

## Practical Vision and Program Accomplishments for 2016

The Practical Vision is a tool to focus our limited resources onto our region's highest priorities for the 2014 to 2020 time period. Twenty three projects were undertaken in 2016 to implement the Practical Vision. An Operational Plan for implementing the projects was created to assign staff and budget resources, and establish milestones and schedules for the projects.

In concert with the work of the Practical Vision is the day-to-day programmatic work of the San Diego Water Board. This work falls into three broad categories; planning, permitting, and enforcement. Every year, San Diego Water Board staff prepares program work plans that include performance measures or commitments that are tracked by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) and reported to the legislature. Although some of the Practical Vision projects overlap with program work plan commitments, there is a large body of work beyond the Practical Vision that is necessary to carry out the Board's core programmatic responsibilities.

This report describes some of the Practical Vision projects undertaken in 2015, and also describes the important program accomplishments submitted to the State Water Board for its annual report to the State Legislature.

### Chapter 1. Healthy Waters

**Biological Objectives.** The objective of the Clean Water Act is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters. Until recently, much of the emphasis has been to focus on the chemical integrity (discharge specific) of receiving waters. Although chemical integrity is an essential component in protecting and maintaining healthy systems, it alone is inadequate in protecting the ecological health of a water body. Biological assessments provide direct measures of the cumulative and integrated response of the biological community to all sources of stress as the organisms are exposed to these stresses over time. Through this long term exposure in their natural setting, biological communities provide the most comprehensive measure of the condition of the beneficial use to be protected. Biological objectives set the biological quality goal, or target, to which water quality can be managed against, rather than the maximum allowable level of a stressor (pollutant or other water quality condition) that affects the aquatic life in that water body.

In 2016, the San Diego Water Board accomplished the following:

- Initiated the public participation process for biological objectives. A CEQA Scoping meeting was held in July 2016.
- Incorporated bioassessment results in the 2014 Integrated Report, which was adopted by the Board in October 2016.
- Continued its stream bioassessment program, with 25 stream sites sampled during the 2016 field season

**Regulation of Commercial Agriculture.** On November 9, 2016 the San Diego Water Board adopted general waste discharge requirements for discharges from commercial agricultural operations in the San Diego Region. The general waste discharge requirements require an estimated 6,000 commercial agricultural operations located on 70,000 acres of land in the San Diego Region to implement effective management practices to protect water quality. Commercial agricultural operations within the San Diego Region are required to enroll under the general waste discharge requirements by August 7, 2017.

**Effective Long-term Containment of Solid Wastes.** The San Diego Water Board Land Disposal Program accomplished a number of long-term objectives for operating and closed landfills:

- The San Diego Water Board adopted waste discharge requirements for the closure and post-closure maintenance of the Forster Canyon Landfill. That action clears the way for re-development of the adjacent property for residential and commercial uses in the City of San Juan Capistrano.
- The San Diego Water Board amended the waste discharge requirements for Sycamore Landfill for a new Stage IV-C Unit with approximately 1.6 million cubic yards of additional solid waste disposal capacity. Since April 2015, the total permitted capacity at Sycamore Landfill has increased by approximately 3,570,000 cubic yards. The San Diego Water Board staff conducted a construction inspection of the new Stage IV-C Unit in September 2016.
- The San Diego Water Board recently approved the Design Report for the construction of the new Phase D1 and D2 Units to expand solid waste capacity by over 13,000,000 cubic yards and extend the Sycamore Landfill service life by 21 years.

The San Diego Water Board's Practical Vision for regional strategies that foster healthy waters is being realized through the adoption of effective waste discharge requirements for closure and post-closure maintenance at closed landfills, and ensuring long-term containment of municipal solid wastes within expanded areas of operating landfills.

## Chapter 2. Monitoring and Assessment

**Strategy for a Healthy San Diego Bay.** Throughout 2016, staff made great progress in implementing assessment, prioritization, and communication elements of the Board's Strategy for a Healthy San Diego Bay (Strategy). In August, staff hosted a San Diego Bay bioaccumulation workshop for stakeholders to hear about and discuss the latest findings from studies assessing risks to human health and wildlife. Then, a public Board workshop in October brought many community groups together to focus on staff's initial assessment of two key beneficial uses of the Bay: Contact Recreation and Consumption of Fish and Shellfish. Fact sheets to inform the public about the conditions of those two key uses were also developed and will be released in early 2017. Outreach from these initial assessments will be used to help create the public and private partnerships needed to implement the Strategy.

San Diego Bay is a high priority water body in the San Diego region due to its ecological value and because it supports tourism, commercial and subsistence fishing, and a variety of recreational, maritime, industrial, commercial, and military uses. The Strategy adopted by the Board in 2015 guides the Board and its staff in making the most effective and efficient use of their resources when taking actions to protect and restore the health of the Bay.

