

California's Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program Realignment San Diego Advisory Committee Meeting 1 Notes

Friday, June 25, 2021

Attendees

Advisory Committee members in attendance:

- Shasta Gaughen, Pala Band of Mission Indians
- Heidi Brow, Pala Band of Mission Indians
- Jill Sherman-Warne, Native American Environmental Protection Coalition (NAEPC)
- José Bravo, Just Transition Alliance
- Ray Hiemstra, Orange County Coastkeeper
- Mitchell (Mitch) McKay, Citizens for Coastal Conservancy
- Jeff Fowles, California Department of Public Health (CDPH)
- 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)

Advisory Committee members not in attendance:

- The Honorable Frederick (Bo) Mazzetti, Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians & Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association (SCTCA)
- Kelcey Stricker, Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians
- Matt O'Malley, San Diego Coast Keeper
- Matt Lucero, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Kirsten Winter, US Forest Service (USFS)

Realignment Team in attendance:

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

- Chad Loflen, San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (R9)

Welcome and grounding

- Members of the Realignment Team welcomed all to the first San Diego Advisory Committee Meeting.
- Members of the Realignment Team provided a refresher on the [Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program Realignment Plan](#) (i.e. objectives, timeline, etc.) and its focus on incorporating community perspectives and needs into Program monitoring efforts.
- Committee Members discussed and approved meeting ground rules: be respectful to one another, be constructive, be engaged, and be respectful of each other's time.

Advisory Committee Member Introductions

- Advisory Committee members 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.
- 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 from this process included:
 - The process should be collaborative and grounded in environmental justice, equity, and partnership principles.
 - Increased incorporation and inclusion of Tribal perspectives and needs, and that Tribes should be equal partners and leaders in this process.
 - Acknowledgement, understanding, and sensitivity to the diversity of Tribes and their associated needs in the region, and that building relationships and trust should be prioritized in this process.
 - Acknowledgement that the intent of this process is to develop a plan to improve SWAMP bioaccumulation monitoring in the region so that it can begin to fill data and information gaps that exist and impact those who are most highly exposed to contaminants in fish or shellfish that are consumed for subsistence by traditionally underrepresented communities, as well as Tribal tradition, culture, and subsistence.
 - Any data and information sharing should be approached respectfully and with an understanding that information shared with the state can be accessed through a Public Records Act Request.
 - Results and products produced through this process should be implemented, acted upon, and used to inform the management and protection of water resources and beneficial uses in the San Diego Region and beyond.
 - Results and products should be scientifically robust/evidence-based, transparent, and understandable to a wide variety of audiences. This includes but is not limited to

more understandable advice about the risks associated with species and fish consumed that may or may not currently have an official [consumption advisory](#).

Realignment Refresher and Objectives

- Discussion of the original goals and objectives of the overall realignment process and the Advisory Committee.
- Discussed interest in understanding what sampling and analysis methodologies will be used and how they fit into current SWAMP programs.
- Discussion of additional objectives that should be added to the process include:
 - The process should be collaborative and grounded in environmental justice, equity, and partnership principles. Building mutually beneficial relationships and trust, particularly with Tribes, should be prioritized.
 - Results, products, and outcomes of this process should be tangible, implemented, acted upon, and used to inform the management and protection of water resources and uses in the San Diego Region and beyond.
 - Also see the above section, “Discussion of desired outcomes from this process” bullet for a summary of additional outcomes and topics that were discussed in more detail during this agenda item.

Advisory Committee Feedback Survey

- Committee Members discussed and approved the use of the Advisory Committee Feedback Survey to be distributed to Advisory Committee members to consistently poll and collect their perspectives, needs, and priorities for this process.
- Committee Members discussed and approved the survey being shared/distributed by Advisory Committee members to others outside of the Advisory Committee as they see fit (e.g. to other Tribal members).
- Recommended revisions or additions to the Advisory Committee Feedback Survey included:
 - Removal of unnecessary contact information (e.g. affiliation information)
 - Addition of question about other entities we should connect with during this process
 - Addition of question about additional data and information sources that should be considered during this process
 - Addition of an open-ended question for respondents to articulate outcomes they would like to see achieved through the process
 - Ability to indicate priority in questions pertaining to locations, species, or pollutants of interest
- Also discussed the importance of scheduling in-person meetings and site visits in the future so we can expand our perspectives on issues and needs in the region, and support the relationship and trust-building process.

Next Steps

- Discussion of the importance of including input from tribal members who fish in different areas of the San Diego region.
- Discussed potential for some members of the Realignment Team to attend and present at the annual Tribal EPA Conference in October, which is being hosted by the Pala Band of Mission Indians.
- Discussion of the importance of water quality beyond fish consumption (e.g. ceremonial purposes).
 - Realignment Team noted that although this process scope and authority is limited to fish and shellfish consumption, there is ability to collect information on other needs throughout this process and then distribute it to relevant programs and partners who have authority to address concerns.
 - Noted that the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board is working on these concerns through their [2021 Basin Plan Triennial Review Process](#). Priority projects for the next 3 years include Tribal beneficial uses, including ceremonial purposes, and water body designations.

Review Action Items & Adjourn

- Realignment Team Action Items:
 - Write up meeting notes, share with Advisory Committee for review and feedback
 - Send availability survey and invitations for the July and August meetings
 - Send out realignment survey, review and summarize results for next meeting
 - Connect with groups we would like to invite to join this process, fill them in on progress and next steps
 - Initiate compensation process
- Advisory Committee Members:
 - Review June meeting notes, provide feedback/corrections
 - Introduce Anna to groups we would like to invite to join this process
 - Complete availability survey for the July and August meetings
 - Complete the Realignment Survey
- Committee Members and Realignment Team reflected on how they were feeling about the meeting and the path ahead. In general, attendees felt more positive and hopeful than what they expected going into the meeting.