

**Minutes of the
ASBS Natural Water Quality Committee**

*December 15, 2006
via phone conference*

Members in attendance:

Andrew Dickson - Scripps Institute of Oceanography
Rich Gossett - CRG Marine Laboratories
Dominic Gregorio - State Water Resources Control Board
Burt Jones - University of Southern California
Bruce Posthumus - San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board
Kenneth Schiff - Southern California Coastal Water Research Project
Brian Kelley - San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board

Others in attendance:

Members absent:

Jim Allen - Southern California Coastal Water Research Project
Steve Murray – California State University Fullerton

Dominic Gregorio began the meeting at 10:00 AM. There were two items on today's agenda: 1) schedule meeting dates for the upcoming year; and 2) addressing bacteria related monitoring at SIO.

Two alternate dates were selected for each quarterly meeting for the upcoming year: March 8 or 12; May 1 or 4; July 24 or 27; and September 6 or 7. Dominic will verify the preferred dates with the absent members.

The bacteria monitoring special study was an action item from the last meeting. The NPDES permit for SIO mandated special studies for bacterial contamination, but that to date had indicated little to no problems. Therefore, the Committee was asked to consider whether the bacterial special study should be continued. To address this issue, the Committee asked three questions: 1) Is bacteria monitoring necessary for assessing ecological health? 2) If bacteria monitoring is necessary, what questions need to be resolved? and 3) What alternatives should be considered if bacteria monitoring is unnecessary? After discussion, the Committee decided that the special study in the receiving water should be abandoned because some felt that bacteria monitoring provides only a tenuous link to ecosystem health impacts. However, routine effluent monitoring of bacteria should be continued, similar to any other standard NPDES permit requirement.

The remaining question to be resolved is determining where SIO's stormwater plume is located. While bacterial monitoring in the receiving water could be used to track the movement of stormwater plumes through the ASBS, plume tracking could be done in other, less expensive methods (i.e., salinity, turbidity, etc.). Therefore, the Committee recommended that an alternative to the bacterial receiving water special study should be considered to determine the encroachment of discharge plumes from SIO and other nearby sources (i.e., Los Penasquitos or Avenida de la Playa). This study could be designed this year and implemented in the 2007-08 wet season. This information should be linked to the existing ASBS hydrodynamic model developed by SIO.

The final question to be resolved is if alternative special studies might be necessary. Dominic suggested two for discussion. First, water quality measurements from an undeveloped reference watershed could be measured, along with its receiving water environment, as a point of comparison for SIO. A short discussion about the utility of currently available data from existing studies (i.e., SCCWRP's Natural Loading or Reference Beach Studies) was explored. While these studies provide key data for discharges, water quality in the nearshore receiving waters remains a key data gap for ASBS. A proposal for additional water quality measurements in the discharge and receiving waters from one or more reference watershed(s) was proposed. The second suggested alternative special study was participation in Bight'08 regional monitoring. A proposal for participation in Bight'08 was also recommended.

Unless Dominic or Bruce need the Committee to review the public notice for altering SIO's NPDES permit for special studies, the Committee was adjourned until the next meeting in March.