

## **Practical Vision and Program Accomplishments for 2018**

The Practical Vision is a tool to focus limited resources onto the region's highest priorities for the 2014 to 2020 time period. Twenty-four projects were undertaken in 2018 to implement the Practical Vision. An Operational Plan for implementing the projects was created to assign staff and budget resources, and establish milestones and schedules for the projects.

In concert with the work of the Practical Vision is the day-to-day programmatic work of the San Diego Water Board. This work falls into three broad categories; planning, permitting, and enforcement. Every year, San Diego Water Board staff prepares program work plans that include performance measures or commitments that are tracked by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) and reported to the legislature. Although some of the Practical Vision projects overlap with program work plan commitments, there is a large body of work beyond the Practical Vision that is necessary to carry out the Board's core programmatic responsibilities.

This report describes some of the Practical Vision projects undertaken in 2017, and also describes the important program accomplishments submitted to the State Water Board for its annual report to the State Legislature.

### Chapter 1. Healthy Waters

**Cleanup of Contaminated Sediment at the Former Naval Training Center.** After a 20-year negotiation and investigation process, the United States Navy (Navy), under the direction of the San Diego Water Board, completed the sediment cleanup at the Former Naval Training Center Boat Channel (Boat Channel) within San Diego Bay. The Remedial Action Plan for the Boat Channel cleanup called for the Navy to dredge sediment contaminated with copper, lead, zinc, chlordane, and dichlorodiphenyl-trichloroethane (DDT) from areas of ecological concern. Historical storm water conveyance system discharges were identified as the source of the contamination in the Boat Channel.

### Chapter 2. Monitoring and Assessment

**Assessments Completed for High Priority Water Quality Beneficial Uses in the San Diego Region.** The San Diego Water Board completed assessments for contact recreation, fish and shellfish consumption, and habitats & ecosystems for priority water quality areas in the region. Key areas are the places where protection and restoration of the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of waters is most important for a key beneficial use. Focused assessments on key uses of waters will help the Board set region-wide strategic priorities and measurable goals for protecting and restoring the integrity of waters through regulatory and collaborative efforts. Further information available at: [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/water\\_issues/programs/key\\_areas/](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/water_issues/programs/key_areas/)

**Reissue permits for discharges from the San Elijo and Encina Ocean Outfalls that include plume tracking requirements.** In 2018, the San Diego Water Board completed reissuance of the NPDES permits for publicly owned treatment works (POTWs) that discharge treated wastewater through the San Elijo and Encina Ocean Outfalls to the Pacific Ocean. The permits require effluent plume tracking to characterize the discharge plume and how it behaves in the ocean. The results of the plume tracking studies will be used to improve the receiving water monitoring programs, evaluate the comingling of plumes from different ocean outfalls, determine compliance with receiving water quality objectives, and assist with the development of a regional monitoring program. On September 21, 2018, the San Diego Water Board hosted a plume tracking stakeholder workshop to provide a forum for agencies to consider coordination and collaboration on plume tracking efforts. In attendance were representatives from many of the POTWs in the San Diego Region, the Southern California Association of POTWs (SCAP), the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP), Scripps Institution of Oceanography, and the U.S. Navy's Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWAR). The San Diego Water Board is working with the participating agencies to conduct additional workshops in 2019.

### Chapter 3. Recovery of Stream, Wetland and Riparian Systems

**Environmental Restoration through Streamlined Enforcement.** The San Diego Water Board adopted a settlement agreement in January 2018 with the Colrich California and Campus for Life LP to remedy unpermitted fill of riparian habitat that had been identified during a routine construction storm water inspection. As a condition of settlement, the developers conducted punitive mitigation for the habitat loss at a ratio of 10:1, thereby resulting in over half an acre of reestablishment mitigation. The Water Board's objective with this agreement was to focus on the Board's Vision to restore streams and wetlands, while ensuring a strong deterrence for future violations. By focusing on restoration of lost habitat functions and water quality value, the Water Board was also able, through this settlement negotiation, to minimize staff time in litigation and seek an expedient resolution through the Executive Officer's delegated authorities.

