



Fact Sheet

Stormwater Strategy Program

Reclaiming Stormwater as a Resource to Improve Water Quality and Quantity

Stormwater runoff has historically been seen as a threat to human life, and property -- if not properly managed. In addition, stormwater, or urban runoff, remains a significant source of water quality pollution for many urban communities throughout the state. Despite these challenges, stormwater hold promise today, and for future generations, as a viable source of water to sustain the state's anticipated continued population growth.

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) is revisiting its mission in this area, to lead the evolution of stormwater management in California for the next century and beyond. The Board is advancing the perspective that stormwater has value, supporting policies for collaborative watershed-level stormwater management, addressing obstacles, developing resources, and integrating regulatory and non-regulatory interests. This effort will require the participation and support by the public, stakeholders, and communities where stormwater management remains a challenge.

Stormwater Management Required a Revisit

The urgent need to protect water quality from stormwater impairment, compounded by the severe impacts of drought and climate change, compels immediate action to preserve California's water resources.

The [California Water Action Plan](#), released in January 2014, called for multiple benefit stormwater management solutions and more efficient permitting programs. As a result, in April 2014, the State Water Board formed a team of State Water Board and Regional Water Board staff (Initiative Team) to develop a Storm Water Strategic Initiative to guide the Water Board's Stormwater Program for at least the next ten years. From this initial effort evolved the Stormwater Strategy Team in September 2015, composed of State Water Board staff in the Stormwater Planning Unit, along with Regional Board staff and Executive Management sponsors. In addition, this effort captures a number of climate change adaption efforts by the state and regional water boards to prepare for the impacts of climate change in California.

The decision of the State Water Board to dedicate staff and resources to stormwater planning marks a significant achievement for those dedicated to improving stormwater management and water quality, and an acknowledgment of the importance of stormwater as a resource for California. The Stormwater Strategy Team will work closely with other related groups to address the issues in stormwater management, considering the perspectives of the regulated community, environmental groups, and watershed planning.

Background

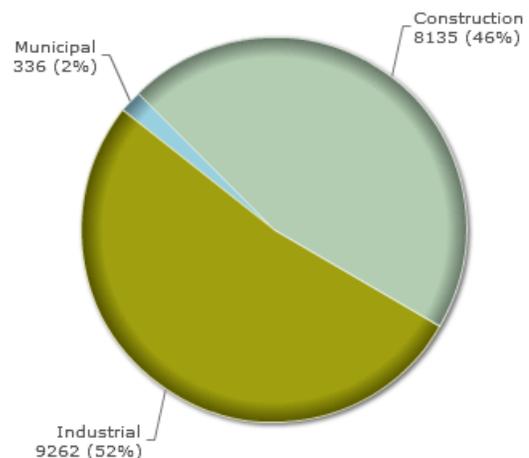
Stormwater, also known as urban runoff, is a significant source of water quality pollution.



Stormwater runoff is diffuse, episodic, and varies greatly depending on magnitude and frequency of storms. Stormwater runoff contains pollutants that accumulate during dry weather. Urban development of impermeable surfaces has increased the volume and velocity of stormwater runoff carrying pollutants to local water bodies.

The State Water Board and Regional Water Quality Control Boards (Regional Water Boards) identify the sources of pollutants that threaten the quality of the State's waters, and regulate dischargers of stormwater through National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. NPDES stormwater permits address runoff from industrial and construction sites as well as municipalities. The data shown below, from the [Water Boards' Annual Performance Report](#), highlight the total NPDES stormwater facilities regulated in California during fiscal year 2013-14.

Regional Offices	Construction	Industrial	Municipal	Total
1	204	330	3	537
2	1,288	1,335	83	2,706
3	603	420	2	1,025
4	1,335	2,669	101	4,105
5F	663	423	7	1,093
5R	160	209	0	369
5S	942	1,091	18	2,051
5 all.	1,765	1,723	25	3,513
6A	70	38	3	111
6B	294	188	2	484
6 all.	364	226	5	595
7	267	166	13	446
8	1,278	1,590	63	2,931
9	1,031	803	41	1,875
TOTAL	8,135	9,262	336	17,733



Program History

The Stormwater Strategy Program is founded on the efforts of the Initiative Team. The purpose of the Initiative Team was to direct the State Water Board's role in storm water resource management and to evolve the Storm Water Program by a) developing guiding principles to serve as the foundation of the storm water program, b) identifying issues that support or inhibit the program from aligning with the guiding principles, and c) proposing and prioritizing projects that the Water Boards could implement to address those issues.

The Initiative Team released a [concept paper](#) and met extensively with stakeholders to understand their interests and solicit ideas on how to proceed. The result was the Storm Water Strategic Initiative Proposal ([Proposal](#)).

The [Proposal](#) identified the goals, challenges, and actions needed for the State Water Board and Regional Water Boards to continue to improve the regulation, management and utilization of California's storm water resources for multi-benefit approaches that achieve tangible results for improved water quality and supply.

The Proposal was posted for public review and comment on June 25. On Aug. 19, the State Water Board held a public workshop to discuss the Proposal and receive public feedback. Many commenters supported the concept that storm water should be considered a valuable resource. Overall, the State Water Board was encouraged by the scope of the Proposal and program objectives, but they requested that a more strategic implementation plan be developed with refined and consolidated projects.

Developing a Strategy to Optimize Resource Management of Stormwater
Following the Proposal review at the public workshop, the next phase was to develop a strategy-based document, called the Strategy to Optimize Resource Management of Stormwater (STORMS). STORMS includes a program vision, mission, goals, objectives, actions, projects, timelines, and consideration of the most effective integration of project outcomes into the Water Boards' Storm Water Program.

Strategy Goals

The Goals in STORMS are based on the Guiding Principles created by the Initiative Team in the Proposal, and are intended to focus and guide the efforts of the Stormwater Strategy Program. Based on stakeholder input, STORMS includes the following four goals:

1. Change the perspective of stormwater as a waste or hazard, and treat it as a valuable water resource;
2. Manage stormwater to preserve watershed processes and achieve desired water quality outcomes;
3. Implement efficient and effective regulatory programs; and
4. Collaborate to solve water quality and pollutant problems with an array of regulatory and non-regulatory approaches.

Next Steps

Currently, STORMS will be presented to the State Water Board for consideration in December 2015.

For more information visit the State Water Board's [Stormwater Strategy webpage](#) or contact Noelle Patterson, Noelle.Patterson@waterboards.ca.gov.

This fact sheet was last updated on Oct. 6, 2015.