RWQCB Staff Meeting with City of Santee Representatives – 2/17/11
Focus – Discuss Current and Future Municipal Requirements

Overview
Our goal is to continue programs that have a direct benefit on water quality and to eliminate programs that do not. We need flexibility on where efforts are focused, so that we can use our time and budget to make real improvements in water quality. This can be largely accomplished through:

- Reduced reporting;
- Focused inspection efforts based on jurisdictional experience with facilities;
- Using monitoring that focuses on watershed priority pollutants and compliance with relevant TMDLs.
- Eliminate minutia so that we can focus on TMDL-driven projects.

Current Permit Recommendations:
Analysis, Assessment and Reporting

1. Fiscal analysis should be eliminated or greatly reduced. It does not improve water quality. Substantial time is spent preparing this analysis that has limited value.

2. Effectiveness assessment – needs to be focused on a few key indicators and proportional to what is being measured. May be beneficial to measure and report on specific BMPs at a watershed level. **See attached copy of comment letter on draft State policy for effectiveness assessment.**

3. JURMP – the JURMP annual report should be eliminated. It takes 3-months to prepare and has very little value. We envision generating summary tables (a couple of pages) documenting critical numbers which would be incorporated into watershed-based reports. Summaries of projects and JURMP amendments could be incorporated into watershed report.

4. Watershed report – should be a repository for JURMP data and updates and TMDL compliance information. Eliminate "watershed activities" and "watershed education activities." This will be superseded by TMDL-related efforts.

Development and Construction

1. SUSMP requirements were flexible enough to allow us to develop a very good SUSMP. Criticism is that too many updates in the document lead to confusion and lack of understanding. This document should be kept intact and remain unchanged in the next permit cycle. (Note: LID BMP list is now superfluous).

2. HMP requirements were too prescriptive (continuous simulation and shear stress). Left issue of sediment transport out of equation and boxed us into

just meeting the requirements. Permit needs to give flexibility for Board or Board staff to approve alternative methods. We now need time to monitor these facilities to test our HMP.

3. Treatment control BMP inspection program requires flexibility in ensuring maintenance. Should require either maintenance verification or inspection. Maximum and minimums helpful – but clarify.

4. Construction program requirement for inspection of high priority sites every 2 weeks is restrictive. Many sites have been dormant or have little work occurring for periods of time. Would like to avoid conducting inspections to "make the numbers" in the annual report (overprescribing inspections and reporting). Suggest qualifying requirements with "during work."

Industrial and Commercial

The industrial/commercial inspection requirement of 25 percent was understandable when the program was initially established; we have now inspected all of our facilities and we know where we have problems. A major focus of our stormwater program now is to complete over 200 inspections, whether or not there is value in the effort. A reasonable goal would be 10 percent , with a focus on quality inspections at new and problem businesses.

Water Quality Monitoring

Water quality monitoring should be implemented and managed at a regional level and consistent with TMDL. Dry weather program has been valuable, but we have moved beyond that (few illicit connections/illicit discharges discovered). It should be adapted to meet the needs of our current program, which will be TMDL-driven. Some outfall monitoring may be useful (especially if it incorporates any TMDL requirements), but outfall analysis should focus on watershed priority pollutants in receiving waters.

Thoughts on New Permit

Consistency among permits and avoiding duplication of effort. How does the watershed monitoring program for the San Diego River fit in with the current permit? With a Regional Permit? With TMDL monitoring? We need one program that comprehensively addresses our monitoring to ensure efficiency.

Retrofit: requirements should be driven by TMDL requirements. City is unable to use taxpayer money for improvements on private property and there needs to be a trigger to require improvements by property owner (such as a permit application). SUSMP already requires retrofitting redevelopment.

Multiple Regions: How do the three regions fit together? Costs for collaboration (i.e., meeting attendance) and complexity in achieving consensus will be increased. Working relationship within region is good. If the goal is to minimize permit issuance costs, consider allowing each region to operate separately.

CITY OF SANTEE

November 29, 2010

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Re: Comment Letter – Effectiveness Assessment Document.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft effectiveness assessment document. The City of Santee, a copermittee under a Phase I municipal permit has several years of experience conducting effectiveness assessment. Ambient monitoring data for our City indicates that water quality generally improves as it traverses our City. As an organization we feel that we have proven ourselves to be good stewards. We hope that our insight from preparing effectiveness assessments and working to protect water quality will assist you.

We are a City with a population of approximately 58,000 people with a stormwater program funded solely through Flood Control funds and the general fund. Despite the limited options for funding available, we have successfully restored two creeks within our jurisdiction, including the CASQA-award winning Forester Creek Restoration Project. Restoration of Forester Creek has resulted in significant improvements in water quality, including an 84% reduction in fecal colliform and 50% reduction in nitrogen. While we understand the need for assessing the effectiveness of a program, we feel that the main focus of any storm water program should be implementing projects that will directly improve water quality.

We provide the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: The cost of monitoring and assessment should be limited to up to one dollar per capita and no more than 30% of the annual storm water budget. This limitation would ensure that the funds available are spent primarily on implementing BMPs and making direct improvements to water quality. A cost benefit analysis should be incorporated into the effectiveness assessment guidelines so that the costs of the assessment method selected do not outweigh the benefits provided.

The City of Santee currently spends approximately $60,000 or 38% of its annual storm water budget on MS4 outfall monitoring. While the program has been effective at eliminating some illicit connection and illegal discharges, the City has gained an understanding of the potential sources and feels that these funds would

now be better spent implementing projects or programs to directly improve water quality.

