

Join us each Monday as the Clean Water Team shares resources on water quality monitoring. Today let's look at Water Quality Control Plans/Basin Plans.

There are nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards (Regional Boards) with the mission to develop and enforce water quality objectives and implementation plans that will best protect the beneficial uses of the State's waters, recognizing local differences in climate, topography, geology, and hydrology. California's water quality standards are embodied in Water Quality Control Plans, also known as Basin Plans. Basin Plans are administered by these Regional Water Quality Control Boards and in several statewide Plans and Policies administered by the State Water Resources Control Board.

Each Basin Plan contains the regulations adopted by a Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) to control the discharge of waste and other controllable factors affecting the quality of waters of the state within the boundaries of the North Coast Region. [Porter-Cologne](#) defines "Waters of the state" to mean any surface water or groundwater, including saline waters, within the boundaries of the state. The Basin Plan, as amended periodically, establishes the beneficial uses of water within the region; the water quality objectives necessary to protect those uses, including an antidegradation policy; the prohibitions, policies, and action plans, by which protections are implemented; and the monitoring, which is conducted to ensure attainment of water quality standards. Under the Clean Water Act, water quality standards include designated uses, water quality criteria, and an antidegradation policy. Porter-Cologne modifies the federal language to refer to designated uses as beneficial uses and water quality criteria as water quality objectives, which includes the State Water Board's antidegradation policy (Resolution 68-16).

Porter-Cologne also requires a program of implementation for water quality protection in California. A program of implementation includes actions necessary to achieve objectives, a time schedule for the actions to be taken, and monitoring to determine compliance with water quality objectives and protection of beneficial uses of water. Beneficial uses are the resources, services, and qualities of California's aquatic systems. The Water Board's mission is to preserve, enhance, and restore water quality for the protection of all uses. Swimming, fishing, spawning habitat, protected species habitat, agricultural use, tribal and cultural use, and municipal and domestic supply are all examples of beneficial uses. Each use represents a different type of benefit provided by California's watersheds, and each Regional Water Board has defined and designated beneficial uses unique to their waters.

Basin Plans are adopted by each individual Regional Water Board and approved by the [State Water Resources Control Board](#) (State Board), and the [Office of Administrative Law](#) (OAL). Once approved, the amendments are submitted to the [United State Environmental Protection Agency](#) (USEPA) who then approves the water quality standards contained in the Basin Plan, as required by the [Clean Water Act](#).

The Basin Plan is used as a regulatory tool by the Regional Water Board. Regional Water Board orders cite the Basin Plan's [water quality standards](#), prohibitions, and other programs of

implementation applicable to a particular discharge or category of discharge. The Basin Plan is also used by other agencies in their permitting and resource management activities. Further, it serves as an educational and reference document for dischargers, water quality monitors, watershed stewards, and members of the public.

Basin Plans Online

- BMP [Portal](#)
- BMP [Map](#)
- BMP [Story Map](#)

Regional Board Water Quality Control Plans (Basin Plans)

- Region 1 - [North Coast Region](#)
- Region 2 - [San Francisco Bay Region](#)
- Region 3 - [Central Coast Region](#)
- Region 4 - [Los Angeles Region](#)
- Region 5 - [Central Valley Region](#)
- Region 6 - [Lahontan Region](#)
- Region 7 - [Colorado River Basin Region](#)
- Region 8 - [Santa Ana Region](#)
- Region 9 - [San Diego Region](#)

Water Boards Plans and Policies

An overview of California's water quality control plans and state policies for water quality control may be found in California's continuing planning process report, which is periodically submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

www.waterboards.ca.gov/plans_policies

USEPA - Water Quality Standards Regulations: [California](#)

Water Quality Goals Part 1 – Basin Plans: [Video](#)

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