



Effective Coordination of Monitoring and Assessment in the San Diego River Watershed

What is it?

The San Diego Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program has initiated a project to improve monitoring and assessment of surface waters in the San Diego River watershed through collaboration and coordination with stakeholders. The goal of the project is to develop a coordinated and cost-effective monitoring and assessment plan for the San Diego River watershed. The project employs a multi-stakeholder, collaborative approach and is facilitated by the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP), and Dr. Brock Bernstein.

A number of organizations currently monitor surface waters in the San Diego River watershed, but this monitoring is largely uncoordinated. Some monitoring is done in connection with San Diego Water Board regulatory requirements, such as permits for discharges from municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) and a wastewater treatment plant. Other monitoring is conducted by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), water supply entities, and an academic group, independently of San Diego Water Board regulatory requirements. Although existing monitoring and assessment programs generate substantial amounts of data, the lack of coordination among monitoring programs means that the data can not be used to answer important questions about the basic condition of the San Diego watershed. Furthermore, data may be out-of-date and/or difficult to find, recognize, understand or communicate to decision makers.

Why is it important to the State?

This project is important to the State because it will ensure that useful data is collected and made accessible to decision makers. Also, the project focuses on coordination among different Water Board programs, which will improve consistency and efficiency among the programs and result in resource savings.

Why is it important to me?

The most critical component of this project is the collaboration with stakeholders who have an interest in the health of the surface waters of the San Diego River watershed. Stakeholders and other interested parties have the opportunity to participate in the project and help improve monitoring and assessment of the watershed.

How will this information be used?

The data from the monitoring coordination project will help improve the effectiveness of management decisions which can lead to the improvement of water quality and to the protection of beneficial uses in the San Diego River watershed. This project will also serve as a model for future projects to improve monitoring and assessment in other watersheds in the San Diego Region and throughout the State.