



Sustainable Seafood Educational Wall

World Ocean Network
Interim Report

Summary

Management of the Sustainable Seafood Educational Wall is on track. Consultation on the development of the wall amongst internal stakeholders has been conducted, a critical path for implementation of the project has been determined and educational messaging has been finalized.

The next steps towards the completion of the Sustainable Seafood Educational Wall are to finalize graphic design and image placement and installation of the panels on the physical wall structure. The Wall will be launched in concert with a sustainable seafood event as part of our Ocean Wise program on World Ocean Day (June 8th, 2007).

Introduction

The Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre is a self-supporting, non-profit association dedicated to effecting the conservation of aquatic life through display and interpretation, education, research and direct action. Our vision is to be the world's most effective and well-recognized practitioner of aquatic conservation education and to effect conservation through strategically devised educational projects, products and experiences.

The Vancouver Aquarium champions Ocean Wise, a conservation program committed to raising awareness amongst restaurants, retail outlets and consumers about sustainable seafood to help make sure ocean resources are harvested and consumed in a way that ensures a future for marine species. Working closely with restaurants, retail operators, culinary schools and others, Ocean Wise helps its partners to shape their menus and product lists over time to reflect sustainable seafood choices.

With support from the World Ocean Network's Sustainable Actions Grant Committee we proposed to design and construct an Educational Wall adjacent to the Aquarium's high traffic Upstream Café that with the aim of raising public awareness about sustainable seafood and showcasing the Aquarium's highly successful Ocean Wise program. The educational display is also intended to communicate other conservation initiatives spearheaded by the Aquarium's Food Services department, including the transition to biodegradable packaging, the use of organic and local foods and the adoption of an environmental management system.

Statement of Problem

The world's marine life is quickly being depleted. An estimated 90% of all large, predatory fish are gone from the oceans and scientists warn that if we do not change our seafood choices today, many more species will be lost. Further, many marine species consumed as seafood are harvested in environmentally harmful ways, causing habitat degradation and contributing to bycatch and overfishing.

With this in mind, Ocean Wise aims to enhance the sustainability of local fisheries and works to ensure that ocean resources are harvested and consumed in an environmentally benign way. This is achieved by appealing to consumer purchasing power. Ocean Wise harnesses supply-demand forces, driving the market towards less harmful fishing practices.

Ocean Wise does this in partnership with the local food community. Restaurants, retail operators and culinary schools that participate in the program shape their menus and product lists to match Ocean Wise recommendations.

With inadequate labeling and scant product information the norm, it can be unreasonable to expect the average consumer to know the conservation status of a given seafood item or to understand the environmental implications of the way it is harvested. Ocean Wise takes away the guesswork with a reliable, reputable eco-label that is instantly recognized and appreciated by consumers. As well as empowering consumers to make informed choices,

Ocean Wise also works with the food community to create market opportunities associated with sustainable seafood.

Ocean Wise is working to make sustainability profitable and popular. This will only succeed, however, if the message is communicated to as wide an audience as possible. The Sustainable Seafood Educational Wall will help to share the message by targeting the nearly 1 million people who visit the Aquarium every year.

Expectations

The primary objective of the Sustainable Seafood Educational Wall is to communicate the message about Ocean Wise and other food-related sustainability initiatives spearheaded by the Vancouver Aquarium. By doing this, it will help to promote Ocean Wise to the public and increase recognition of the Ocean Wise brand/logo.

More specifically, Ocean Wise has the following goals:

- To enhance the sustainability of West Coast fisheries and to ensure that ocean resources are harvested and consumed in an environmentally benign way that does not contribute to habitat degradation, bycatch or overfishing.
- To increase the number of partners and other supporters that are committed to continuous improvement over time and that are actively shaping their menus and product lists towards full Ocean Wise certification.
- To create a community of Ocean Wise participants who are educated and passionate about sustainable seafood and who strive to make the West Coast, and specifically Vancouver, a world leader in the sustainable seafood movement.

