

# Index of Biological Integrity



2009 SWAMP Achievements Report

## Index of Biological Integrity (IBI) for the eastern Sierra Nevada Ecoregion

### What is it?

The Lahontan Regional Water Board completed a multi-year effort to develop a tool for assessing stream health. The new tool, called an "Index of Biological Integrity" (IBI), provides a numeric score and letter grade ("A" through "F") based on the benthic macroinvertebrates (bottom-dwelling animals) found in a stream or river.

### Why is it important to the State?

Quantitative scoring tools such as IBIs allow the State to objectively assess stream health. Such scoring tools are needed to provide objective, precise, fair and consistent judgments about the health of streams and rivers. Without objective scoring tools, conclusions about stream health would continue to be made based on subjective opinions.



### Why is it important to me?

The new IBI can be used by all stakeholders to objectively assess stream health, including landowners, citizen monitors, local governments, and non-governmental interest groups.

### How will this information be used?

The IBI report is available on the Internet, along with a calculator tool that provides scores for stream health.

