

**Name of Project**

Monitoring the Health of Our Waters through Bioassessment

**Project Applicant**

San Diego Coastkeeper

**Applicant Contact Person**

Stephanie Ritter

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**Problem Statement**

Existing water quality objectives in the San Diego Water Board's Basin Plan emphasize the chemical integrity of waters on a pollutant by pollutant basis, which might not adequately protect the biological integrity of waters. A water quality objective for biological condition is critical to restoring and maintaining the biological integrity of the region's waters.

San Diego Water Board staff have identified developing biological objectives as issue number one in the Tier 1 priority list for Basin Plan revisions. San Diego Water Board staff have begun working on the development of biological objectives, which will likely include a narrative biological objective for water bodies, in addition to numeric measures to interpret the narrative objective based on water body type.

Understanding the current and future state of the benthic macroinvertebrate community is crucial to this process. San Diego Coastkeeper will conduct biological assessments (bioassessments) at one site to evaluate the biological condition of a waterbody based on the organisms living within it, which will allow us to illustrate and monitor the health of our waters over time. This bioassessment programs involves training volunteers to survey the types and numbers of macroinvertebrates in water samples and conduct physical habitat assessments, and producing a report to illustrate the findings.

**Work Plan containing tasks and deliverables compartmentalized into partial funding opportunities, if applicable.**

Task:

1. Perform Bioassessments
  - 1.1. Site Selection
    - 1.1.1. Identify existing data and locate data gaps
  - 1.2. Secure necessary permits (e.g. DFW scientific collection permit)
  - 1.3. Train volunteer sampling team

- 1.3.1. Bioassessments will be conducted by a trained team of volunteers, overseen by a San Diego Coastkeeper staff member
- 1.4. Conduct macroinvertebrate sampling and physical habitat assessment
  - 1.4.1. Bioassessments will be conducted using the Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program's Standard Operating Procedures *For The Collection Of Field Data For Bioassessments Of California Wadeable Streams: Benthic Macroinvertebrates, Algae, And Physical Habitat*
    - 1.4.1.1. Taxonomic Identification will be conducted by an outside laboratory using SAFIT level 2 procedures.

**Deliverables:**

- Engage and train 6 volunteers to survey the types and numbers of organisms present in the water samples at one specific site
- Develop and publicize a data report of findings to illustrate the health of the water at the specific site

**Timeline (from funding approval) with milestones and end dates.**

6 months from funding approval - Identify existing data and locate data gaps  
 7 months from funding approval - Secure necessary permits  
 18 months from funding approval - Train volunteers  
 18 months from funding approval - Conduct sampling  
 24 months from funding approval - Develop final data report  
 24 months from funding approval - Project Concludes

**Budget broken down into tasks.**

Task 1- \$3,000 for staff time, supplies, and equipment

**Discuss all permitting requirements, including CEQA, and their status. If exempt, cite applicable statute.**

We will obtain a California Department of Fish and Wildlife Scientific Collection Permit for this project.

**Watershed(s) affected.**

Carlsbad

**Describe if this project can be a basis for additional funding from other sources.**

Funding from other sources could lead to the increase in the number of sampling locations.

**Monitoring, success criteria, and other tools to track long-term success.**

This program will help create a baseline for the health of our waters and allow us to monitor trends that occur over time. This program will also help us evaluate the success of restoration projects, permit implementation, and BMP implementation. Ultimately, we seek to reduce pollution and improve local water quality.

**Description of how the project is resilient to climate change.**

N/A

**Applicant's ability/authority to receive and distribute funds.**

San Diego Coastkeeper is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and is able to receive funds from a variety of sources. We manage several government and private grants each year, including properly distributing funds and conducting interim and final reports. Previous bioassessment monitoring projects have been conducted under Proposition 50 and Proposition 84 grants administered through the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) process.

**Is the project to conduct work that is required by any entity/agency? (e.g. cleanup or mitigation)**

No