List of Participants

Ocean Wise partners with 46 restaurants, 1 market retailer and 1 culinary school and the number is increasing all the time (Attachment 1: List of Ocean Wise participants). Ocean Wise also works in partnership with the Monterey Bay Aquarium's 'Seafood Watch' program to ensure that the designation of seafood species as sustainable is based on best-practice scientific research.

Ocean Wise shares information and collaborates where appropriate with other environmental NGOs working to promote sustainable seafood (such as the David Suzuki Foundation). Further, the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation is proposing to partner with Ocean Wise by asserting that all concessions serve only Ocean Wise approved sustainable seafood.

The Vancouver Aquarium Food Services department also partners with Biodegradable Solutions, JJ Bean and the Sustainability Purchasing Network to source biodegradable, recycled and other environmentally friendly packaging and product alternatives.

Budget and Justification

The key expense for the Sustainable Seafood Educational Wall is the design and mounting of 6-8 panels on the wall adjacent to the Aquarium's Upstream Café. The panels will feature graphics and messaging related to sustainable seafood, Ocean Wise and other environmental initiatives championed by the Food Services department.

Budget	Total
Graphics panels (design & mounting) – 8 x \$720	\$5,760
TOTAL EXPENSES (USD)	\$5,760
WON Sustainable Actions Committee Grant	\$2,500
Net Revenue (Deficit)	(\$3,260)

The World Ocean Network Sustainable Action Grant will not cover the full cost of installing the educational and graphics panels on the Sustainable Seafood Educational Wall. A list of other prospective contributors has been developed, which includes foundations and local business interests.

Potential for Large Scale Implementation

The objective of Ocean Wise is to create a sustainable market for sustainable seafood. This is achieved by addressing both supply and demand, which over time will stabilize and the need for program interventions will reduce. Further, Ocean Wise educates key stakeholders in the seafood industry about the importance of sustainability and the potential market opportunities associated with sustainable seafood. In this way, Ocean Wise is working to make sustainability profitable and popular, which will ensure the environmental benefits continue long after the project work is completed.

The Sustainable Seafood Educational Wall will help to communicate the message about Ocean Wise and sustainable, healthy eating. By sharing the message and promoting the Vancouver Aquarium's initiatives in this regard, there is the potential for widespread adoption of sustainable seafood (and other) eating practices and the potential for large scale implementation of this and other similar programs elsewhere.

Management of the Project

The management of the Sustainable Seafood Educational Wall project, including design, production, installation and launch, is collaborative. The internal stakeholders include:

- Education.
- Marketing.
- Design.
- Conservation.
- Food services.

An extensive internal consultation process characterizes this project. Given that the Sustainable Seafood Educational Wall will be a semi-permanent structure exhibiting conservation and education messages, it is critical that everyone with a stake in the project is involved in development through to implementation.

Philippe Antes, Manager of Food Service Operating Systems, is managing the project.

Progress Towards Major Objectives

The management of the project is on track. After funding was secured from World Ocean Network, the project was approved internally and authorized to start. One further application was submitted to an external funding body, as the funding secured from World Ocean Network does not cover the full cost of the project. This application is still pending.

Internal management procedures were initiated, including an extensive stakeholder consultation process to ensure the involvement of all relevant individuals and departments. As part of this, responsibilities were delegated, internal deadlines were set and a critical path was determined.

The educational messaging has been finalized and approved, and the project is now with the Design department, where the text will be designed to fit into panels and images will be selected. The panels will be adapted to fit into the original concept sketch and to integrate with the physical wall, which has already been installed. The deadline for finalizing content and graphic design is May 18th 2007.

The panels will be mounted at the end of May (exact date to be determined).

The Sustainable Seafood Educational Wall will be launched on World Ocean Day on June 8, 2007 in combination with a sustainable seafood celebratory event that will welcome new restaurant and retail partners to the Ocean Wise program.