
State Water Resources Control Board

NOTICE OF PUBLIC WORKSHOP

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) Will Hold a Public Workshop for Staff to Present an Overview of the Scientific Basis for a Proposed Statewide Policy for Biological Objectives in Perennial Streams.

The **Public Workshop** will be held:

Wednesday, January 23, 2013 – 9:00 a.m.

**Coastal Hearing Room (2nd Floor)
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814**

SUBJECT OF WORKSHOP

State Water Board staff will present an overview of the technical tools that utilize benthic macroinvertebrates as indicators of biological integrity of waters which affect their use. To ensure a productive and efficient public workshop, the discussion will focus on the scientific basis for developing biological objectives, which will include discussion on the definition of reference biological condition, the models used to compare site condition to reference condition, the process for investigating possible causes of degraded biological condition, and the process used to obtain external scientific review and input. The workshop discussion is not intended to focus on policy questions or implementation.

A quorum of State Water Board members may be present at the workshop and may provide input, pose questions, or provide direction to staff, but will not take action. The public may review and comment on the technical presentations delivered to the Scientific Advisory Group and the Group's responses (see below) that will be the subject of the workshop discussion. Written documentation of the technical work currently is being prepared. The public will have an opportunity to comment on the written documents as they are released beginning in February 2013. There is no draft policy developed at this time. The availability for public review and comment of any draft policy will occur at a later date with proper notice.

BACKGROUND

Aquatic life health is an essential component of water quality. This is recognized by the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. § 1251 et seq.), commonly known as the Clean Water Act, and the state Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Water Code § 13000 et seq.), both of which describe water quality in terms of the biological, chemical and physical characteristics of water. Historically, the State and Regional Water Boards have focused on attainment of chemical water quality objectives, yet after 40 years of water quality regulation in California, streams continue to have degraded biological communities. To improve protection of aquatic life beneficial uses, State Water Board staff proposes to develop a statewide biological objectives policy for perennial wadeable streams. The proposed objectives would describe how benthic macroinvertebrates (small, bottom dwelling organisms that are typically insect larvae) will be used as indicators of biological integrity. Over the past two years, staff has been working with teams of scientists, regulators, and stakeholders to develop and refine the technical tools needed to support the proposed objectives. Biological objectives and implementation measures have not yet been developed. That work is scheduled to be completed the beginning of calendar year 2013.

AVAILABILITY OF TECHNICAL PRESENTATIONS

Since October 2010, staff has held five Scientific Advisory Group meetings to present the technical work that will be the basis for the new biological objectives policy. At each of those meetings, the Scientific Advisory Group provided feedback in presentation form. All of the presentations delivered to the Scientific Advisory Group and the Group's responses are available via the Internet on the State Water Board Web site at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/plans_policies/biological_objective.shtml#scientific

SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN COMMENTS

The State Water Board encourages interested parties and persons to submit their comments in writing. Comment letters regarding the workshop topics **must be received by 12:00 noon on February 25, 2013**. Please send comment letters to Jeanine Townsend, Clerk to the Board, by email: commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov (15 megabytes, or less, in size); by fax: (916) 341-5620; or by mail, addressed to:

Jeanine Townsend,
Clerk to the Board
State Water Resources Control Board
1001 I Street, 24th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Please indicate the subject line **“Comment Letter – Board Workshop: Scientific basis for development of statewide policy for biological objectives.”** Persons delivering hard copies of comment letters must check in with lobby security personnel, who can contact Ms. Townsend at (916) 341-5600.

PARKING AND ACCESSIBILITY

A parking garage is located across from the Joe Serna Jr. - Cal/EPA building with entrances on 10th and 11th Streets between "I" and "J" Streets. Metered parking spaces are also available in the vicinity of the building. For a map, refer to the State Water Board's web site:

<http://www.calepa.ca.gov/EPAbldg/location.htm>.

Please note: All visitors to the Cal/EPA Building are required to sign in and obtain a badge at the Visitor Services Center located just inside the main entrance (10th Street entrance). Valid picture identification may be required. Please allow up to 15 minutes for receiving security clearance before proceeding to the Coastal Hearing Room on the 2nd floor.

The facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities. Individuals who require special accommodations are requested to contact the Office of Employee Assistance, at (916) 341-5881, at least five working days prior to the meeting date. Persons with hearing or speech impairments can contact us by using the California Relay Service Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD). TDD is reachable only from phones equipped with a TDD Device.

HEARING IMPAIRED RELAY SERVICE: TDD to Voice (800) 735-2929, Voice to TDD (800) 735-2922.

A Web broadcast of the public meeting will be available via the Internet and can be accessed at: <http://www.calepa.ca.gov/broadcast/> .

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please direct all questions regarding this notice to: Toni Marshall at (916) 322-2518 or e-mail tmarshall@waterboards.ca.gov .

December 21, 2012

Date

Jeanine Townsend

Jeanine Townsend
Clerk to the Board