



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION I
5 POST OFFICE SQUARE
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02114-2023

Memorandum

To: New Bedford Harbor Site File

From: Kelsey O'Neil

Date: September 2016

Subject: 2015 Outreach Coordinator Data

This memorandum is meant to provide background and present results on EPA's community outreach efforts following the 2015 Community Involvement Plan (CIP) and Seafood Consumption Institutional Control Plan (Seafood IC Plan), specifically regarding the operation of the Outreach Coordinator Program. The 2015 CIP and Seafood IC Plan outlined an action plan in response to recommendations from community interviews regarding EPA outreach. The goal of the action plan for the Seafood IC Plan was to define a variety of creative ways EPA could communicate the seafood consumption recommendations to the broad public.

EPA's seafood consumption recommendations are based on site specific risk information and use conservative (health-protective) assumptions and will protect the public, including sensitive populations, from health concerns if followed. There is a total ban on fishing and shellfishing in place for Fish Closure Area 1, the area north of the hurricane barrier. Therefore, no fish or shellfish should be consumed from Fish Closure Area 1. EPA believes it is also important that recreational fishermen and shell-fishermen be aware that the risk assessment states that: consumption of black sea bass be limited to one meal per month if they are obtained in Fish Closure Areas 2 and 3; that scup not be consumed from Areas 2 or 3; and that general guidelines for shellfish include limiting consumption to one meal a month in Area 2 (one meal per week in Clark's Cove). **Pregnant women, nursing mothers, children under age 12, and women who may become pregnant** should not eat fish, shellfish or lobster caught in Closure Area 2 and should not eat fish or lobster caught in Area 3. They can safely eat one, and only one, meal per month of shellfish caught in Area 3. See link to map of Fish Closure Areas and a more complete listing of EPA and DEP fish consumption regulations and recommendations.
<https://www.epa.gov/new-bedford-harbor/fish-consumption-regulations-and-recommendations>

In 2015, through a cooperative agreement with the City of New Bedford, EPA began collaborating with the City to address outreach in response to the CIP. The City then worked with the Community Economic Development Center (CEDC) to hire three local, bi-lingual,

residents to perform outreach activities and communicate EPA's seafood consumption message to the public, particularly area residents fishing in the harbor. On July 9, 2015, EPA provided an orientation for the Outreach Coordinators, which included background on the Site history, seafood consumption risks, and directives for their work. Originally, EPA had planned to translate all public outreach materials related to seafood consumption into Spanish, Portuguese, and K'iche. Based on involvement with the community and CEDC, EPA concluded that, while K'iche is a commonly spoken language, it is not written often, if at all. For this reason, EPA translated materials only into Spanish and Portuguese. K'iche was the native language of one of the Coordinators. Copies of the 2015 outreach materials in English, Spanish and Portuguese are attached.

EPA designed two forms for the Coordinators to use to document their efforts and collect data. Copies of the forms are attached. The coordinators were directed to cover territory from Wood Street in the north end of the City to Ricketson point, outside of the hurricane barrier in the south end of the City. Hours spent at each location were recorded and reported to CEDC, who oversaw the time keeping and was responsible for accountability. When individuals were willing to speak with them, coordinators collected information on how often individuals were fishing, how regularly they consume the fish they catch, and if they had concerns about consuming seafood from the harbor.

Results:

From mid-July through late September, the outreach coordinators collected data and distributed EPA fact sheets. Data from the information collected by the Outreach Coordinators are outlined below.

- Recorded 70 visits to 15 different locations.
 - 40 visits were inside of the hurricane barrier in Fish Closure Area 1.
 - 30 visits were outside of the hurricane barrier in Fish Closure Area 2.
- Observed 230 people fishing
- Spoke with 178 individuals
- Distributed 243 EPA fact sheets.
- 73 people answered the question "do you consume the fish you catch?"
 - 62 reported yes, 11 reported no.
- Data showed a wide variety of fish were being caught in the harbor including: scup, tautog, blue fish, striper, and sea bass.
- Of the 73 questionnaires completed, not one individual reported collecting or consuming shellfish. The questionnaires were completed by line fishermen, the outreach coordinators did not speak to anyone shell fishing in the area. This data is not conclusive or indicative of whether shellfish is or is not consumed in these areas.
- Of the 59 individuals who responded to the question "How often do you consume the fish you catch?"
 - 1 reported daily
 - 18 reported once a week
 - 21 reported 2-3 times a week

- 8 reported once a month
 - 1 response came from individuals fishing inside the hurricane barrier
- 8 reported twice a month
 - 2 responses came from individuals fishing inside the hurricane barrier
- 2 reported bi-monthly
 - 3 responses came from individuals fishing inside the hurricane barrier
- 1 reported 3 times annually

Recommendations:

Using the data from 2015, EPA will focus on ways to improve the work of the outreach coordinators and further determine where seafood is being caught and/or consumed. Based on the results from the 2015 outreach campaign, the EPA team proposes the following recommendations to improve the materials and directives for the 2016 season.

- EPA will work with the outreach coordinators to ensure that all areas of the harbor, specifically inside Area 1, are being covered. Provide specific directives on where visits should take place and require visits at a variety of locations to ensure data is geographically comprehensive.
- Streamline the questions to ensure the responses are to the questions we want to be asking. Example: question of fish consumption, be clear it is fish FROM THE HARBOR, not just fish being consumed.
- In order to ensure the accuracy of the data, EPA will work closely and more regularly with outreach coordinators. Collecting and analyzing the data from the coordinators on a more regular basis will allow EPA staff to ensure geographic territory is being covered as directed and the progress of the outreach coordinators is being measured appropriately.

Conclusion:

This was EPA's first year employing seafood outreach coordinators and, overall, we feel that the program was successful. The coordinators distributed 243 of EPA's seafood consumption fact sheets to the public, the majority to people that were fishing in the Fish Closure Areas. The effort confirmed that members of the public are consuming fish from both fish closure Area 1 and Area 2 and are consuming species of fish which are restricted for consumption. The data collected supports the need for continued education and outreach on the seafood consumption advisories and recommendations. EPA believes that using local residents as coordinators was effective. These residents know the areas well, speak multiple languages, and are generally well received by the public.