The proposed requirements are extensive and comprehensive and could add up to a significant cost potentially exceeding the cost of inspections, education and enforcement. This level of data collection would have limited benefit to the City, and direct scarce dollars away from program implementation to program assessment. Limiting the monitoring and effectiveness assessment costs would ensure that public dollars are directed toward implementation.

In addition, the guidelines should be revised to ensure that selection of assessment methods be performed based on a cost-benefit analysis. For instance, the guidelines should direct program managers to consider what adjustment could be made to respond to data collected from a certain assessment method? What would be the cost (savings or increase) of this adjustment? Would the adjustment be proportional to the costs of the assessment? If the benefits of an assessment method do not outweigh the costs, then another method should be selected.

Recommendation 2: Receiving water assessments should be conducted at a watershed or regional level. In addition where feasible, program effectiveness assessments should be developed and implemented at a regional level (even if they are assessed by watershed) where cost savings can be leveraged.

At present the City participates in regional programs which measure many of the outcomes listed in the draft effectiveness document (resident's knowledge, mass loading, toxicity, bioassessments etc). The cost of this regional monitoring program is very high, in San Diego County it is over $2.2 million annually. However, this regional monitoring is significantly less expensive than if each individual City prepared its' own monitoring plan, performed monitoring and prepared reports. In addition, the regional monitoring program allows assessment of water quality throughout the region and provides the advantage of understanding issues that affect an entire region due to geology, hydrology and climate.

Recommendation 3: MS4 outfall monitoring should be limited to dry weather, as this is the most effective time to directly measure effects of urban run off. MS4 outfall monitoring should not include toxicity tests, as the costs of toxicity monitoring are prohibitive and there is limited benefit from measuring a few locations in the MS4.

The proposed outfall monitoring guidelines significantly increase the requirements, and in turn the cost, of monitoring. Given the evolution of storm water science, more emphasis should be placed on implementation and less on monitoring than in the past.

There is limited benefit to monitoring MS4 outfalls during wet weather. Without an appropriate reference study, it is impossible to determine what pollutants originate

[1] San Diego River Source Tracking Investigation, Weston Solutions Inc., December 2009

from anthropogenic sources. There are many natural areas that drain into our storm drain systems. A recent source ID study conducted in the San Diego River found that run off from open spaces contained approximately 78 percent of the total dissolved solids (TDS) loading.[1] Sampling MS4 outfalls during wet weather would be a waste of public funds, as tracking the source of the pollutants would be impossible. MS4 monitoring should occur during dry weather when groundwater is at its lowest point and the source of pollutants can be traced upstream.

Further, the cost of toxicity monitoring is very high. If the City performed toxicity monitoring at two outfalls twice per year, this would result in a 33 percent increase in the cost of the City's monitoring program. Monitoring only two of hundreds of outfalls at an annual cost of $20,000 is a waste of public funds. It is clear that the cost of performing toxicity monitoring far outweighs the benefit. Toxicity monitoring is more appropriately performed on a receiving water basis. Where toxicity is found in the receiving water, investigations could be conducted immediately upstream to determine the source.

Recommendation 4: BMP performance studies are more appropriately performed by storm water organizations such as CASQA and SCWRPP to determine the relative effectiveness of BMPs. Field testing on the performance of individual BMPs should not be included in the effectiveness assessment as it is unlikely to result in an improvement to water quality.

The guidelines recommend assessments include field testing of BMP performance and comparison to specified performance data. Many credible studies of BMP performance have been performed by universities, certified laboratories and other storm water organizations. These studies are expensive and time consuming. There are dozens of BMPs installed in our small City and this number grows each year. The cost to complete field testing of the performance of each of these BMPs would be enormous.

There are limited benefits to field testing BMP performance on a project by project basis. In San Diego County, low impact development BMPs, such as bioretention, are required to be implemented, where feasible. If LID BMPs cannot be implemented, BMPs are selected based on their relative performance for the pollutants of concern. It is unlikely that even if a particular BMP performed poorly in a program effectiveness assessment study that the selection of BMPs would be altered, since the most relatively effective BMPs are being used. BMP performance studies are more appropriately conducted by universities, CASQA, SCWRPP, and other certified laboratories to allow selection of the most effective BMPs based on relative performance data. The information from this academic research can be used to refine municipal program requirements.

Recommendation 5: The effectiveness assessment guidance should eliminate any discussion regarding region or Statewide comparison of programs, but rather focus

[1] San Diego River Source Tracking Investigation, Weston Solutions Inc., December 2009

on a watershed-based approach to ensure that watershed-specific issues are addressed where the issues arise.

Different watersheds and regions have different issues and different levels of development. For instance, the groundwater in the San Diego region has been found to contain high levels of nitrogen. It would be inappropriate to compare this region's success with another region where the causes of nitrogen pollution are from urban sources. The goal of the effectiveness assessment is to assess an individual program not compare programs. If the State or other entities find such comparisons helpful, then they should fund these assessments. It is not appropriate for the City to direct its taxpayer dollars to this endeavor when they could be directed to program implementation, directly benefiting the funding community.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this draft effectiveness assessment document that could impose a significant cost burden to our stormwater programs.

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Deputy City Manager/Director of Development Services

[1] San Diego River Source Tracking Investigation, Weston Solutions Inc., December 2009