

3. WATER QUALITY OBJECTIVES

The California Water Code, Division 7, Chapter 4, Section 13241 specifies that each Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) shall establish water quality objectives which, in the Regional Water Board's judgment, are necessary for the reasonable protection of the beneficial uses and for the prevention of nuisance.

The federal Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 303) requires the State to submit to the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for approval all new or revised water quality standards which are established for surface and ocean waters. Under federal terminology, water quality standards consist of the beneficial uses enumerated in Table 2-1 and the water quality objectives contained in this section. The water quality objectives contained herein are designed to satisfy all state and federal requirements.

As new information becomes available, the Regional Water Board will review the appropriateness of the objectives contained herein. These objectives will be subject to public hearing at least once during each three-year period following adoption of this Basin Plan to determine the need for review and modification as appropriate.

The water quality objectives contained herein are a compilation of objectives adopted by the State Water Board, the Regional Water Board, and other state and federal agencies. Other water quality objectives and policies may apply that may be more stringent. Whenever several different objectives exist for the same water quality parameter, the strictest objective applies. In addition, the State Water Board "Policy With Respect to Maintaining High Quality Waters in California" also applies.

Controllable water quality factors shall conform to the water quality objectives contained herein. When other factors result in the degradation of water quality beyond the levels or limits established herein as water quality objectives, then controllable factors shall not cause further degradation of water quality. Controllable water quality factors are those actions, conditions, or circumstances resulting from man's activities that may influence the quality of the waters of the State and that may be reasonably controlled.

Water quality objectives form the basis for establishment of waste discharge requirements, waste discharge prohibitions, or maximum acceptable cleanup standards for all individuals and dischargers. These water quality objectives are considered to be necessary to protect those present and probable future beneficial uses enumerated in Table 2-1 and to protect existing high quality waters of the State. These objectives will be achieved primarily through the establishment of waste discharge requirements and through the implementation of this Basin Plan. The appropriate numeric water quality standards will be established in waste discharge orders.

The Regional Water Board, in setting waste discharge requirements, will consider, among other things, the potential impact on beneficial uses within the area of influence of the discharge, the existing quality of receiving waters, and the appropriate water quality objectives. The Regional Water Board will make a finding as to the beneficial uses to be protected within the area of influence of the discharge and establish waste discharge requirements to protect those uses and to meet water quality objectives. Resolution Nos. 87-113, 89-131, and 92-135 describe the policy of the Regional Water Board regarding the specific types of waste discharge for which it will waive issuance of waste discharge requirements. These resolutions are included in the Appendix Section of this Plan.

The water quality objectives for the Region refer to several classes of waters. Ocean waters are waters of the Pacific Ocean outside of enclosed bays, estuaries, and coastal lagoons, and within the territorial (3 mile) limit. Bays are indentations along the coast which include oceanic waters within distinct headlands or harbor works whose narrowest opening is less than 75 percent of the greatest dimension of the enclosed portion of the bay; this definition includes only Crescent City Harbor in the Klamath River Basin, and Humboldt Bay and Bodega Bay in the North Coastal Basin. Estuaries are waters at the mouths of streams which serve as mixing zones for freshwater and seawater; they generally extend from the upstream limit of tidal action to a bay or open ocean. The principal estuarine areas of the Region are at the mouths of the Smith and Klamath Rivers and Lakes Earl and Talawa, and at the mouths of the Eel, Noyo, and Russian Rivers. Inland waters include all surface

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waters and groundwaters of the basin not included in the definitions of ocean waters, enclosed bays, or estuaries. Interstate waters include all rivers, streams, and lakes which flow across or form part of a state boundary. Groundwaters are any subsurface bodies of water which are beneficially used or usable. They include perched water if such water is used or usable or is hydraulically continuous with used or usable water.

The water quality objectives which follow supersede and replace those contained in the 1971 "Interim Water Quality Control Plan for the Klamath River Basin," the 1967 "Water Quality Control Policy for the Klamath River in California," the 1967 "Water Quality Control Policy for the Smith River in California," the 1967 "Water Quality Control Policy for the Humboldt-Del Norte Coastal Waters," the 1969 "Water Quality Control Policy for the Lost River," the 1971 "Interim Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coastal Basin," the 1967 "Water Quality Control Policy for the Sonoma-Mendocino Coast," the 1975 "Water Quality Control Plan for the Klamath River Basin (1A)," the 1975 "Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coastal Basin (1B)," and the 1988 "Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region".

