

CONSERVATION WORKING GROUP
MINUTES OF JANUARY 21, 2003 MEETING

Attendance: Jack Wickham (SC), K. Gaffney (TOC), John Fisher, V.Nichols , F. O'Neill, Carol Maehr (ACS), Meredith Lopuch & Mike Osmond (WWF), Steve Shimek (OP), Peggy McNutt (TNC), Holly Price (MBNMS), Cecil Wahle (League of Women Voters), Harriet Mitteldorf, Kathy Fosmark (Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries).

Announcements:

- The USFW Recovery Plan for the Southern Sea Otter, expected out in Jan. 2003, has been delayed again. The Otter Project is circulating letters to USFW and Sam Farr is circulating a letter to coastal legislators supporting release of the plan.
- Fishing organizations have filed lawsuits challenging the gillnet closure implemented by CDFG last year as well as the Channel Islands marine reserves regulations.

Sanctuary Report:

- Holly reported that the Sanctuary has been involved in a number of emergency responses issues in the past month including emergency permits for shoreline protection, tarballs, a 100,000 gallon sewage spill (in Capitola).
- The First Flush data suggest much higher contamination levels than in previous years.
- CWG members questioned the stormdrain system at Fort Ord. Holly agreed to have staff look into this issue and report back to the CWG.
- Holly announced that the Sanctuary hired a new Water Quality Protection Program Director, Chris Coburn as well as a new enforcement officer.
- Holly noted that the Celebrity *Mercury* (cruise ship) that is visiting Monterey 13 times in 2003 has an advanced wastewater treatment system on board raising questions about whether it should be required to comply with the no discharge policies adopted by the City of Monterey and Sanctuary.

Sanctuary Currents Award

- Kaitilin Gaffney was nominated for the Conservation Award and Point Reyes Bird Observatory was nominated for the Organizational Award.

Oil Tanker Memo to SAC

- The CWG discussed a recent incident wherein a hull damaged oil tanker transited Sanctuary waters en route from Long Beach to Port Angeles for repair.
- The CWG agreed to send a memo to the SAC suggesting that the SAC write to the Coast Guard and the Technical Advisory Committee seeking improved notification of such incidents and consideration of a protocol for addressing the risks posed in similar situations.

Updates

- Vicki gave an update on the Pew Commission's release of a Marine Reserves Report in San Mateo last week. This report and others are available at the Pew Commission's website.
- JMPR- workgroups have begun meeting. CWG members serving on workgroups will provide brief updates and seek group input at future CWG meetings.
- Cruise Ship Discharges- the SAC will be considering a cruise ship discharge regulation at its Feb. 7th meeting. CWG members were encouraged to attend and express their views. Vicki urged Kathy Fosmark to encourage the fishing community to support this water quality effort.

Invasive Species

- The CWG discussed the framework for addressing invasive species in the coming months. This issue will be addressed from 11 am –1 pm at the February, March and April CWG meetings. Kaitilin will invite representatives from the harbors, the Slough, MLML, the MB Aquarium and Dave Ebert to participate in the working group.
- Working with Senator McPherson's office, SOS has submitted a spot bill on invasive species issues.