

EXECUTIVE OFFICER SUMMARY REPORT
February 14, 2018

ITEM:	8
SUBJECT:	Workshop: Administrative Draft of New Biological Water Quality Objectives (<i>Chad Loflen</i>)
PURPOSE:	The purpose of the workshop is to inform the public and the Board about the Administrative Draft of the proposed Basin Plan amendment and to receive information regarding community perspectives on the Administrative Draft.
RECOMMENDATION:	Receive feedback on the Administrative Draft
KEY ISSUES:	The San Diego Water Board has multiple narrative biological criteria in the form of aquatic-life beneficial uses. The proposed Basin Plan amendment would add the first numeric biological objectives in the San Diego Region.
PRACTICAL VISION:	<p>The project supports and implements multiple Practical Vision chapters, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Strategizing for Healthy Waters,2. Monitoring and Assessment, and3. Recovery of Stream, Wetlands, and Riparian Systems4. Proactive Public Outreach and Communication. <p>The public workshop demonstrates the San Diego Water Board's values of communication and transparency by obtaining feedback from the public prior to releasing a formal draft for public review.</p>
DISCUSSION:	A high priority project of the San Diego Water Board 2014 triennial review of water quality standards in the Basin Plan was an amendment to the Basin Plan to incorporate biological water quality objectives in order to protect and restore beneficial uses associated with aquatic and aquatic dependent wildlife. On May 13, 2015, the San Diego Water Board adopted Resolution R9-2015-043, which directed staff to begin working on the project to amend the Basin Plan to incorporate biological water quality objectives.

Since the development of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Porter-Cologne) the San Diego Water Board has relied on direct measurements of a waterbody's chemistry to assess if beneficial uses of waters for human health and ecosystems are protected. These beneficial uses center around the objective of the CWA, which is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's Waters. Forty years of CWA and Porter-Cologne implementation in the San Diego Region has overwhelmingly focused on management of chemical integrity on a pollutant-by-pollutant and waterbody-by-waterbody basis. While largely appropriate for human health risk, this approach is insufficient to fully protect and restore the biological integrity of waters. Biological Objectives are needed to protect and restore the biological integrity of ecosystem-based Beneficial Uses. Scientific advancements in biological metrics for streams has made it practical to add biological objectives to complement the existing chemical objectives.

Biological assessments provide direct measures of the cumulative and integrated response of the biological community to all sources of stress, as the organisms are exposed to these stresses over time. Through this long-term exposure in their usual setting, biological communities provide the most comprehensive measure of the condition of the beneficial use to be protected. Biological objectives set the biological quality goal, or target, to which water quality can be managed against, rather than the maximum allowable level of a stressor(s) (pollutant or other water quality condition) that affects the aquatic life in that waterbody. Evaluating the biological condition of waterbodies, in combination with physical and traditional chemistry-based approaches, allows the San Diego Water Board, other regulatory and regulated agencies, and the community at-large, to take a more balanced and holistic approach when identifying priority areas for protection and guiding measures for meaningful restoration.

This Basin Plan amendment includes changes to Chapter 3 (water quality objectives) and Chapter 4 (implementation). All Basin Plan amendments are subject to peer review, as well as a full public participation and hearing process prior to adoption by the San Diego Water Board. Basin Plan amendments also must be approved by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), Office of Administrative Law (OAL) and, in many cases, the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).

LEGAL CONCERNS: NA

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

1. Administrative Draft Biological Objectives Basin Plan Amendment: Chapter 3
2. Administrative Draft Biological Objectives Basin Plan Amendment: Chapter 4
3. Administrative Draft Biological Objectives Staff Report
4. Public Notice of Board Workshop and Administrative Draft
5. Scientific Publications for the California Stream Condition Index and Stream Reference Site Requirements

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES:

NA

COMPLIANCE RECORD:

NA

PUBLIC NOTICE:

Notification of this public workshop was sent to known interested parties on January 12, 2018, via email subscription lists. Notice was also posted on the San Diego Water Board web page and twitter and Facebook accounts.