

October 21, 2009

Ms. Cynthia Gorham-Test,
California Regional Water Quality Control Board,
San Diego Region,
9174 Sky Park Court,
Suite 100,
San Diego, CA 92123-4340.

Re: City of Santee Comments on Proposed 2008 303(d) Listings for the San Diego Region (TMDL: 656901)

Dear Ms. Gorham-Test,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Section 305 (b) and 303(d) Integrated Report for the San Diego Region. The following comments relate specifically related to the San Diego River watershed where the City of Santee is located. Our comments are presented below:

Item 1

Observation: Appendix A (proposed and revised sections [Attachment 1]) states that the only change for Forester Creek is the listing of Selenium. There are no changes listed for the San Diego River. Appendix B (Summary of Assessed Waterbodies [Attachment 2]) lists Manganese as "List on 303(d)" for San Diego River (upper) on page 85. Appendix B also list Enterococcus, Nitrogen and Toxicity as "List on 303(d)" for San Diego River (lower) also on page 85.

Comment: Appendix A and Appendix B should be consistent. Please clarify which impairments are proposed for the San Diego River and Forester Creek, so that they can be commented on. It is our understanding from a conversation with Mr. Monjii, that if any additions to Appendix A are required, then they would be made available for comment.

Item 2

Observation: Forester Creek was listed on the final 303(d) list for 2006, however the supporting factsheet concludes "Do Not List" Forester Creek for dissolved oxygen. The factsheet for 2008 states that "no new data were assessed for 2008. The decision has not changed." Based on these observations it is concluded that Forester Creek was listed with an impairment for dissolved oxygen through typographical error.

Comment: This error should be corrected and Forester Creek no longer listed with an impairment for dissolved oxygen.

Item 3

Observation: Supporting information for manganese to be listed on the 303(d) list for the San Diego River (upper) (Line of Evidence ID 9015, for Decision ID 17050) states that SWAMP data collected on March, April, June, and September 2002 (from sample location 907SSDR15) were used to support the decision for the listing. A search of the SWAMP database and the referenced SWAMP Report for 2007 did not provide this data.

Comment: At present it is not possible to assess the justification for this listing. Any data used to support the listing of manganese in the upper San Diego River should be provided for review.

Item 4

Observation: Line of Evidence ID 7490 for Decision ID 17046 (states for Nitrogen "List on 303(d)" for San Diego River (lower) that four samples were collected from 907SSDR15. The samples collected on 2/28/05 and 9/13/04 were listed as being "matrix spike/matrix spike duplicate." These were the only data that exceeded the threshold used in the Line of Evidence of 1.0 mg/L. It appears that this data was inappropriately used (see Attachment 4). In addition, the method used to analyze the nitrogen (QC10107062E) appears to be a proprietary analytical method. Insufficient information is available to assess if these is equivalent to EPA Method 351.1 or some other widely-used method and if its use is appropriate.

Comment: This line of evidence cannot be used to justify the nitrogen listing and should be removed.

Item 5

Observation: Line of Evidence ID 7489 for Decision ID 17046 uses samples collected during wet weather. Samples collected during wet weather are not indicative of normal ambient conditions, but reflect the more extreme conditions of a rain event. All exposed areas have rainwater running over them mobilizing natural and man-made sources of nitrogen. This is an event that occurs periodically, and would naturally introduce heavier loads than those observed during dry weather conditions. Many beneficial uses (such as Rec-1 and Rec-2) would not be enjoyed during a rain event, therefore it is incorrect to apply data from conditions where the beneficial use would not be enjoyed.

Comment: Remove data collected from wet weather sampling.

Item 6

Observation: Line of Evidence ID 7487 for Decision ID 17047 uses samples collected during wet weather. Samples collected during wet weather are not indicative of normal ambient conditions, but reflect the more extreme conditions of a rain event. All exposed areas have rainwater running over them mobilizing natural and man-made sources of enterococcus. There is a growing body of research that indicates that enterococcus can originate from a number of different sources including plants, animals, and humans. Inferring that a loading of enterococcus

originates from anthropogenic sources and then applying it to determine a listing is not acceptable. The lower San Diego River is already listed for fecal coliforms, therefore sources of human fecal matter will already be addressed. This listing does not add any benefit in working towards improved water quality.

In addition, these samples were collected during rain events. A rain event occurs periodically, and would naturally introduce heavier loads than those observed during dry weather conditions. Many beneficial uses (such as Rec-1 and Rec-2) would not be enjoyed during a rain event, therefore it is incorrect to apply data from conditions where the beneficial use would not be enjoyed.

Comment: Do not list *Enterococcus* for the lower San Diego River.

Item 7

Observation: Toxicity is identified as a potential listing.

Comment: It is inappropriate to include it in the draft report if a decision has still to be made on whether it should be listed or not. Remove this from Appendix B.

Item 8

Observation: Selenium has been added to the 303(d) list for Forester Creek based on four samples collected at 907SDRFC2. Based on information observed in other regions (Attachment 4), selenium occurs naturally in rocks and is mobilized by nitrates in groundwater. No potential source for the selenium has been identified in the factsheet. It is likely that the reported concentrations of selenium are a result of natural conditions in the watershed. The Santiago Formation is reported to be high in selenium and groundwater data presented by the Cities of Santee and El Cajon have shown that there are concentrations of nitrates in groundwater above 10 milligrams per Liter (10 mg/L) within the watershed. It is unreasonable to list Forester Creek for an impairment that requires a TMDL if the condition is naturally-occurring. At a minimum the listing should be under a category where a TMDL is not required (Category 4c for example).

Comment: Do not list selenium in Forester Creek as Category 5. If a listing is required, then list it under a category where a TMDL is not required.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these proposed listings. Please contact Helen Perry at (619) 258-4100 x177 if you have any questions about this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Pedro Orso Delgado, P.E.
Deputy City Manager/Director of Development Services

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