A California Water Boards Treasure Chest

It’s a Compendium

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Many Californians have joined other members of their community to care for and monitor local streams, lakes, and beaches to help ensure their protection. Since 1999 their go-to place for assistance has been the California Water Boards’ Clean Water Team (Team). The Team helps watershed monitoring efforts that rely wholly or in part on citizen scientists. The Team does this by providing technical assistance and guidance documents, training, quality assurance/quality control support, temporary loans of equipment, and communication to citizen monitoring programs and watershed stewardship organizations. One of the Team’s greatest resources is their Guidance Compendium for Watershed Monitoring and Assessment. It’s like a treasure chest filled with many gems.

The Clean Water Team’s Compendium is a collection of How to Manuals (starting and running a monitoring program), Fact Sheets (presenting ecological significance and regulatory benchmarks), Information Papers (method “menus” and principles), Standard Operating Procedures (step-by-step instructions), and more. This Compendium was created to help citizen monitoring programs organize and produce actionable data for watershed stewardship. Many groups outside of California and internationally also use the Compendium. And it’s not just citizen monitoring programs; researchers, agencies, and colleges use the Compendium as well.

The Compendium is organized into 9 Sections, plus appendices and notes. Section 1 is an introduction to the universe of citizen monitoring and is very useful for those thinking about starting a citizen monitoring program and those who already have. In Section 2 you will find guidance documents related to proper field procedures, such as sample collection, sample preservation, custody, and field work considerations. If you need information about measurements taken at one point in a water body, you will find them and many water quality Fact Sheets in Section 3. Section 4 is filled with guidance related to stream measurements (e.g., flow, visual observations, trash, wildlife). Measurements taken in a watershed such as rainfall, sediment, or geographic information for watershed use are in Section 5 and Section 6. Programmatic quality assurance and quality control (QA, QC, and QAPP) along with data quality management (DQM) are demystified in Section 7 and Section 8. The compendium even includes guidance on specific staff and volunteers roles as they relate to data quality management (Section 9).

The Compendium is a living resource in that it continues to grow as more guidance and organizational management documents are added to it. To date it includes over 300 items. You don’t have to be a pirate to enjoy this treasure chest – just be a scientist, resource manager, or a caring citizen.

www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/swamp/cwt_guidance.shtml

Se Habla Espanol?

Did you know that Compendium has many resources written in Spanish? These include Fact Sheets on all 5 Vital Signs, aquatic invertebrates and a list of Spanish language water quality monitoring resource Web-Links.