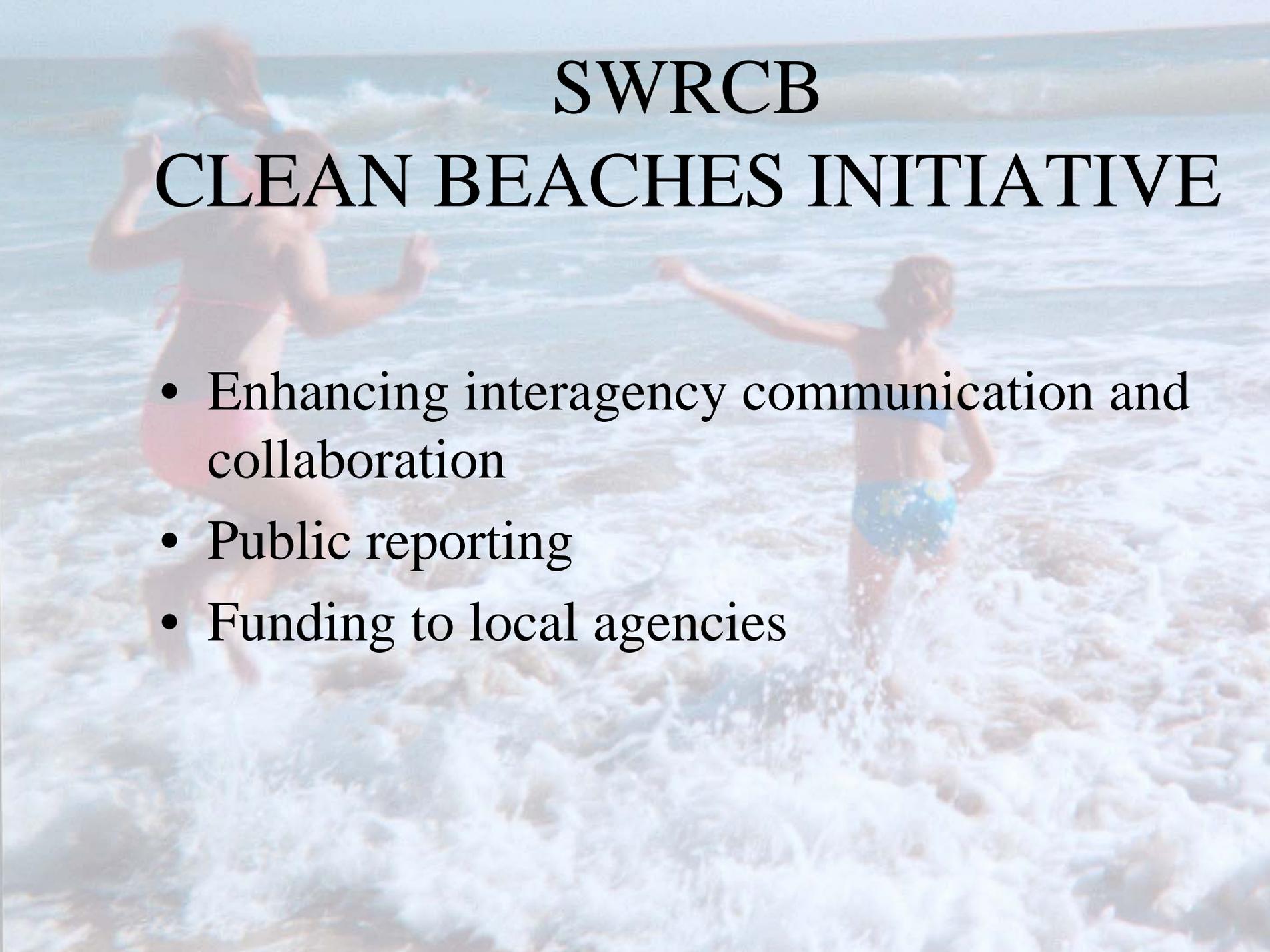


THE VALUE OF COLLABORATION FOR  
STATEWIDE DECISION MAKING:  
BEACH WATER QUALITY WORKGROUP

Robin McCraw  
California State Water Resources  
Control Board

A background image showing two children playing in the ocean waves. The child on the left is wearing a pink bikini and has their arms raised. The child on the right is wearing a blue bikini and has one arm raised. The water is white with foam from the waves.

