Safe to Swim Workgroup

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California State Water Resources Control Board
Safe to Swim Overview

• Accomplishments Review
  – Strategy, objectives, design
  – Indicators and methods
  – Data management
  – Consistency of assessment endpoints
  – Reporting
  – Program sustainability

• Workgroup Needs

• Participants
Program Strategy, Objectives, Design

• The purpose is to coordinate and present the monitoring and assessment of water quality issues affecting swimming safety

• Portal has created web pages to answer many safe to swim questions but -
  – Portal focus on ocean beaches.
  – Freshwater swimming information missing.
  – Data management problems cause information to be out of date.

• Medium
Indicators and Methods

• Consistent state water quality bacteria standards for ocean waters
  • Inconsistent use of fresh water indicators from region to region and even within regions.
  • Plan exists to adopt statewide fresh water indicators through new water quality standards based on EPA criteria.
• QA consistency addressed through SWAMP and AB 411.
• Rapid indicator methods in development.
• Medium
Data Management

• Uneven data quality in BeachWatch with some data duplication and mis-labeling of data.
  – Connectivity poor between BeachWatch and CEDEN.
  – Portal data limited to coastal waters due to data feed from BeachWatch.
  – Recent data currently unavailable in portal.
  – Contract to correct the above and move portal feed from CEDEN,
  – Developing mechanism to obtain coastal data in a more timely manner.

• General lack of access to data generated by citizen monitoring groups.

• Low to Medium
Consistency of Assessment Endpoints

• Inconsistent freshwater bacterial indicator objectives between regions and within regions.
• Plan to correct problem with statewide indicator standards through new rulemaking.
• Some inappropriate use of endpoints in SwimGuide.
• Score card approaches in Heal the Bay's Ocean Beach Report Card and SwimGuide need to be extended to freshwater data.

Low to Medium
Reporting

• Portal has not been updated since it was launched in 2009.

• Delay in receiving lab results due to methods and reporting requirements; new rapid methods may improve timing.

• Delay in getting data into portals; improvements in BeachWatch data structure will help

• Inability to obtain freshwater data in a timely manner.
  – Delays cause NGOs to request data separately from county health officers, increasing inefficiency.

• Portal links to coastal county websites present most timely data.

• Medium
Program Sustainability

• Inconsistent workgroup leadership and commitment from member organizations.
• Coastal monitoring more sustainable due to continued funding.
• Freshwater monitoring,
  – relies on individual regional water board priorities
  – citizen monitoring efforts,
  – no statewide coordination nor consistent funding. – SWAMP funding to be cut?
• Medium
Explicit Workgroup Needs

- Consistent and sustained workgroup leadership and commitment of effort from Water Boards and others.
- Funding for workgroup efforts and portal development.
- Continued funding for monitoring, especially for freshwaters.
- Coordinated statewide freshwater swimming safety monitoring program.
- Improved data management system that includes timely data entry from multiple sources and transfer of data to portal.
- Continued development of smartphone apps to reach public more effectively.
Participation

• Current Participation
  – State Board – OIMA, DWQ, DIT
  – Regional Boards recently
  – NGO – Waterkeepers, Heal the Bay
  – County Environmental Health

• Additional Participation
  – Citizen monitoring groups
  – CA Department of Public Health
Questions

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