

Water Quality Report Card

Legacy Compounds in The Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel

Regional Water Board: Colorado River Basin, Region 7

Beneficial Uses Affected: RARE, REC-1, REC-2, WARM

Implemented Through: Coachella Valley Agricultural General Order

Effective Date: November 12, 2020

Attainment Date: 2035

STATUS **Improvement Needed**

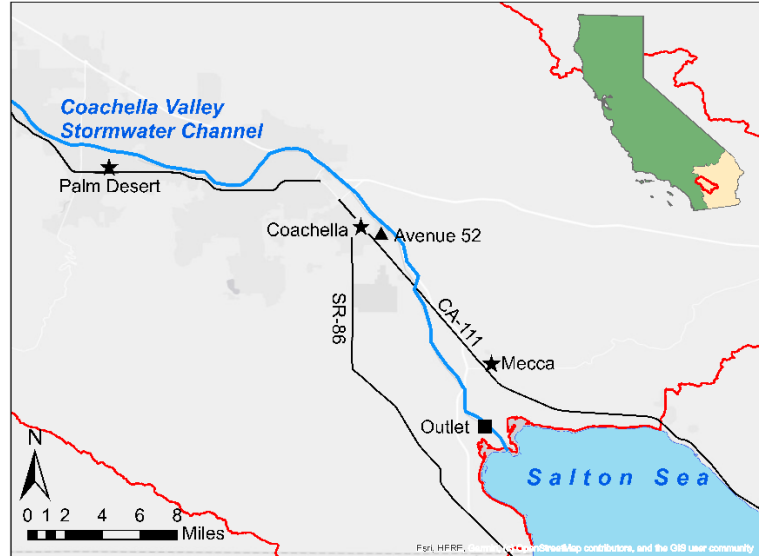
Pollutant Type: Nonpoint Source Legacy

Pollutant Source: Irrigated Crop Production

Water Quality Improvement Strategy

The Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel (CVSC) is an unlined, engineered extension of the Whitewater River. CVSC serves as a conveyance channel for agricultural irrigation return water, treated wastewater from municipal wastewater treatment plants, and urban and stormwater runoff to the Salton Sea. The CVSC was listed as impaired on the USEPA Clean Water Act 303(d) List for the legacy compounds dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT), dieldrin, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and toxaphene. Concentrations of these legacy compounds exceed the water quality objectives (WQOs) established to protect warm water ecosystems, endangered species, and recreational beneficial uses of CVSC. The listed pollutants are man-made organochloride (OC) compounds that are persistent in the environment as they are slow to degrade and can tightly bind to sediments. DDT, dieldrin, and toxaphene were used as pesticides for agriculture and domestic pest control until banned in the 1970s and 1980s. PCBs were developed for industrial uses but are found in electrical equipment and insulation manufactured prior to being banned in 1979. CVSC becomes impaired when contaminated sediment is washed into waters due to erosion or runoff. Once in the water, OC compounds bioaccumulate in aquatic life such as invertebrates or fish. These impairments are being addressed through the [Coachella Valley Agricultural General Order of Waste Discharge Requirements \(WDRs\) \(General Order\)](#) adopted by the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Board in 2020. The General Order requires the dischargers to implement management practices (MPs) to control the impairments and conduct monitoring to assess their effectiveness.

Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel Map



Water Quality Outcomes

- Legacy compound concentrations in fish tissue have reduced significantly from peak concentrations in the 1980s
- New fish tissue data of legacy compounds needs to be collected to confirm impairment
- Water data shows that legacy compounds are not usually found in CVSC waters and is inconclusive that legacy compounds are below assessment guidelines (not shown)
- The General Order requires implementing MPs and monitoring of legacy compounds in water and fish tissue.
- Note: Data that were non detect or detected and not quantified with reporting limits above the targets were not used in the graphs below.

Water Quality (Fish Tissue at CVSC Outlet)