### Chapter 4. Proactive Public Outreach and Communication

**Updated Fish and Shellfish Advisories for San Diego Bay.** Using data collected by the San Diego Water Board, the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) was able to update fish and shellfish consumption advisories for San Diego Bay. Previous advisories lacked important data on lobsters even though San Diego Bay is the largest recreational lobster fishery on the West Coast. Consistent with its Practical Vision to focus on important beneficial uses, Board staff partnered with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to collect and analyze lobsters for suspected bioaccumulative pollutants. The updated OEHHA advisories help ensure the public can make informed decisions to protect human health and can be found at: <https://oehha.ca.gov/advisories/san-diego-bay>

**Responses to Massive Public Records Act Requests.** In 2018, several very large Public Records Act (PRA) requests were received that topped over 10,000 pages of documents. Consistent with the core values of transparency and communication, the San Diego Water Board redirected staff from other program activities to assist mission support staff with the large PRAs in order to ensure timely and complete access to our records. Per the law, staff responding to a PRA request must ensure that the Regional Water Board provides all responsive, non-exempt records. During the last five years, the Water Board has received approximately 54 records requests per month. In addition to providing access to or copies of non-exempt public records, staff must disclose the existence of any exempt records. Thousands of records are available in electronic format, but many remain in paper files or on microfiche. PRAs are particularly challenging because they are often not specific to a single file but pertain to all files related to one or more water bodies or even a class of activities or parties. The heavy workload associated with these numerous PRAs continues to impact all levels of staff and have caused a slow down in the development of regulatory orders.

#### Chapter 5. Strategy for Achieving a Local Sustainable Water Supply

**Master Recycling Permit Issued for the Southern Regional Tertiary Treatment Plant (SRTTP) at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton.** The San Diego Water Board issued a Master Recycling Permit to the United States Marine Corps (USMC) that included implementation of a seawater intrusion barrier project. The seawater intrusion barrier was recommended in the Salt and Nutrient Management Plan for the Lower Santa Margarita River Watershed (SNMP) at Camp Pendleton. The project will inject recycled water, treated to disinfected tertiary standards, into the lower aquifer of the Lower Ysidora groundwater basin to create a hydrologic barrier and prevent seawater intrusion from impacting the nearby drinking water aquifer and improve groundwater quality in the Ysidora Basin.

**Municipal Storm Water Audits conducted to assess compliance with the over-irrigation discharge prohibition of the Regional Municipal Storm Water Permit.** The San Diego Water Board completed audits of major municipal storm water dischargers in 2018. The audits assessed compliance with the over-irrigation discharge prohibition of the Regional Municipal Storm Water Permit (Regional MS4 Permit). The audits were conducted because the municipalities rely heavily on the reduction of over-irrigation discharges to meet numeric water quality improvement goals described in their Watershed Water Quality Improvement Plans and to motivate water conservation. The audits evaluated the ordinances of each municipality to ensure adequate legal authority to enforce the over-irrigation discharge prohibition, the adequacy of online public outreach and education materials, adequate implementation of the illicit discharge and detection program, and the adequacy of the municipal enforcement program in addressing over-irrigation as a prohibited discharge. The audits resulted in issuance of enforcement citations to several municipalities for failing to have the proper legal authority to effectively prohibit over-irrigation as an illicit discharge. Detailed audit findings were also made to inform each municipality where their pollutant control programs were found to be ineffective at informing the public about over-irrigation

through online education materials and public information. The audits determined that most pollutant control programs implemented by the 39 municipal entities in the San Diego Region were ineffective at meeting the requirement to effectively prohibit over-irrigation as a discharge into the municipal separate storm sewer system. The audit reports were sent to each municipality with detailed audit findings and scheduled reporting dates for corrective actions.

### Core Program Accomplishments

**Waste Discharge Requirements Issued for the Master Plan Expansion of Sycamore Landfill.** The San Diego Water Board issued new Waste Discharge Requirements to the Sycamore Landfill (Landfill) that increase the Landfill's lateral waste disposal footprint from 324 to 352.6 acres and allows the Discharger to vertically expand the Landfill waste prism thickness from 200 to 500 feet. The increase in waste prism thickness and the 28.6 acre lateral expansion allows the landfill to expand its capacity by 82 million cubic yards and extend its operational service life until 2046. The Sycamore Landfill is a class III (non-hazardous) municipal solid waste landfill that has been in operation since 1976.

