MDRA's youth fishing program, the club has taken nearly 500 children out on 24 fishing trips. MDRA shows the children how to fish, makes sure they have a great time out on the ocean, talks about the local contamination and fish that can't be eaten, and sends children home with an FCEC tip card. Each time a child catches a fish, the group is asked to identify the fish and if they should release or keep it.

5. Community Outreach Update

Vietnamese Outreach Update by BPSOS. Khanh Doan (BPSOS), talked to the group about the outreach she carries out to reach the Vietnamese community. BPSOS has been serving the Vietnamese community in their pursuit of liberty, happiness and human dignity since 2000. BPSOS uses their existing English as a Second Language, Citizenship, and Computer classes as a venue for getting FCEC information out. BPSOS also provides FCEC information to clients who go to their office for different services such as naturalization applications and to file taxes. Outreach is also carried out at beauty colleges, where BPSOS talks to students about health issues related to nail salon technicians. BPSOS also attends monthly workshops hosted by the Vietnamese American Cancer Foundation, where they speak about the local contamination and how to protect their health.

During outreach, BPSOS shows the FCEC video clip about how to prepare fish. This catches their attention because of the way the fish is cut and skin removed. Vietnamese are disappointed to hear about not eating the skin because traditionally and culturally, Vietnamese like eating the skin, fatty parts, and other organs. Community members have expressed concern over the contamination situation and Doan gets lots of questions about the effects of consuming contaminated fish. Sometimes there have been fishermen in the audience or people who know fishermen and they ask for more tip cards to give to their friends.

Questions/Comments:

- Doan said most of the people she speaks with are adults and seniors, when asked by Alamillo (Heal the Bay).

Chinese Community Outreach by Herald Community Center. Rebecca Soong spoke to the group about the outreach she conducted to the Chinese Community, reaching 725 people and distributing 919 Chinese FCEC tip cards ([link to presentation](#)). Outreach was conducted at various venues including community health seminars, community gatherings, tax seminars, religious gatherings, and staff meetings. As a part of their facilities, Herald has a health clinic that sees over 100 patients a day. So it's important to educate staff about the fish contamination issues as well. Soong noted that in the Chinese community, the grandparent tends to be the ones who cook in the families. So Herald tries to reach those populations who have the final decision on what kind of fish to buy. Soong also shared an FCEC advertisement published in Herald's paper.

Questions/Comments:

- Groner (SGA) said that the FCEC message is a tricky one: EPA and FDA came out with the recent advisory encouraging people to eat fish, as long as it's the right fish. We don't want people to avoid fish altogether and choose a hamburger instead.

6. Enforcement Update

California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Cyndy Pourroy took over the project late last year and has been updating the forms CDFW uses when patrolling or conducting inspections. Since she's been on the project there has been only one incident of white croaker being seized from a recreational fisherman. She also found one commercial landing of white croaker and contacted the individual personally. The individual was not aware of the white croaker contamination and had harvested a lot. Wardens have been conducting individual inspections, and will soon be starting joint inspections with the City of Long Beach. Wardens are inspecting most commercial facilities and have found that a majority of facilities are aware of the contamination.

Reflecting on the morning's presentations, Pourroy said it was important to recognize that some of our messages affect people's livelihoods, particularly when it comes to boat captains. Captains will be sensitive to new regulations and anything that could potentially hurt their business. They are already subject to the environment and circumstances beyond their control, so we should be sensitive to people who need to make a living.

Questions/Comments:

- Referring to the areas wardens patrol, Alamillo asked if the areas are identified by catch blocks. Pourroy said the forms capture whether or not the vessel is in the catch ban area or outside of it.
- Chauvel (DTSC) asked if customers specifically ask for white croaker. Pourroy said that if customers ask for something, this individual would get it for them.
- Pourroy said she was not aware of any kind of ban information when asked by Brown.

City of Long Beach. Monica Cardenas provided an update on the City's activities, as they are responsible for conducting 15 surveys every quarter at markets and restaurants. The markets they visit are not the large, chain stores, but smaller ones. Inspectors look for white croaker, but have not found any so far. The City also attends health fairs such as the Aquarium of the Pacific's employee fair and works closely with California State University Long Beach's nursing classes, where they provide FCEC information. Long Beach has also attended five events, reaching a total of about 150 community members.

Questions/Comments:

- Brown asked if inspectors were monitoring other species aside from white croaker. Ramsey said that inspectors are only being asked to look for white croaker because it's the only fish of the DNC species that was commercially caught and distributed to retail markets.

Orange County Health Care Agency Update. Mozhgan Mofidi said Orange County's inspections are the same as Long Beach. The only difference is Orange County inspected 12 markets or restaurants per month. Not finding any white croaker in the markets, they expanded to include restaurants because inspectors thought they saw suspicious fish in restaurants. Upon inspection, they found that the fish was not white croaker, it was yellow croaker from Korea. After no white croaker was found in both restaurants and markets, Orange County decided to bring the inspection program to an end. They will remain involved in the meetings and sharing information with the program, but will no longer carry out market inspections.

White Croaker Sample Collection Presentation. Riz Sarmiento, with Gilbane, shared the protocol for white croaker sample collection ([link to presentation](#)). As a part of monitoring efforts, CDFW and inspectors are asked to provide Gilbane with any white croaker they come across. For CDFW, if white croaker are found without proper documentation, caught within the catch ban area, or exceeding the bag limit of 10, CDFW is asked to seize the fish, initiate enforcement proceedings and contact Gilbane to collect the fish. If white croaker is identified in a market, the market needs to provide documentation on the source of white croaker and Gilbane needs to be contacted to collect the fish.

Questions/Comments:

- Brown asked if FCEC had considered asking bait shops for samples should they come across any white croaker. Ramsey said EPA prefers to utilize the existing networks of partners.
- Through MSRP's youth fishing programs, Dorr said they come across white croaker occasionally. Last year the program caught a lot of white croaker with LA Rod and Reel Club. Montiel (Cabrillo) said that partners who come across white croaker can bring samples to Cabrillo where they would be frozen and saved for Gilbane.
- Brown said he will be going fishing in Long Beach Harbor with LA Rod and Reel's youth fishing trip and could potentially obtain white croaker samples if any are caught.
- Ramsey clarified that EPA is looking for more white croaker from the piers to assess the risk posed to pier fishermen and to better understand the contamination levels of croaker pier fishermen are catching across the study region.
- Pourroy said wardens see white croaker during recreational inspections and only seize it if there is a violation. Even after education, anglers still opt to take white croaker home.
- Chi-Li Tang (Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts) said they are collecting white croaker samples from six different zones. Normally they do a night trawl in November, starting during white croaker's spawning season.
- Alamillo mentioned that the technical memo looking at the contamination information of white croaker and lobster would be useful information for the group since it's information looking at the DDT and PCB levels of fish in markets and at piers. It's helpful to see what the trends are having collected samples across the years.

- Ramsey said EPA is in the process of finalizing the technical memos.

7. Meeting Adjournment.

Ramsey adjourned the meeting by thanking the partners again for attend the meeting and their invaluable assistance and contribution to the PV Shelf Site. Ramsey indicated that he hopes to see all of the partners at the Fall FCEC - Strategic Planning Meeting - that is tentatively planned in September.