Website:

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

### Chapter 3. Recovery of Stream, Wetland and Riparian Systems

**Adoption of the Integrated Water Quality Report.** In October, the San Diego Water Board adopted the 2014 Clean Water Act 303d/305b Integrated Report, for which staff evaluated over 5,000 water body/pollutant combinations. This effort was shaped by PV Chapter 1's emphasis to focus programs on environmental outcomes and biological data particularly when regulatory inertia would favor a narrow aquatic chemistry view. Whereas prior Integrated Reports focused on the impaired waters portion (the 303(d) List), this 2014 Integrated Report has begun to identify high-quality waters using multiple lines of evidence of biological data in wadeable streams. Additionally, this Integrated Report has included a physical assessment for a subset of waterbodies where benthic macroinvertebrate, toxicity, and chemistry data were also evaluated. This allows for better transparency and understanding of where waterbodies may face challenges from impaired chemistry or physical conditions, alone or in combination. That, in turn, allows for better identification of restoration and protection priorities than afforded by prior Integrated Reports.

### Chapter 4. Proactive Public Outreach and Communication

**Water Body Fact Sheets.** In 2016, we produced watershed and water body status sheets for key beneficial uses of San Mateo Creek and San Diego River. These provide accessible information to the public regarding ecosystem health (San Mateo and San Diego River) and levels of contaminants in fish (San Diego River). By disseminating high level information about key issues with emphasis on environmental outcomes and water quality assessments, these status sheets improve meaningful communication on key challenges and actions.

**Community Outreach Meetings.** During 2016 the San Diego Water Board conducted 11 community outreach meetings with 20 stakeholder/community organizations throughout the Region. The purpose of the outreach meetings was to provide stakeholders with the unique opportunity to engage in conversations with Water Board Members and the Executive Officer about the water-related issues. Each meeting was attended by Chairman Abarbanel, 1-2 other Board Members, Executive Officer Dave Gibson, and Outreach Coordinator Deborah Jayne. Each meeting was also attended by 8-12 invited stakeholders including State elected officials, mayors, councilmembers, water districts, and NGOs.

**Community Outreach Strategy.** In accordance with Chapter 4 of the Practical Vision, the San Diego Water Board adopted its first *Community Outreach Strategy*, with an emphasis on Environmental Justice Communities, in November 2016. The purpose of the Outreach Strategy is to guide the Water Board as it implements outreach above and beyond its traditional regulatory requirements. The Outreach Strategy identifies five general goals including 1) making the Water Board more *accessible* to local Environmental Justice Communities and the public for the purpose of promoting greater public participation in the Board's decision making process; 2) increasing *awareness* of the Water Board's Mission/Practical Vision; 3) *Identifying* the most important community issues and concerns; 4) encouraging the timely two-way exchange of *information* between the Water Board and its stakeholders; and 5) forming *partnerships* with like-minded organizations to extend the Water Board's effectiveness and leverage resources. To advance the Practical Vision priorities and achieve the above goals, the Outreach Strategy identifies six Outreach Priorities in which to focus:

1. Environmental Justice and Disadvantaged Communities;
2. Recovery of Stream, Wetland, and Riparian Systems;
3. Tijuana River Valley Recovery Strategy and Five Year Action Plan;
4. Healthy San Diego Bay Strategy;
5. Irrigated Lands Pollution Reduction; and
6. Sustainable Local Water Supply.

The strategy can be found at:

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/docs/FINAL\\_ADOPTED\\_2016\\_Community\\_Outreach\\_Strategy.pdf](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/docs/FINAL_ADOPTED_2016_Community_Outreach_Strategy.pdf).

#### Chapter 5. Strategy for Achieving a Local Sustainable Water Supply

**Drinking Water Aquifer Clean Up.** The Mission Valley Aquifer has been remediated to meet drinking water standards. The City of San Diego has plans to develop the Mission Valley Aquifer and releases of petroleum constituents from the nearby bulk fuel storage facility, Mission Valley Terminal, impacted the groundwater with petroleum constituents. The contamination plume extended over a mile long. The San Diego Water Board issued a Cleanup and Abatement Order (CAO) that required cleanup of free product, soil, and dissolved constituents. The CAO set aggressive deadlines to remove the residual petroleum from the soil and reduce the groundwater concentrations to below the drinking water standards. The responsible party expanded and accelerated the cleanup and successfully met the deadlines required by the CAO.

