

Introduction to Collaborating with Citizen Monitors and Watershed Stewardship Organizations

What is it?

A series of workshops were developed through a unique collaboration between the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and the Sierra Streams Institute (SSI). The workshops were held in northern California (Rancho Cordova, Oakland, Santa Rosa) in April and May of 2013. The purpose of these workshops was to present a comprehensive curriculum for successful collaborations between agencies (local, regional, state, and Federal) and watershed organizations (grassroots groups, non-governmental organizations, etc.).



Workshop participants included staff from different agencies and non-profit organizations. Through interactive presentations, breakout activities and brainstorming, agency staff gained a better understanding of the capabilities and needs of watershed groups. Watershed group leaders gained a better understanding of how to successfully work with agencies. Knowledge of what makes a watershed group succeed in its core outreach or monitoring function can help agency staff better guide development and thereby augment program capacity and expand water quality

data sets. Participants who attended the workshop enjoyed spending time in the field to experience the same data collection protocols used by citizen monitors (e.g., water quality sensors, benthic macro invertebrates).

Why is it important?

In California, watershed groups, including citizen monitors, have been engaged in watershed management and water quality data collection for more than a decade, saving the state tens of millions of dollars in monitoring costs. Citizen data are used to guide local watershed management and are a critical element of regional and statewide assessments of surface water quality for drinking, fishing, swimming, ecosystem health, and other beneficial uses. Citizen data



are used by the State for 303(d) and 305(b) reports, total maximum daily loads (TMDLs), indices of biological integrity (IBIs), sediment quality objectives (SQOs) development, evaluation of best management practices, assessment of storm water, and issuance of permits. Citizen monitoring programs also produce data of sufficient quality to upload into the California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN).

The use of data generated by citizen monitoring programs and collaborations is especially critical in these fiscally challenging times, enabling a significant expansion in program capacity and monitoring without increasing State costs.

How will this information be used?

The State and Regional Water Boards, as well as other agencies, need data and projects to protect our vital natural resources. Collaborative efforts are of considerable value in both maintaining and expanding programs, especially when providing quality data and building stewardship of local waters. This can only be achieved through new collaborations and innovative partnerships such as the one which produced this program and expanded the citizen monitoring trainer capacity beyond just the Clean Water Team.

It is anticipated that workshop participants will produce and manage successful collaborations. Training resources produced for these workshops are available online for all to use.

Workshop materials:

- [Introduction](#)
- [Clean Water Team Presentation](#)
- [How To Start a Collaboration](#)
- [Collaborative Projects](#)
- [Developing Cooperative Monitoring Projects](#)
- [Equipment, Protocol, and Data Management](#)