

Attendance: Jay Davis, Rainer Hoenicke, Jennifer Salisbury, Michael Buckman, Karen Taberski, Karen Worcester, Chris Foe, Michael Lyons, Janis Cook, Terry Fleming, Bob Brodberg, Eric Von der Geest, Cassandra Lamerdin, Autumn Bonnema, Dave Crane, Max Puckett, Gary Ichikawa, Gail Cho, Tom Maurer, Jon Marshack, Rainer Hoenicke

Item 1: Roll Call, Agenda Review, General Updates

Key Points

- Mussel report – Jay would like comments sent to him by Feb. 17th. Email originally sent Dec. 5th.
- SFPUC study – (Hetch Hetchy Study) Mike Kellogg of the SF Public Utilities Commission, Heather McKenny from the National Park Service, and colleagues are in the midst of a detailed study of mercury in and around Hetch Hetchy. The findings from the Lakes Survey were the impetus for this work. The study will attempt to determine sources of the mercury accumulating in Hetch Hetchy fish through sampling of fish, zooplankton, water, and atmospheric deposition in many lakes and locations in the Tuolumne River watershed. It will be very interesting to see the results of this study. SFPUC and NPS are interested in coordinating and partnering with BOG and the state on this work. A write-up of their study plan for 2011 is attached. Grebe study – will be a topic on for the Review Panel Meeting (Feb. 9, 2012)
- Review Panel meeting – Meeting will be Feb. 9, 2012 at the State Board (CalEPA) from 9:00 – 5:00

Action Items

- Mussel Report – Comments due Feb. 17th to Jay Davis.

Item 2: Methylmercury Exposure Reduction

This is pilot program that is successfully reaching fish-consuming populations and providing them with means to reduce their exposure to mercury. It is currently a permit-driven funded program, which is likely to be as unsustainable. The BOG and the California Water Quality Monitoring Council may be in a position to recommend sustainable solutions to build on and expand successful elements of the Bay Area pilot to insure that education about mercury contamination and awareness about fish species considered "safe to eat" result in behaviors that lead to reduced exposure to mercury in fish-eating populations.

Desired Outcome:

- Identify a prioritized list of potential funding sources that could allow CDPH to work with community-based organizations in educating key segments of society about adverse health effects of consuming contaminated fish, providing alternatives based on consumption advisories issued by the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, and implementing a monitoring system capable of tracking behavior changes in sport-fish consuming populations.

Key Points

- This is unsustainable because the permit-holders don't think they should be in charge (this is not their expertise) and a statewide effort led by DPH or a state agency would make more sense.
- Exposure reduction is also being pursued in the Delta, but there aren't enough Delta dischargers to fund it all. Education and outreach can produce results but fees should be proportional to the amount of mercury load to the system.
- Maybe fishing licenses should be changed to discourage consumption of large fish.
- There is a need to show results – this hasn't happened yet.
- Outcomes can be measured as changes in levels of awareness, behavior, or body burdens.

- Rainer reported that the permittees agreed to have one more round of exposure reduction in the current permit. The permit cycle is 5 years, leaving some time to develop a different funding mechanism.
- We should schedule Alyce Ujihara of DPH for a presentation to the BOG on the Bay Area project in a couple of months.
- Feb. 8, 2012 – Biomonitoring Program meeting w/ DPH

Action Items

- Rainer Hoenicke will send an email with some of the materials DPH staff shared with the permittees and Regional Board staff. This included a progress report for the third quarter (particularly Task 4 which pertains to the interim "outcome" indicator of raising awareness that's the precursor to behavior change, which leads to the ultimate outcome of reduced body burdens and health risks posed by whatever pollutant you want to limit your exposure to), Year-end Evaluation Summary, Retrospective Post-test Outcome Evaluation, Retrospective post-test questionnaire for pier anglers (Done)
- Schedule Alyce Ujihara for a presentation to the BOG later this year

Item 3: Biotoxin Workplan for 2012

A proposed plan for a biotoxin workshop in 2012 has been drafted for BOG consideration.

Desired Outcomes:

- Obtain feedback on the draft scope and consensus on a path forward.

