

**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
BOARD MEETING SESSION – DIVISION OF WATER QUALITY
SEPTEMBER 21, 2010**

ITEM 7

SUBJECT

AREAS OF SPECIAL BIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE (ASBS) MONITORING AND STATUS OF THE ASBS NATURAL WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE OF SCIENTISTS

DISCUSSION

The California Ocean Plan prohibits waste discharges into ASBS, and requires that “natural water quality” be maintained there. In 2004, the State Water Resources Control Board adopted [Resolution No. 2004-0052](#) approving an exception to the California Ocean Plan for the discharge of storm water and waste sea water to the La Jolla ASBS. The exception was issued to the University of California, San Diego Scripps Institute of Oceanography. Along with the exception, Resolution No. 2004-0052 also directed the Division of Water Quality to create an advisory committee of scientists to define “natural water quality.” This panel became known as the ASBS Natural Water Quality Committee.

The Board has funded and worked with stakeholders, including Scripps, to monitor and assess water quality and the marine aquatic life beneficial use in ASBS. This work has resulted in a unique data set providing insight on marine water quality associated with storm water runoff and in clean “reference” areas that represent “natural water quality.”

The stated mission of the Natural Water Quality Committee was to evaluate monitoring data from the Scripps Institute of Oceanography, and to advise the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board whether or not the Scripps discharges were altering natural water quality in the ASBS. While the committee initially focused on the Scripps Institute of Oceanography and other relevant La Jolla data, they also recognized the importance of their work in the context of the greater ASBS, the Ocean Plan, and larger storm water issues. In response, the Natural Water Quality Committee agreed that their work would be broadened to provide guidance for assessing impacts to water quality in any ASBS in the State. The committee has reviewed the ASBS monitoring results and will present its findings.

The program's webpage is here:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/ocean/asbs_nwqcommittee.shtml

POLICY ISSUE

None; information item.

FISCAL IMPACT

None

REGIONAL BOARD IMPACT

None

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

None; information item.

State Water Board action on this item will assist the Water Boards in reaching Goal 4 of the Strategic Plan Update: 2008-2012 to “Comprehensively address water quality protection and restoration, and the relationship between water supply and water quality, and describe the connections between water quality, water quantity, and climate change, throughout California’s water planning processes”.