**Facilitating Regional Uses of Recycled Water.** The San Diego Water Board took actions to further the goals of the State Water Board's Recycled Water Policy, State Water Board Strategic Plan, and the San Diego Water Board's Practical Vision to facilitate regional recycled water uses. The San Diego Water Board convened two public workshops on Recycled Water and adopted three revised Master Reclamation Permits for the North City Water Reclamation Plant (City of San Diego), Woods Valley

Ranch Water Reclamation Facility (Valley Center MWD), and the Santa Maria Wastewater Treatment Plant (Ramona MWD). The San Diego Water Board also facilitated the permitting of recycled water reuses from recycled water filling stations for 10 recycled water agencies in the San Diego Region. These stations will be designed to provide tertiary treated recycled water for non-potable uses, including:

- Street sweeping and cleaning of sidewalks and outdoor work areas.
- Dust control, compaction and construction.
- Pipeline flushing and pressure testing.
- Commercial and residential landscape irrigation and agricultural operations.
- Fire protection/fire suppression.

The San Diego Water Board used the State Water Board's Order No. WQ 2016-0068-DDW to enroll recycled water purveyors who can provide tertiary treated recycled water to fill stations for the uses listed above. The San Diego Water Board published an Executive Officer Report for the Recycled Water Annual Summary (May 2016). Based on the information reported, the amount of recycled water produced in the region was 96,000 acre-feet, which is approximately 57 percent of the permitted recycled water production for the San Diego Region. Slightly over 55,000 acre feet of the produced recycled water was beneficially reused in the San Diego Region.

## Core Program Accomplishments

**Acceptance of Water Quality Improvement Plans.** In 2016, the San Diego Water Board Executive Officer accepted seven Water Quality Improvement Plans that describe watershed wide goals, strategies, and schedules for addressing the Region's highest priority water quality conditions within San Diego County. A key feature of the San Diego Water Board's Regional Phase I Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit, Order No. R9-2013-0001, (the Regional MS4 Permit) is that it provides an adaptive management pathway for Copermittees to select and address the highest priority water quality issues through a non-punitive iterative process incorporated in watershed-specific Water Quality Improvement Plans. The Water Quality Improvement Plans are developed through a collaborative effort by the Copermittees in each Watershed Management Area, and other key stakeholders, including representatives from the San Diego Water Board. The Water Quality Improvement Plans include descriptions of the highest priority pollutants or conditions in a specific watershed, goals and strategies to address those pollutants or conditions, and time schedules associated with those goals and strategies. By allowing the Copermittees to expend their resources to address the highest priority issues, they will no longer be required to address "all pollutants, all of the time," as was the premise of previous storm water permits.

**Human Health Protected from Vapor Intrusion.** In 2016 the San Diego Water Board worked with the Department of Navy to investigate and mitigate vapor intrusion risks associated with chlorinated solvents in shallow groundwater contamination plumes at Naval Air Station North Island (NASNI). Investigations include evaluation of sub-slab soil gas as well as indoor air, over at least 2 seasons (summer and winter). Building 379 at NASNI overlies a non-aqueous phase liquid (NAPL) plume comprised of jet fuel, Stoddard solvent, and chlorinated solvents. The volume of NAPL is estimated between 30,000 to 350,000 gallons and affects an area of approximately 160,000 square feet. Based on the investigations, Building 379 was found to have unacceptable risk to human health due to the presence of trichloroethene (TCE) in indoor air above EPA's Accelerated Response Action Level (ARAL) of 8 microgram per meter cubed. The Navy took immediate action at Building 379 which included communication of risks at the site with stakeholders, offering temporary relocation of personnel requesting it, conducting workplace indoor air monitoring, and installing air filtration units in lunch room and first floor restrooms. Vapor entry points were sealed which included cleaning out and re-sealing more than 15,000 linear feet of expansion joints, floor cracks, and other penetrations through the building foundation. A horizontal soil vapor extraction system has also been installed under the slab of the building to keep the vapors from moving into the building. The Soil vapor extraction system is performing effectively, decreasing levels of TCE in indoor air to less than the ARAL and mitigating the risk to human health.

**Enforcement.** The San Diego Water Board adopted Order No. R9-2016-0064, assessing civil liability of \$595,367 against developer San Altos-Lemon Grove, LLC, in August of 2016. Adoption of the Order resolves allegations of violations of the Construction General Storm Water Permit at the Valencia Hills Construction Project in the Chollas Creek watershed. The complaint was originally issued in support of the City

of Lemon Grove's efforts to regulate construction projects consistent with its own municipal storm water permit. The complaint alleged dozens of violations and cited numerous warnings and inspections by the City, San Diego Water Board and the construction project's own Qualified Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan Developers and Practitioners. The Water Board Advisory Team was exhaustive in reviewing and resolving evidentiary issues involved in the matter and held deliberations over three Board Meetings. The entirety of the penalty will be paid into the Statewide Cleanup and Abatement Account that is used to address water quality impacts that do not have a viable responsible party.