SWAMP Monitoring Strategy

Los Angeles Regional Water Board

During the first five years of the Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP), the Los Angeles Regional Water Board focused on funding monitoring in each of our 10 watersheds on a rotating basis. Due to funding constraints, we spent most of our resources on monitoring wadeable streams, relying on a triad of indicators to assess whether the aquatic life beneficial use is being supported (benthic macroinvertebrate community, water column toxicity, water column chemistry). We assessed 6 of the 10 watersheds: Calleguas Creek, Santa Clara River, Santa Monica Bay, Los Angeles River, San Gabriel River, Dominguez Channel. We also monitored a few estuaries (Calleguas Creek, Santa Clara River, Los Angeles River, San Gabriel River), harbors (Los Angeles/Long Beach Harbor, Port Hueneme), and marinas (Ventura Marina, Channel Islands Harbor) and lagoons to assess protection of aquatic life. We were only able to monitor one lake to assess protection of aquatic life (Lake Machado).

Following SWAMP's scientific review, we shifted our strategy to augment statewide SWAMP programs. In 2007, we sampled 32 lakes and reservoirs in the Los Angeles Region in conjunction with the statewide study of contamination in fish from lakes to assess whether it is safe to consume sportfish from these waterbodies. In 2008, we sampled 6 watersheds with the triad of indicators mentioned above in conjunction with the SWAMP Perennial Stream Assessment (PSA) initiated in 2008 and to begin early implementation of the PSA-based design adopted by the Southern California Stormwater Monitoring Coalition (due to begin in 2009). In 2008, we also contributed to the Bight'08 regional monitoring

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program to survey coastal waters in the Southern California Bight. In 2009, we are sampling in two watersheds (Santa Monica Bay, Santa Clara River) to help implement the Southern California Stormwater Monitoring Coalition watershed monitoring program and we expect to continue this support in 2010 and subsequent years.

In 2009, we contributed funding to augment the SWAMP's study of contamination in sportfish in coastal waters, bays and estuaries to assess whether it is safe to consume sportfish from these waterbodies. We also set aside funds to conduct follow-up work on lakes with high fish tissue contamination levels to provide sufficient data for the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) to evaluate the need for fish consumption advisories. This monitoring probably will begin in 2010.

In addition to routine SWAMP matters, staff time has been spent on planning activities associated with the periodic regional Bight surveys of coastal waters, bays and estuaries (1998, 2003, 2008) and coordinating development and implementation of watershed-wide monitoring programs (Calleguas Creek, San Gabriel River, Los Angeles River) that integrate NPDES-mandated monitoring, TMDL monitoring, SWAMP monitoring, volunteer monitoring and other efforts into more useful comprehensive monitoring programs with defined objectives.

The Los Angeles Regional Water Board produced reports on SWAMP monitoring for the Santa Clara and Calleguas Creek Watersheds, the Santa Monica Bay Watershed Management Area, the Dominguez Channel/Los Angeles-Long Beach Harbor Watersheds, and the San Gabriel River Watershed. These reports are available online. A fact sheet providing an overview of the Los Angeles Region also is available online.

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