

**Delta Mercury Exposure Reduction Program (Delta MERP)
Community Stakeholder Group Meeting Notes**

September 30th, 2015

Asian-Pacific Self Development and Residential Association (APSARA), Stockton

9:30AM-12:00PM

In Attendance:

Name	Organization
Kathryn Kynett	Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy
Laura McLellan	Central Valley Water Board
Sophy Pho	Lao Khmu Association, Inc.
Margy Gassel	Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
Gabriela Pasat	Delta Conservancy/California Department of Public Health
Jeff Boggs	Solano County Resource Management
Hengsothea Ung	APSARA
Seng So	APSARA
Lauren Joe	California Department of Public Health
Alyce Ujihara	California Department of Public Health
Andy Gordus (via webex)	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Rachel McNeil (via webex)	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Susan Klasing (via webex)	Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
Tram Pham (via webex)	Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
Wesley Smith (via webex)	Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment

Introduction and Welcome (APSARA - Sothea Ung)

APSARA stands for the Asian Pacific Self-development and Residential Association. APSARA was formed by Cambodian refugees and is a non-profit organization that provides social services for Cambodian residents in San Joaquin County as well as owns and operates a housing complex where over 1,000 people live. APSARA has assisted with translating Delta MERP materials into Cambodian and is implementing a project through the Delta MERP small grants program. Sothea Ung provided an overview of the history of APSARA, the Cambodian population they serve and the activities APSARA is implementing through Delta MERP.

Delta MERP Updates

- Translation of Delta MERP materials to Chinese, Khmer (Cambodian), Lao, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, Tagalog, and Hmong is set to be complete by early 2016.
- The Delta MERP team is working on a one-page handout with core Delta MERP messages.
- The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has developed an online continuing medical education (CME) course for health care providers to receive education on fish contamination issues. This tool is available at:
<https://cmecalifornia.com/Activity/2780489/Detail.aspx>

- CDPH is working on adapting this course by developing an online tool for those outside of the health care profession. This tool is meant as a training tool for community groups and other non-technical staff. CDPH will be seeking feedback as soon as the tool goes live.
- The Delta MERP team is adapting a 5 minute video developed to raise awareness of fish contamination issues at Lake Nacimiento in San Luis Obispo County by including Cambodian subtitles. The original video is in Hmong with English subtitles. See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILovk4-PfeE>. There is also a version with Lao subtitles. See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PPulfJwjOwo>.

Delta Advisory Sign Development and Posting Update

California Department of Public Health (CDPH)/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy (Conservancy) staff provided an overview of activities that have occurred to support the development of the design for the advisory sign to be posted at locations throughout the Delta. This included an overview of the design elements considered for the sign, the testing and feedback for these elements with fishermen, and the revisions made. Important sign design elements considered include a map, a chemical meter to indicate more or less chemicals in a species of fish, a green fork to indicate safe eating options, a website link on the sign where people can go to find more information, and various designs for categorizing how safe specific fish species are to eat.

Meeting attendees mentioned that, in their experience, not everyone could understand the assignment of fish species to three advice columns. The Delta MERP team will investigate ways to clearly link the species of fish to the advisory messages such as “eat more” or “eat less”. Recommendations included; shading the entire column red, green and yellow; highlighting the species name red, green or yellow to correspond with the column header, and strengthening the lines dividing the columns. Meeting attendees also suggested changing the title of the chemical meter to “mercury level” instead of “mercury”.

Conservancy staff provided an overview of the activities taking place to identify sign posting locations and steps for posting of the signs. Posting of the signs is planned for early 2016 and an assessment of the condition of the signs is planned for 12 to 18 months after posting. There are hundreds of different potential locations for posting throughout the legal Delta which include wildlife areas and water access locations such as boat launches, piers and fishing locations. The Conservancy is currently reviewing a sign posting database used for posting advisory signs in the past and identifying key locations with input from the Community Stakeholder Group and others (e.g., counties, Delta Protection Commission, State Lands Commission, parks, etc.). The number of locations selected will depend on the number of signs printed and the number of signs posted at each location. The Conservancy will coordinate obtaining permissions and approvals where needed for each site, and the Delta MERP team will provide the signs and materials required to post. Currently, the Delta MERP teams plans on posting 100 to 150 signs. The next step is to incorporate local knowledge to add relevant locations to the list and request help from local partners to help with posting.

