

EXECUTIVE OFFICER SUMMARY REPORT  
April 9, 2014

ITEM: 6

SUBJECT: Information Item: Overview of the Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP). (*Lilian Busse, Chad Loflen*)

PURPOSE: This is an informational item to provide an overview of SWAMP, to present efforts of SWAMP in the San Diego Region, to show how SWAMP data are used in San Diego Water Board programs, and to outline how SWAMP implements the Practical Vision.

RECOMMENDATION: None

DISCUSSION: **SWAMP Overview**  
The Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP) was created in 2000 pursuant to AB 982 (WC section.13191) and is implemented by the State and Regional Water Boards. The SWAMP mission is to provide resource managers, decision makers, and the public with timely, high-quality information to evaluate the condition of waters throughout California. SWAMP accomplishes this through carefully designed, externally reviewed monitoring programs, and by assisting other entities in the generation of comparable data that can be brought together in integrated assessments that provide answers to current management questions (Supporting Document No. 1).

SWAMP is an ambient monitoring program that produces an unbiased assessment of ambient water quality in the regions. SWAMP's ambient monitoring is fundamentally different from compliance, enforcement, and permit-based monitoring of other Water Board programs, which generally target areas of known problems. However, SWAMP's monitoring provides data that establish a critical perspective in order to place water quality data from other Water Board programs in context within the region's conditions.

SWAMP's relationship with contractors is ending this fiscal year, which may have short or long-term effects on SWAMP partners, laboratory analyses, and public access to data.

### **SWAMP in the San Diego Region**

SWAMP in the San Diego Region is designed to support and expand water quality assessment. From 2000-2008, the activities of SWAMP in the San Diego Region consisted of monitoring and assessment of the health of stream ecosystems using physical, chemical and biological indicators. The results are summarized in reports for each of the region's eleven hydrologic units as well as a region wide synthesis report. Reports can be accessed through San Diego Region's SWAMP website:

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/water\\_issues/programs/swamp/](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/water_issues/programs/swamp/)

Since 2009, the San Diego Region's SWAMP has consisted of three major components: (1) Condition Monitoring and Assessment, (2) Special Studies, and (3) Coordination and Collaboration. SWAMP is currently conducting condition monitoring and assessment in perennial and nonperennial streams, and in depressional freshwater wetland ecosystems. Special studies include monitoring of contaminants of emerging concern (e.g. pharmaceuticals, personal care products, and cyanotoxins). SWAMP is also taking the lead in coordinating and collaborating with stakeholders to improve monitoring and assessment in the region's water bodies by developing cost-effective and integrated monitoring and assessment programs within watersheds and across water body types. In addition, SWAMP collaborates with several governmental agencies, environmental organizations, stakeholders and citizen volunteers to enhance monitoring and assessment activities throughout the region and to ensure the collection and comparability of high quality monitoring data (Supporting Document No. 2).

### **Use of SWAMP Data in Water Board Programs**

SWAMP data are essential to other Water Board programs by providing context for monitoring data collected under those programs. For instance, SWAMP data are used for each region's Clean Water Act section 305(b) surface water quality assessment and section 303(d) list of water quality limited segments. In addition, SWAMP data support development of statewide policy efforts, such as for biological objectives and nutrients.

Locally, SWAMP data was instrumental in providing context for the Riverside County municipal storm water permit. SWAMP data are currently being used for a causal assessment study in the San Diego River watershed with the goal of diagnosing the underlying causes of observed impairment to biological communities. SWAMP data will also help in the development of the Water Quality Improvement Plans required by the regional municipal storm water permit.

Achievements of SWAMP in the San Diego Region are posted on the web at:

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/swamp/achievements/](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/swamp/achievements/)

### **Implementation of Practical Vision**

The Practical Vision Chapter on monitoring and assessment is based on the monitoring and assessment framework endorsed in December 2012 (Resolution No. R9-2012-0069, Supporting Document No. 3). The new monitoring and assessment framework follows the SWAMP strategy. The San Diego River Watershed Monitoring and Assessment Program is funded by SWAMP and is an early implementation action of the Practical Vision Chapter (Supporting Document No. 4).

**KEY ISSUES:**

The data and outreach produced by SWAMP are fundamental tools for our Practical Vision.

**LEGAL CONCERNS:**

None

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:**

1. SWAMP 2010 Strategy
2. SWAMP fact sheet for the San Diego region
3. Monitoring and Assessment Resolution No.R9-2012-0069.
4. San Diego River Watershed Monitoring and Assessment Program (Draft, January 2014)