

Strategic Plan for Reduction of Mercury Risk Delta Tributaries Mercury Council

Focus on Mercury:

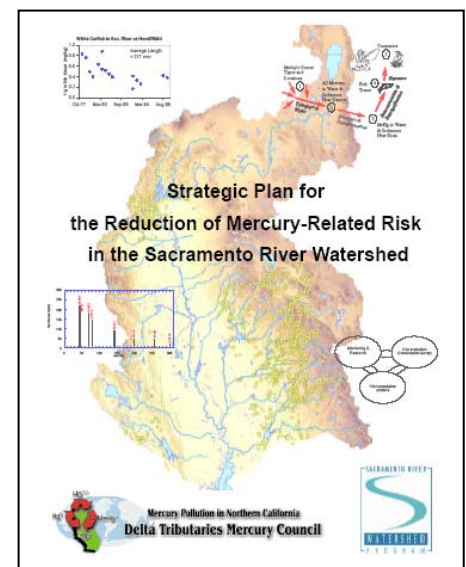
Concerns about mercury stem from the potential toxic affects of methylmercury to humans and wildlife. Exposure to methylmercury comes largely from eating fish and shellfish that have accumulated this toxic substance through the food that organism eats. Methylmercury is linked to developmental problems in fetuses and children and to nervous system effects in adults. Similar affects have been seen in wildlife.

Mercury occurs naturally within the Sacramento River watershed and enters waterways from soil erosion and geothermal springs. Cinnabar ore was mined in the Coast Ranges and processed to obtain elemental mercury. This liquid form was transported to the Sierra Nevada where it was used extensively in gold mining activities. Contaminated mine sites and downstream waterways are a legacy source of mercury in the area. Other sources within the watershed include: the atmosphere (from various emissions), urban runoff, and discharges of treated municipal and industrial wastewater.

Recommendations of the Delta Tributaries Mercury Council's Strategic Plan for the Reduction of Mercury-related Risk in the Sacramento River watershed:

The Delta Tributaries Mercury Council (DTMC) released in December 2002 a Strategic Plan to reduce the risk of mercury within the Sacramento River watershed. The recommendations in the Plan are based on a compilation and synthesis of the best available information on mercury behavior in the environment. The primary recommendations are:

- Identify appropriate areas for and types of pilot remediation projects,
- Develop a modeling framework for incorporating quantified relationships, assessing monitoring data, and improving predictive ability,
- Design and implement monitoring to assess local and regional effect of pilot projects and to support models,
- Design and perform research projects to reduce uncertainties in the linkage analysis and to improve models and stay informed of and coordinate with other ongoing research projects,
- Develop and implement an outreach program to collect additional fish consumption information and to inform and educate affected people regarding mercury risks in the short term, and
- Continuously plan and evaluate progress.



About the DTMC:

The DTMC is a stakeholder group that formed in 1998 to provide a forum for the presentation and discussion of mercury issues within the Sacramento River watershed and larger CALFED project area [define?]. Participation includes state, local and federal resource and regulatory agencies; local watershed groups; industry representatives; university scientists; water agencies; county public works and planning staff; environmental consultants; and landowners. A goal of the group is to develop and implement a Strategic Plan for the control of mercury.

The DTMC received funding from the Sacramento River Watershed Program to develop this Strategic Plan. For more information about the Strategic Plan or the DTMC, visit our Website at www.sacrriver.org/dtmc .