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The following objective shall apply to all waters of the Region.

Whenever the existing quality of water is better than the water quality objectives established herein, such existing quality shall be maintained unless otherwise provided by the provisions of the State Water Resources Control Board Resolution No. 68-16, "Statement of Policy with Respect to Maintaining High Quality of Waters in California", including any revisions thereto. A copy of this policy is included verbatim in the Appendix Section of this Plan.

OBJECTIVES FOR OCEAN WATERS

The provisions of the State Water Board's "Water Quality Control Plan for Ocean Waters of California" (Ocean Plan), and "Water Quality Control Plan for Control of Temperature in the Coastal and Interstate Waters and Enclosed Bays and Estuaries of California" (Thermal Plan), and any revisions thereto

shall apply. Copies of these plans are included verbatim in the Appendix Section of this Plan.

OBJECTIVES FOR INLAND SURFACE WATERS, ENCLOSED BAYS, AND ESTUARIES

In addition to the General Objective, the specific objectives contained in Table 3-1 and the following objectives shall apply for inland surface waters, bays, and estuaries.

Color

Waters shall be free of coloration that causes nuisance or adversely affects beneficial uses.

Tastes and Odors

Waters shall not contain taste- or odor-producing substances in concentrations that impart undesirable tastes or odors to fish flesh or other edible products of aquatic origin, or that cause nuisance or adversely affect beneficial uses.

Numeric water quality objectives with regards to taste and odor thresholds have been developed by the State Department of Health Services and the U.S. EPA. These numeric objectives, as well as those available in the technical literature, are incorporated into waste discharge requirements and cleanup and abatement orders as appropriate.

Floating Material

Waters shall not contain floating material, including solids, liquids, foams, and scum, in concentrations that cause nuisance or adversely affect beneficial uses.

Suspended Material

Waters shall not contain suspended material in concentrations that cause nuisance or adversely affect beneficial uses.

Settleable Material

Waters shall not contain substances in concentrations that result in deposition of material that causes nuisance or adversely affect beneficial uses.

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Oil and Grease

Waters shall not contain oils, greases, waxes, or other materials in concentrations that result in a visible film or coating on the surface of the water or on objects in the water, that cause nuisance, or that otherwise adversely affect beneficial uses.

Biostimulatory Substances

Waters shall not contain biostimulatory substances in concentrations that promote aquatic growths to the extent that such growths cause nuisance or adversely affect beneficial uses.

Sediment

The suspended sediment load and suspended sediment discharge rate of surface waters shall not be altered in such a manner as to cause nuisance or adversely affect beneficial uses.

Turbidity

Turbidity shall not be increased more than 20 percent above naturally occurring background levels. Allowable zones of dilution within which higher percentages can be tolerated may be defined for specific discharges upon the issuance of discharge permits or waiver thereof.

pH

The pH shall conform to those limits listed in Table 3-1. For waters not listed in Table 3-1 and where pH objectives are not prescribed, the pH shall not be depressed below 6.5 nor raised above 8.5.

Changes in normal ambient pH levels shall not exceed 0.2 units in waters with designated marine (MAR) or saline (SAL) beneficial uses nor 0.5 units within the range specified above in fresh waters with designated COLD or WARM beneficial uses.

Dissolved Oxygen

Dissolved oxygen concentrations shall conform to those limits listed in Table 3-1. For waters not listed in Table 3-1 and where dissolved oxygen objectives are not prescribed the dissolved oxygen concentrations shall not be reduced below the following minimum levels at any time.

