

# **Mark Gold, Heal the Bay**

## **2006-07 Stanton Fellowship Summary**

### **Project overview**

The goal of the project was to develop a mechanism to provide Heal the Bay's expertise to government agencies and community-based organizations. A major component of the project was to complete a business plan for the program, but the plan won't be finalized until May 2008. Heal the Bay retained TC Hoffmann and Associates to complete the business plan for the program. Business plan development includes three phases: market research with a focus on a survey of numerous NGOs and potential funders; analysis of survey results; and completion of the final business plan. Senior staff, including Heal the Bay's Executive Director, Senior Staff Scientist, and our Executive Assistant are all now working on the project.

Among the questions that will be answered in the plan are: 1) What is the appropriate structure for the endeavor? Should it be within HtB or independent of HtB 2) Who is the appropriate market for the service? Ideally, we'd like to split our services equally between CBOs and government agencies. 3) If CBOs can't pay for expertise, will foundations be willing to fund HtB's efforts?

To date, Heal the Bay has answered a number of pertinent questions. There is no question that there is a wide market in the government sector for our professional services. As stated below, we have greatly expanded our efforts to provide technical expertise to government agencies on a wide variety of projects. Also, staff has determined that the range of services potentially provided will be limited to providing expertise on coastal pollution – especially beaches and stormwater, watershed assessment, and environmental education.

The following is a summary of projects that HtB's been working on that fit under the project goals.

### **Education and the Environment Initiative**

The EEI curriculum development process is proceeding near the scheduled pace. Each unit of draft curricula will be reviewed by Heal the Bay, teachers and professional editors. National Geographic has provided photos and maps for the units as well as substantial environmental education video. A number of the draft curricula are currently getting field tested in school districts, and feedback will be used to modify the curricula. The ambitious goal is to finish 150 units by the end of 2008. From there, the units would go to the State Department of Education Curriculum Commission for final approval.

There are still a number of enormous challenges for the EEI and for Heal the Bay. One immediate need is for National Geographic to take a more aggressive content

review and graphic design role in the process. Another urgent need for Heal the Bay is more funding. Although we received a three year \$150K grant from Edison International to review units, this is not adequate for the time spent by Heal the Bay. The biggest challenge may be getting sustainable funding for the State of California to implement the EEI. Surprisingly, we've received no significant interest from the foundation community despite numerous approaches to a number of foundations.

### **Scientific Advisory Committee**

I have taken a different strategy on this task than originally proposed. I'm a member of the California Ocean Science Trust (Cal-OST), which provides technical expertise to the California Oceans Protection Council. Currently, the Trust is working with the OPC to create a Scientific Advisory Board that will include 12 to 15 of the leading coastal scientists in California. Additionally, our hope is to create a registry of scientists in California that are working on ocean science issues. I chaired the Cal-OST committee on creating the scientific advisory board and we set the criteria for eligibility. Applications are currently being reviewed. In essence, one of my major goals is being implemented as a larger process through the OPC and Cal-OST.

### **Beaches**

Heal the Bay's work on beaches continues to expand:

- 1) We partnered with the Southern California Coastal Waters Research Project (SCCWRP), UC Berkeley and others to complete a multi-year epidemiology study on people who swim in the runoff contaminated waters of Doheny Beach and Malibu Surfrider Beach.
- 2) We initiated another epidemiology study at Avalon on Catalina. The USEPA paid for us to complete this study. Although the study went extremely well from the standpoint of water quality results (highly variable), we were unable to interview enough subjects to complete the study. We will likely continue the study this summer.
- 3) Our source identification study with SCCWRP for Los Angeles County on two polluted watersheds in Malibu: Ramirez and Escondido Canyons was stopped after 6 weeks because of lack of flow. We will continue this effort early this spring.
- 4) Confidentially, I continue to serve as a technical expert to the NRDC on litigation against the EPA for their failure to develop national beach water quality criteria by the deadline in the Federal BEACH Act. The case is headed to trial this April.
- 5) Heal the Bay was successful in convincing the State Water Board to fund time for experts to help coastal cities and counties create effective project proposals for the California Clean Beach Initiative: over \$100 million allocated to clean up the state's most polluted beaches. I have provided expertise on a number of Southern California beaches, but have not charged for my expertise on these issues because

the amount of time spent on each project didn't merit it. This may change in the near future.

### **Stormwater**

Heal the Bay signed an MOU with the City and County of Los Angeles and a contract with Geosyntec (a consulting firm) to manage a \$330,000 project to develop a quantitative watershed management tool for the Ballona Creek watershed. The tool would allow cities to determine what clean-up technologies are needed to reduce stormwater pollution enough to meet water quality standards. The project is ongoing and has resulted in work product that could be incredibly useful for getting cities, developers and industries to implement treatment devices designed to meet numeric performance and design storm criteria.

The last two years have demonstrated that government agencies are eager to pay Heal the Bay market rates for its work on a wide variety of coastal pollution projects. There is no question that the organization can continue to provide these services in a manner that focuses on projects that are beneficial to the goals and mission of Heal the Bay. The business plan will provide information on whether or not NGOs can use and pay for Heal the Bay's technical expertise, and if foundations are willing to fund NGOs for our expertise on specific projects.