Key Points

- Impacts have been observed in large rivers, lakes, dogs, humans and sea otter
- A long-term bivalve monitoring program by DPH covers saltwater, therefore this group will initially focus on freshwater but ultimately develop a comprehensive statewide plan
- The role of the BOG is to focus on bioaccumulation of toxins
- The workshop will consider the best way to do monitoring
- Funding sources need to be identified
- Water Board's Training Academy should be contacted to see if there could be some cost savings to setting up the workshop.
- SCCWRP has interest in this topic and is a potential partner
- Greg Langlois of DPH is an important person to include
- Need to still identify a facilitator for the workshop
- Workshop could take place near a known freshwater bloom – possibly near Pinto Lake or Delta.
- The size of the workshop will probably be between 50-60 people (not more than 100).
- The product from the workshop will be an outline for a screening study of freshwater biotoxins in California, including methods, species, and toxins.
- Water purveyors may be interested in this topic and we should invite Val and think of a write-up for next steps.
- There could be the potential to get the NNE Water Board folks involved – Steve Camacho is the state lead.
- Workshop tentatively scheduled in the Fall (September not October).
- A format that works well is to have presentations on day 1 and then on day 2 more focused discussions with a smaller group, with a writeup coming from day 2.
- A subcommittee should develop the workshop plan further. Volunteers include Karen Worcester, Karen Taberski, Dave Crane, Kim Ward, and Jay Davis.

Action Items

- Contact the Water Board's Training Academy. They may be able to help monetarily and with logistics (e.g. rooms).
- Decide on a date and location for the workshop.

Item 4: BOG Strategy Development

Continue development of the elements of the Strategy.

Desired Outcomes:

- Consensus on a complete PowerPoint version of the Strategy.

Key Points

- Add more communication points
- Grebe Study goes under statewide monitoring and assessment. Is this project proposal related any other way to the goals of the BOG? How are all of the other proposals related the BOG's overall Strategy (Goals)? Does this move the program forward?
- Decide if the goals are supposed to be in alignment w/ TMDL and 303d?
- Is the statewide monitoring goal only supposed to give first cut screening studies to ID locations?
- Are we going to address filling in the gaps?
- What water bodies are being covered by other groups?
- What is already being sampled?
- Trend monitoring: for management, being led by regional and local entities, promoting information guidance, SWAMP could fill priority gaps and do reference site monitoring or SWAMP monitoring support.
- Think about comprehensive clean-up plan development
- Atmospheric deposition may be contributing 3 to 5 fold increases in Hg loading and the local and regional parties will not be able to handle this – assessing this source is an example of a statewide information gap that is not likely to be filled by the Regional Boards.
- SWAMP funding is limited and we need to look for partners with other funding sources in order to maintain and continue the BOG.
- We need to think about funding sources but also lay out our goals as a program.
- State who is the audience: the Council, the BOG, SWAMP, EPA, Water Boards, OEHHA, Permit/TMDL, etc.
- Highlight success stories (e.g. organochlorine pesticides are essentially gone)
- The idea of having a workshop on methylmercury in reservoirs to expand workgroup received support. This should be coordinated with the communication team for the TMDL.
- Providing video of public sessions through the web and on the portal would be a good way to share valuable information.
- The group thought that the draft presented was a nice overview and pretty good vision.
- Next steps are to lay out all of the elements, strategically prioritize, and sketch a 10 year timeline
- We need product of value to attract partners. The biotoxin work and access to data are likely to be seen as valuable. We should shop the workshop idea around.
- Would be good to build a matrix listing the recommendations, who's responsible, the priority, and funding status.
- Communication to the public is an important area for improvement.
- These issues cross multiple agencies, state and federal – this will make addressing them a challenge.

Action Items

- Add CEDEN to "access to data"
- Jay needs to think about the proposals to see how they relate with the goals of the BOG

- Jay discuss sequence of steps with State Board staff
- Present the Strategy to the Council in May
- Further develop the Recommendations section in the form of a matrix

Item 5: Next Meeting

- Next BOG meeting on Feb. 9, 2012: focus on the Wildlife Study, BOG Strategy, and 2-year Coastal report
- Have the review panel look at the Wildlife Study plan as well as the 2-year Coastal report.
- Will be getting feedback from the review panel and the rest of the BOG members that will be incorporated into the documents. The final report on Coast Year 2 will be released in May.