# SWRCB CLEAN BEACHES INITIATIVE

- Enhancing interagency communication and collaboration
- Public reporting
- Funding to local agencies

# The Beach Water Quality Workgroup

A collaborative Workgroup formed in 1998 to coordinate beach water quality related monitoring, pollution abatement, public education, and public notification efforts.



# BWQW participants include staff from the following agencies:

- Local Departments of Environmental Health
- Local Public Works Departments
- Local Flood Control Agencies
- Local Sanitation Districts
- Universities (UCLA, USC, UCI, Scripps Institute of Oceanography)
- State agencies: Waterboards, Coastal Commission, Health Services
- Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission
- Surfrider Foundation
- Heal the Bay
- Southern California Coastal Water Research Project

# **TOP PRIORITY RESEARCH AREAS**

- 1. RAPID INDICATORS**
- 2. NEW INDICATORS**
- 3. EPIDEMIOLOGY STUDIES**
- 4. SOURCE TRACKING TOOLS**
- 5. NATIONAL RANKING OF MONITORING PROGRAMS**
- 6. BACTERIAL FATE & TRANSPORT**

# BEACH WATER QUALITY WORKGROUP

- Standardized data reporting, signage, and posting and closure protocols
- Developed Model Shoreline Microbiological Monitoring Program
- Developed Guidance for Clean Water Act Section 303(d) listing of coastal waters contaminated by indicator bacteria
- **Reviewed existing monitoring and public notification practices and provided collaborative recommendations for improvements**

# What would we want to know?



- Public health risk.  
What is the water quality now?
- Public information.  
What has it been lately?

# Review Monitoring and Public Notification Practices

- Examine existing monitoring program mandated by AB 411 law
- Review monitoring programs conducted by local agencies
- Review latest scientific findings
- Analyze historic monitoring data
- Incorporate 6 years of experience of public agencies implementing AB411

# Improved Monitoring and Public Notification

## Health Risk

Over- and under-protection of posted beaches

## Public Information

Need for additional information about beach water quality in general

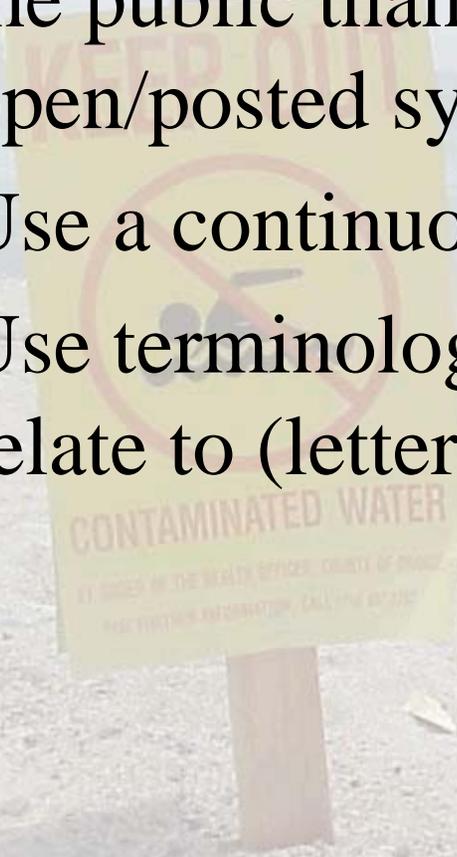


# Three Distinct Beach Types

1. Beaches with stormdrain discharges (AB411 beaches)
  - Characterization study
  - Post affected area
2. Open coastal beaches
  - Confirmation of exceedance
3. Beaches in enclosed bays and harbors
  - Each one unique
  - Predictive model

