Water Quality Report Card

Regional Water Board: Santa Ana, Region 8

**Beneficial Uses Affected:**

REC-1, REC-2, WARM, WILD, EST, COMM, RARE, SPWN, MAR, SHEL

**Implemented Through:**

NPDES permits, WDRs, Nonpoint Source Programs, Cooperative Stakeholder Projects

**Effective Date:**

April 1999 (TMDL)

**Attainment Date:**

To Be Determined

**Status:**

- ✔ Conditions Improving
- ☐ Data Inconclusive
- ☐ Improvement Needed
- ☐ Targets Achieved/Water Body Delisted

**Pollutant Type:**

- ✔ Point Source
- ☐ Nonpoint Source
- ☐ Legacy

**Pollutant Source:**

- Irrigated Crop Production
- Nonpoint Source Runoff
- Erosion/Siltation
- Urban Storm Water Runoff

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**Water Quality Improvement Strategy**

Newport Bay (Bay) and San Diego Creek (SDC) are currently listed on the 303(d) List as impaired for nutrients. To address the nutrient impairment, a Nutrient TMDL for the Newport Bay/San Diego Creek Watershed was developed and became effective in April 1999. The TMDL requires a 50 percent reduction in nutrient loading (nitrogen and phosphorus) to the Bay, and the re-evaluation of nitrogen water quality objectives to ensure that they are protective of Bay and SDC beneficial uses. Nutrient loading to the Bay, particularly from the SDC watershed, contributes to seasonal algal blooms. The TMDL is being implemented through waste load allocations to point source dischargers, and cooperative efforts with stakeholders to address nonpoint sources, particularly rising groundwater, which contains elevated nitrate concentrations from historical agricultural land uses. Although the TMDL load targets for discharge to the Bay have been achieved, not all water quality standards in SDC are being met.

**Total Nitrogen Loads to Newport Bay**

- Nitrogen loads to Newport Bay have declined to below TMDL targets.
- Nitrogen concentrations in Reach 1 of San Diego Creek have declined to below the existing water quality objective, but still exceed the Reach 2 water quality objective.
- Phosphorus loads to the Bay are below the TMDL objective.
- Algal biomass in Upper Newport Bay has declined significantly.
- Algal biomass levels are below levels that indicate impairment (impairment threshold of 0.175 kg/m² dry weight)
- Algal biomass in San Diego Creek remains elevated.

**Macroalgae Biomass in Upper Newport Bay**

- Algal Biomass Impairment Threshold 0.175 kg/m²

**Total Inorganic Nitrogen Concentrations in San Diego Creek**

- Water Quality Objective: 13 mg/L

*Released October 2016*