

San Diego Regional Water Quality Data Portal

What is it?

The San Diego Regional Water Quality Data Portal has the goal of presenting primary data from diverse sources in a unified way so that water quality data is more easily accessible to stakeholders. The project started in 2009 and focuses on the San Diego region. In addition to providing access to traditional water quality monitoring data, the portal will incorporate other spatial information, online tools, and other features to make the data more usable. The first public release is scheduled for April 2010. The general objectives for portal are to: (1) consolidate access to different sources of water quality and related information; (2) enable unified access to this information. Examples include different water quality monitoring programs and water quality regulatory programs, basin plan data, and important spatial layers related to water quality (e.g., major water bodies, watersheds, monitoring sites, jurisdictional boundaries), documents, and photographs; (3) make the data easy to use by the general public, requiring no special technical expertise, through simple on-line tools to search for, retrieve, visualize and export the data; (4) integrate information, allowing users to bring together information across different water quality programs and spatial layers, based on their areas of interest; (5) make the portal expandable, so new data sets, spatial features (layers), on-line tools, and functionality can be added in the future; (6) keep the portal network friendly, so data can be distributed across stakeholders' portals; and (7) maintain data integrity, through periodic updates and maintenance.

Another objective of the project is to develop innovative and institutional mechanisms to make the data portal economically self-sustaining through local stakeholder involvement. This should encourage local control and stewardship of the data, lower costs, and deliver real value to stakeholders.

Why is it important to the State?

The project will help meet the San Diego Regional Water Board's objective of making the data

it collects readily available to the public. Online access will decrease staff time and other internal costs incurred by individual data requests. Easy access to information also is expected to encourage involvement by individuals and regional environmental NGOs, and ultimately improve water quality.

Why is it important to me?

The project is important to different stakeholders because: (1) it provides easy access to water quality data in the San Diego region; (2) it encourages transparency and accountability; and (3) it supports environmental protection by providing for knowledge-based decision-making.

How will this information be used?

Stakeholders interacting with the data portal will decide how they want to use the information. Potential uses, among others, include: (1) increasing public awareness and outreach on a watershed-level; (2) implementing watershed-level strategies through integrated approaches to improve cost-effectiveness of monitoring programs; (3) identifying sources of pollution; (4) assessing the effectiveness of water quality regulatory programs; (5) encouraging information sharing and collaboration between stakeholders; and (6) enabling integrated, collaborative watershed management.

