

Proposed SWAMP Monitoring in the San Diego region for FY 11/12

1. Microcystin Study

In the past, microcystin-producing cyanobacteria were confirmed in Lake San Marcos in the Carlsbad watershed, San Diego County. There is evidence that cyanobacteria and microcystin also occur in other lakes/reservoirs, streams, and wetlands in San Diego County but no monitoring program exists for cyanobacteria and microcystin in San Diego County. The funding allocated for the microcystin study will be a first screening of cyanobacteria and microcystin in freshwater in the San Diego region.

2. Monitoring Coordination

The purpose of this project is to improve monitoring and assessment of San Diego region's watersheds and waterbodies through stakeholder coordination and program integration. In the San Diego region, a number of different monitoring and assessment programs are conducted by and for a number of different entities. Some of these programs are controlled by the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board; some are controlled by other entities. Although existing monitoring and assessment programs generate substantial amounts of data, important basic information about the conditions in San Diego region's coastal wetlands is not produced, is not up-to-date, and/or is not easy to find, recognize, understand, or communicate to decision makers. Correcting these shortcomings will involve making major changes in existing monitoring and assessment programs and will be implemented through stakeholder coordination.

For the past two years, allocations from the SWAMP R9 program supported the monitoring coordination for the San Diego River watershed, for coastal wetlands in San Diego County, as well as for the agricultural dischargers. There is a need to develop and implement a region-wide coordination of water quality monitoring. Funding allocated from this work order will support the coordination of monitoring guided by previous coordination projects. In addition, part of the allocations will be used to follow up on the San Diego River and coastal wetlands monitoring coordination projects. The contractor will lead the coordination of monitoring in the San Diego region by (1) convening a stakeholder group; (2) reviewing past and current monitoring programs, monitoring requirements, and assessments; (3) developing an integrated, and cost-effective monitoring and assessment program plan; and (4) coordinating the initial implementation of the integrated monitoring program.

3. Monitoring of Freshwater Depressional Wetlands

To date, the SWAMP program has not focused on freshwater depressional wetlands, despite the fact that they comprise approximately 45% of the State's 3.6 million acres of wetlands. Most monitoring and assessment of depressional wetlands is associated with specific impact or mitigation projects. As a result, available information is limited in space and time and there is little knowledge of overall extent and condition of depressional wetlands.

The San Diego, Santa Ana, and Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Boards have determined that evaluation of the extent and condition of depressional wetlands

will be a priority for the next several years as a new element of the cooperative regional monitoring and assessment in southern California. Depressional wetlands are of particular interest since they are the most abundant wetland type, are subject to ongoing impacts, and are seldom systematically monitored. This study will be the first-ever systematic condition assessment of southern California depressional wetlands, in addition, this project will help expand the science of depressional wetland assessment by developing a study design and indicators that could be adopted or modified for other regions of the State.

The depressional wetland assessment will address the following questions of importance to regulatory agencies and regulated communities, and public:

1. What is the extent and distribution of depressional wetlands in Southern California?
2. What is the condition of depressional wetlands in Southern California?
3. What are the major stressors affecting depressional wetland condition in Southern California?

Funding from this work order will support the first year of this study. The contractor for this study will be the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP).

4. Identification of benthic macroinvertebrate samples from the San Diego Stream Team

The San Diego Stream Team is a non-profit organization in San Diego County which is focusing their efforts on monitoring the health of San Diego rivers and streams. Citizen volunteers of the San Diego Stream Team are trained in the most recent sampling methods of SWAMP for collecting benthic macroinvertebrates. However, the organization is lacking funding to process the samples that were taken. Funding allocated through this work order will support the identification of three samples taken by the San Diego Stream Team.