

C-12.0 WATERSHED PLANNING

C-12.1 Introduction

The Fourth Term Permits have, with varying degrees of specificity, required the Permittees to develop and implement a watershed-based approach to urban stormwater management to complement the established jurisdictional-based approaches. In the area of the County under the jurisdiction of the San Diego Regional Board, Watershed Workplans¹ have been prepared for each of the six principal watersheds. In the Santa Ana Regional Board area of the County, the Permittees are in the early stages of developing Watershed Master Plans (WMPs), which integrate water quality, hydromodification, water supply, and habitat considerations for the Coyote Creek-San Gabriel River, Anaheim Bay-Huntington Harbor, Santa Ana River, and Newport Bay-Newport Coast watersheds. These WMPs will integrate all other related programs, including the stormwater program, TMDL processes, and the Nutrient and Selenium Management Program (NSMP).

Watershed management is the term used for the approach to water quality planning that places an emphasis on the watershed (the area draining into a river system, ocean or other body of water through a single outlet) as the planning area and looks to multi-jurisdictional solutions to problems that cut across programs and jurisdictional boundaries. In Orange County, watershed management focuses additional effort on the highest priority water quality constituents of concern in each watershed.

The approach taken to develop the Watershed Workplans and WMPs recognizes that the jurisdictional DAMP/Local Implementation Plans (LIPs) and watershed planning efforts represent the principal policy and program documents for two separate, but nonetheless similar and highly interdependent, water quality planning processes targeting the control of pollutants in urban runoff (see **Section 3.0, 2003 DAMP**). There is also recognition that these efforts are, in many watersheds in Orange County, supportive of a third planning process that is focused on achieving broader objectives such as watershed habitat restoration and connectivity rather than specific water quality outcomes.

There are six distinct watersheds within the San Diego Regional Board Area which are identified below.

Region	Watershed Planning Area	Major Watercourses
Region 9 San Diego	Laguna Coastal Streams	Laguna Canyon Creek
	Aliso Creek	Aliso Creek
	Dana Point Coastal Streams	Salt Creek
	San Juan Creek	San Juan Creek, Oso Creek, Trabuco Creek, Bell Canyon, Verdugo Canyon

¹ Watershed Workplans supersede the DAMP/Watershed Action Plans.

Region	Watershed Planning Area	Major Watercourses
Region 9 San Diego	San Clemente Coastal Streams	Prima Deshecha, Segunda Deshecha
	San Mateo Creek	San Mateo Creek

C-12.2 Accomplishments

C-12.2.1 Watershed Management/Planning Initiatives

The 2011-12 reporting period marked the ninth year of implementation of the DAMP/Watershed Action Plans, which have now been repurposed into Watershed Workplans under the Fourth Term Permit. The Watershed Workplans describe the Watershed Permittees' development and implementation of a collective watershed strategy to assess and prioritize the water quality problems within the watershed's receiving waters, identify and model sources of the highest priority water quality problem(s), develop a watershed-wide BMP implementation strategy to abate highest priority water quality problems, and a monitoring strategy to evaluate BMP effectiveness and changing water quality prioritization in the watershed. Initial Watershed Workplans for each watershed planning area were posted on the OC Watersheds website for a 30-day public review and comment period, updated, and submitted to the San Diego Regional Board on December 16, 2010 for review and approval. The 2011 Watershed Workplans became effective on January 16, 2011. Watershed Workplans are updated annually after a public watershed review meeting.

The Co-Permittees held an annual watershed review meeting on December 8, 2011. County and city staff provided an overview of what was presented in the 2011 Watershed Workplans and discussed updates to be included in the 2012 Watershed Workplans. Twenty three Stakeholders attended this meeting. Participants included San Diego Regional Board staff, local city council members, water agencies, NGOs, partner agencies (SCCWRP and UCCE), HOAs, developers, and other city staff. The 2012 Watershed Workplans became effective on January 1, 2012.

C-12.2.2 Watershed-Based Water Quality Planning Efforts

- **Baby Beach TMDL**

The Fourth Term Permit incorporated the Waste Load Allocations (WLAs) for the Baby Beach TMDL as well as monitoring and other requirements. Improving the water quality of Baby Beach has been a high priority for the County of Orange and the City of Dana Point for many years. The frequent exceedance of bacteria water quality objectives at Baby Beach prompted the County of Orange to initiate studies and actions to remedy the issue prior to 303(d) listing and TMDL development. After years of efforts, recent water quality improvements suggest that the comprehensive approach of special studies, operational changes, and structural improvements, has proven to be successful. The myriad of efforts have been implemented in a collaborative manner by various stakeholders, including OC

Public Works, OC Health Care Agency, OC Parks, OC Dana Point Harbor, the City of Dana Point, and Headlands Reserve LLC. The BMPs implemented at the Beach and throughout the watershed that have resulted in bacteria load reductions and water quality improvements at Baby Beach (See Baby Beach Dana point Harbor Bacterial Indicator TMDL Annual Progress Report 2011-12).

C-12.3 Summary

The watershed-based approach to water quality planning has been advocated by many constituencies for over 30 years. In Orange County, this approach has been the basis of efforts to protect and manage its 11 watersheds for almost the same period of time. Development of integrated plans – Watershed Workplans – will address the broader consideration of the hydrologic impacts of land use change comprising concern for changes in peak flow characteristics, and changes in total runoff as well as specific concerns for changes in quality of water.