



California Regional Water Quality Control Board

San Diego Region



Linda Adams
Secretary for
Environmental
Protection

Over 50 Years Serving San Diego, Orange, and Riverside Counties
Recipient of the 2004 Environmental Award for Outstanding Achievement from USEPA

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 12, 2011

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San Diego Water Board Imposes \$353,200 in Civil Liability for 1.6 Million Gallon Sewage Spill into Murrieta Creek

SAN DIEGO --- On January 12, 2011 the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Region (San Diego Water Board), imposed an administrative civil liability of \$353,200 against the Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD) for a 1.6 million gallon sewage spill into Murrieta Creek that occurred on December 25 and 26, 2009 from the Temecula Regional Water Reclamation Facility.

The San Diego Water Board found that the spill resulted in below moderate harm to the wildlife and recreational uses of Murrieta creek and those adverse effects are likely to attenuate without appreciable acute or chronic effects. EMWD reported that it recovered approximately 966,800 gallons of sewage and returned it to the system for treatment. The remaining 633,200 gallons of untreated sewage entered Murrieta Creek, saturated the channel bed, and infiltrated to the sub-surface or evaporated. An unknown quantity of untreated sewage may have percolated into the underlying groundwater aquifer.

"Untreated sewage does not belong in Murrieta Creek, its underlying aquifer, or any other water body," said James Smith, Assistant Executive Officer. "Sewage is toxic to wildlife, and it prevents people from enjoying recreational opportunities. The State of California sets a high standard for sewage collection and treatment, and our Board expects that standard to be met."

The payments will be deposited into the State Water Board's Waste Discharge Permit Fund to support water quality cleanup efforts.

The San Diego Water Board protects and restores water quality in the southwest portion of the State, including parts of San Diego, Riverside, and Orange Counties.