Waters designated WARM, MAR, or SAL . . . 5.0 mg/l
 Waters designated COLD 6.0 mg/l
 Waters designated SPWN 7.0 mg/l
 Waters designated SPWN during critical spawning and egg incubation periods . . . 9.0 mg/l

Bacteria

The bacteriological quality of waters of the North Coast Region shall not be degraded beyond natural background levels. In no case shall coliform concentrations in waters of the North Coast Region exceed the following:

In waters designated for contact recreation (REC-1), the median fecal coliform concentration based on a minimum of not less than five samples for any 30-day period shall not exceed 50/100 ml, nor shall more than ten percent of total samples during any 30-day period exceed 400/100 ml (State Department of Health Services).

At all areas where shellfish may be harvested for human consumption (SHELL), the fecal coliform concentration throughout the water column shall not exceed 43/100 ml for a 5-tube decimal dilution test or 49/100 ml when a three-tube decimal dilution test is used (National Shellfish Sanitation Program, Manual of Operation).

Temperature

Temperature objectives for COLD interstate waters, WARM interstate waters, and Enclosed Bays and Estuaries are as specified in the "Water Quality Control Plan for Control of Temperature in the Coastal and Interstate Waters and Enclosed Bays of California" including any revisions thereto. A copy of this plan is included verbatim in the Appendix Section of this Plan.

In addition, the following temperature objectives apply to surface waters:

The natural receiving water temperature of intrastate waters shall not be altered unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Regional Water Board that such alteration in temperature does not adversely affect beneficial uses.

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At no time or place shall the temperature of any COLD water be increased by more than 5°F above natural receiving water temperature.

At no time or place shall the temperature of WARM intrastate waters be increased more than 5°F above natural receiving water temperature.

Toxicity

All waters shall be maintained free of toxic substances in concentrations that are toxic to, or that produce detrimental physiological responses in human, plant, animal, or aquatic life. Compliance with this objective will be determined by use of indicator organisms, analyses of species diversity, population density, growth anomalies, bioassays of appropriate duration, or other appropriate methods as specified by the Regional Water Board.

The survival of aquatic life in surface waters subjected to a waste discharge, or other controllable water quality factors, shall not be less than that for the same water body in areas unaffected by the waste discharge, or when necessary for other control water that is consistent with the requirements for "experimental water" as described in **Standard Methods for the Examination of Water and Wastewater**, 18th Edition (1992). As a minimum, compliance with this objective as stated in the previous sentence shall be evaluated with a 96-hour bioassay.

In addition, effluent limits based upon acute bioassays of effluents will be prescribed. Where appropriate, additional numerical receiving water objectives for specific toxicants will be established as sufficient data become available, and source control of toxic substances will be encouraged.

Pesticides

No individual pesticide or combination of pesticides shall be present in concentrations that adversely affect beneficial uses. There shall be no bioaccumulation of pesticide concentrations found in bottom sediments or aquatic life.

Waters designated for use as domestic or municipal supply shall not contain concentrations of pesticides in excess of the limiting concentrations set forth in California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 4,

Chapter 15, Article 4, Section 64444.5 (Table 5), and listed in Table 3-2 of this Plan.

Chemical Constituents

Waters designated for use as domestic or municipal supply (MUN) shall not contain concentrations of chemical constituents in excess of the limits specified in California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Chapter 15, Division 4, Article 4, Section 64435 (Tables 2 and 3), and Section 64444.5 (Table 5), and listed in Table 3-2 of this Plan.

Waters designated for use as agricultural supply (AGR) shall not contain concentrations of chemical constituents in amounts which adversely affect such beneficial use.

Numerical water quality objectives for individual waters are contained in Table 3-1.

Radioactivity

Radionuclides shall not be present in concentrations which are deleterious to human, plant, animal or aquatic life nor which result in the accumulation of radionuclides in the food web to an extent which presents a hazard to human, plant, animal, or indigenous aquatic life.

Waters designated for use as domestic or municipal supply (MUN) shall not contain concentrations of radionuclides in excess of the limits specified in California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 4, Chapter 15, Article 4, Section 64443, Table 4, and listed below:

MCL Radioactivity

<u>Constituent</u>	<u>Maximum Contaminant Level, pCi/l</u>
Combined Radium-226 and Radium-228	5
Gross Alpha particle activity	15
(including Radium-226 but excluding Radon and Uranium)	
Tritium	20,000
Strontium-90	8
Gross Beta particle activity	50
Uranium	20