Sothea (APSARA) said that he can identify people to help with posting in Stockton and San Joaquin County. He commented that more signs will be better and he will ask community members about the location of popular access spots.

Sothea also commented that stores that provide fishing licenses would be good locations for posting signs or disseminating information. Big Five and Walmart are the most popular places that he knows of. He also suggested other materials that may get the word out on advisories, such as a smaller sign or stickers. Kathryn said she is seeking input from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife on disseminating information through locations that provide fishing licenses.

Alyce (CDPH) commented that more than 150 signs (the current amount we are planning to produce) may be needed if we plan on posting 100 sites, as some locations will require multiple signs.

Who lives in the Delta? An Overview of Characteristics Collected by the US Census

CDPH staff presented a Delta MERP project to summarize demographic information about Delta populations from US Census data. Lauren provided an overview of her methods and preliminary results. The US Census Bureau reports information by census tracts which are geographic boundaries designed to collect information for the census. Lauren has matched the most relevant census tracts for the Delta area and extracted information about demographics, such as population age, ethnicity, language spoken at home, birth place (in US or not), and poverty status. This information is meant to inform outreach for Delta MERP. The Delta MERP team is seeking input on what should be the final result of this effort—for example the project could result in a report summarizing demographic information for the Delta region. The Delta MERP team is interested in an open and continuing dialogue about how these results could be used.

Findings and Opportunities from an Analysis of Fish Contamination Issues Coverage in the Written Media

Media record analysis is an essential component of the public health evaluation toolkit. It is used to tailor intervention activities and to gauge the impact of media efforts conducted as a part of an intervention. Local media activity can reflect the public opinion on a certain public health issue, it can help identify potential allies and champions as well as opponents and can help shape other media activities. CDPH and the Conservancy presented the results of an analysis of the coverage of Delta fish contamination uses in the written media. Articles published in local newspapers in the five Delta counties between June 2013-July 2015 were examined, and an analysis of the findings was generated, which included the number of articles covering the issue, what events prompted the articles, what other related issues are being covered, what are the main themes and arguments presented on the various sides of the issue, who is reporting, who are the spokespersons, are any solutions presented, who is names as having responsibility for solving the problem, what facts/perspectives/stories can help improve the case, and what is missing from the news coverage of the issue. Media advocacy focuses on the environmental context for health outcomes and the strategic use of mass media has been traditionally employed by community advocates to create targeted support for the adoption of interventions that promote structural change. The Delta MERP team recommended that community groups use this effective tool to advance their social and public health work, in the context of the issues that affect their communities. The Delta MERP team is interested in input from the community on how the program can assist their media efforts and how to incorporate the findings from the media record analysis into the approach that Delta MERP uses to communicate important health messages about fish contamination in the Delta.

Questions/Comments:

Suggestions for the demographic project (Who lives in the Delta?):

- Include a map showing the percentage of the population that are women and children (vulnerable populations for mercury in fish)
- Include a comparison of Delta statistics to counties that intersect the Delta area
- Provide more statistics on: specific languages spoken at home, Asian subgroups, other significant subgroups in the Delta

Attendees expressed an interest in receiving training on how to work with media. They notes that their audiences access social media sites like facebook and youtube, in addition to news sites and traditional media, which would warrant a separate discussion and strategic planning on how to best reach those audiences. It was also suggested that Delta MERP can use what was learned from the media record analysis to plan for media-related activities around the release of the Delta advisory sign in 2016.

A key chain tag was suggested as a potential item that would help to grab attention and direct the community to Delta MERP information.