# Better Public Information

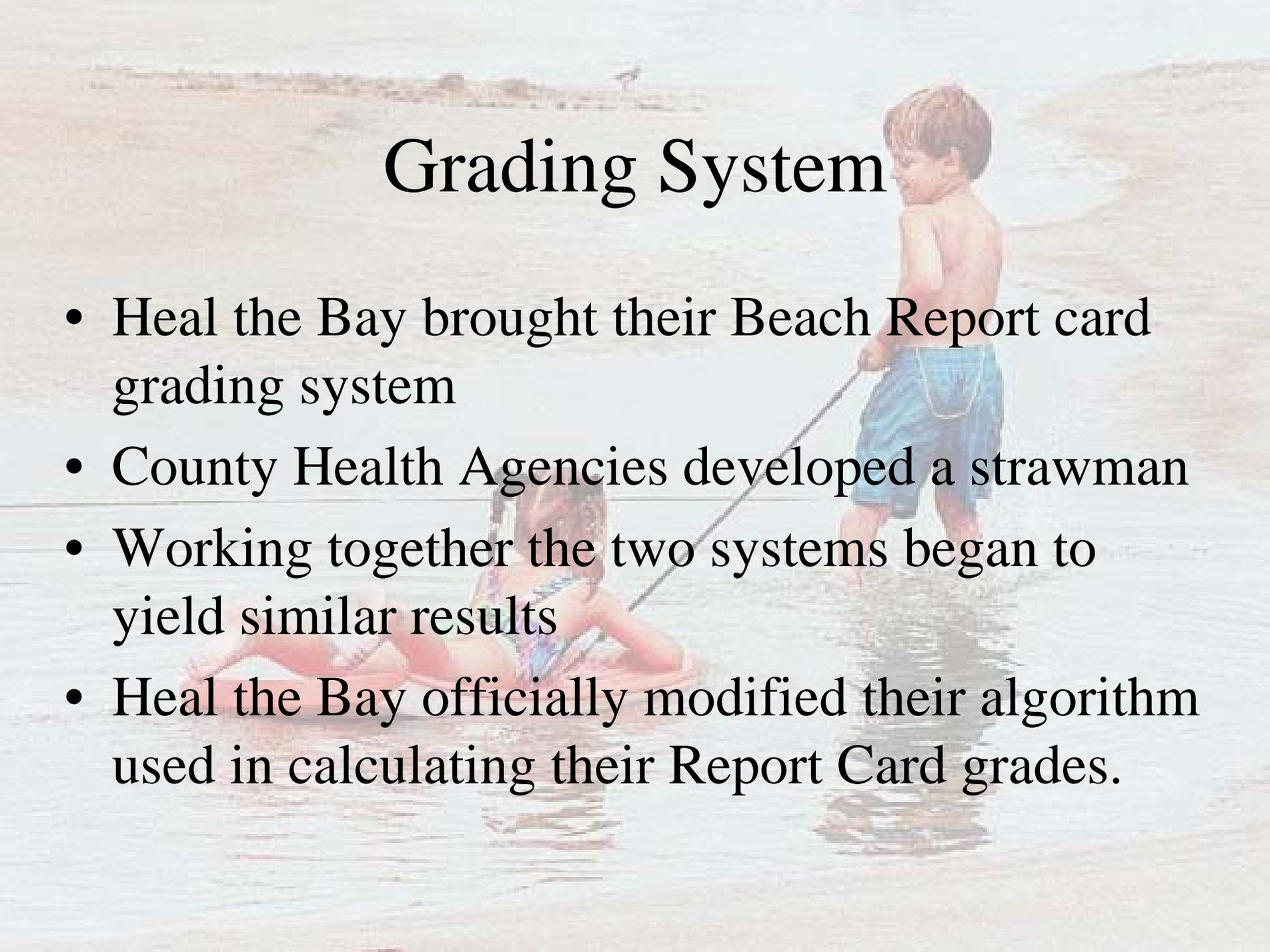
- Provide more useful information to the public than the current open/posted system
- Use a continuous scale
- Use terminology the public can relate to (letter grade)



CONTAMINATED WATER

IN CASE OF THE HEALTH OFFICE, COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CALL THE OFFICE

# Grading System

A young boy in blue shorts is wading in shallow water, holding a long pole. In the foreground, a girl in a swimsuit is sitting in the water. The background shows a sandy beach and a clear sky.

- Heal the Bay brought their Beach Report card grading system
- County Health Agencies developed a strawman
- Working together the two systems began to yield similar results
- Heal the Bay officially modified their algorithm used in calculating their Report Card grades.

# The BWQW recommendations were:

- Change current monitoring practices to reduce chances of over- & under- protection providing more accurate and reliable information regarding health risk.
- Endorse Heal the Bay's revised Beach Report Card to provide the public information component of notification.



# Collaboration

**By working together with local, regional, and state groups the BWQW:**

- Has become a driving force for development of better public health protection tools**
- Works to develop consistent monitoring and reporting protocols throughout California**
- Has become an effective group regarding beach issues that cut across agencies and jurisdictions**