**Permit Issued for the Construction of the City of San Diego Pure Water Project Facilities.** In December 2018, the San Diego Water Board issued a Clean Water Act Section 401 Certification (permit) that allows the City of San Diego (City) to proceed with construction of the North City Pure Water Facility and other new recycled water infrastructure (project). The permit is required for the placement of the new recycled water infrastructure within streams and other aquatic resources. The project includes the diversion, treatment, and purification of wastewater prior to discharge into the City's drinking water Miramar Reservoir. The purified wastewater will be blended with imported water and local runoff within the reservoir. This project reduces the amount of wastewater discharged through the City's ocean outfall and reduces local reliance upon imported water.

**San Diego Water Board Accepts Water Quality Improvement Plan for Watersheds in Orange and Riverside Counties.** The San Diego Water Board formally accepted Water Quality Improvement Plans for two watershed management areas in south Orange County and southwestern Riverside County on June 20, 2018 and November 27, 2018 respectively. The Plans are mandated under a Regional Permit which regulates storm water discharges throughout San Diego County and parts of south Orange and southwest Riverside Counties. The acceptance of the two Improvement Plans along with previously accepted Improvement Plans for watersheds in San Diego County is a major milestone in the Board's efforts to measurably reduce the effects of storm water pollution and achieve improvements in the water quality, habitat and ecology of receiving watershed environments throughout the region. The accepted Plans provide the framework allowing municipal, county government, and special district entities (referred to jointly as Copermittees) to choose an integrated and collaborative watershed-based approach towards improving water quality. Under this approach Copermittees focus on addressing the most pressing water quality conditions instead of trying to address all pollutants and adverse conditions simultaneously and make

meaningful progress towards attaining water quality improvements. The Plans address priority conditions to reduce harmful pollutants, fertilizers, debris and other materials draining into streams, rivers, lakes and the ocean. The priority conditions include initiatives such as reducing bacterial health risk at beaches, improving natural water flows, reducing nuisance algal growth, abatement of human waste sources, eliminating flows from over-irrigation of landscaped areas and restoring natural habitat. In the Plans, the Copermitees describe numeric goals related to the highest priorities, and strategies to achieve the goals within specified schedules. The Copermitees also implement an integrated monitoring and assessment program to determine progress, adapting strategies and measures in the Plan as necessary.

**San Diego Water Board adopts Climate Change Priorities for local Water Quality.**

The San Diego Water Board adopted by Resolution R9-2018-0051, priority goals for protecting water quality from effects of climate change. Although climate change is a global phenomenon in scale and scope, it will trigger a wide range of increasingly severe physical, chemical and biological effects to water resources in the San Diego Region. Consistent with the Board's Practical Vision, the priorities are based upon what is most important for the Board to do to protect water resources for key beneficial uses in the region. Communicating the Board's priorities and intentions will facilitate meaningful collaboration between staff, the regulated community, scientists, and other stakeholders.

**Pardee Homes Fined \$291,286 by San Diego Water Board for Allowing Sediment to Run Uncontrolled During Storms.** The San Diego Water Board fined Pardee Homes \$291,286 in April 2018 for violations at the 204-acre Castlerock Weston construction site near the City of Santee, CA that led to more than 70,000 gallons of sediment-laden stormwater being directed through the City's municipal separate storm sewer system to Sycamore Canyon Creek, in an environmentally sensitive watershed. The fine was leveed through an expedited administrative civil liability (ACL) settlement process intended to more efficiently address violations of the statewide Construction General Storm Water Permit (CGP). The expedited ACL settlement procedure offers CGP permittees an opportunity to correct violations and settle liability at an earlier stage than the traditional ACL complaint and hearing process. To further achieve maximum efficiency and economy of resources in the enforcement action, the San Diego Water Board made use of City of Santee and the City of San Diego inspection reports and photographs as evidence to support the multiple compliance citations. This sharing of resources facilitates the development of more rapid and efficient compliance response strategies working in close collaboration with the local municipalities.