

**WATER COMMITTEE ISSUE SUMMARIES
SEDIMENT QUALITY OBJECTIVES
OCTOBER 2003**

The SWRCB has set aside \$2.5 million dollars and four years to develop Sediment Quality Objectives (SQO) for Enclosed Bays and Estuaries. To develop the SQOs the SWRCB is utilizing three forums including a Sediment Quality Advisory Committee, a Scientific Steering Committee and an Agency Coordination Committee.

Regulatory Background: In 1989, the California Water Code (CWC) was amended to require the SWRCB to develop SQOs as part of a comprehensive program to protect existing and future beneficial water uses within California's enclosed bays and estuaries. In 1991, SWRCB prepared a conceptual approach to develop SQOs in a Workplan for the Development of Sediment Quality Objectives for Enclosed Bays and Estuaries of California (91-14 WQ) (1991 Workplan). Insufficient funding resulted in significant delay of the program. SWRCB staff anticipated that the program described in the 1991 Workplan would require seven years to complete. In 2001, a lawsuit was filed against SWRCB for failing, among other things, to adopt SQOs in accordance with the CWC. The Court agreed with the petitioners, and SWRCB was mandated to develop SQOs.

Project Goals: Develop scientifically defensible SQOs that are protective of beneficial uses. Develop policy that's fair and provides for consistent application throughout the state. Describe methods and tools for assessing sediment quality as part of an implementation policy.

Key Project Objectives: Utilize a combination of numeric and narrative SQOs to address the broad range of beneficial uses. Develop numeric objectives using regional information. Provide an implementation policy for different applications. Focus on protecting benthic communities/aquatic life using a weight of evidence approach.

Project Roles: SWRCB staff and contractors will manage the project. Scientific activities: SCCWRP, SFEI Moss Landing Marine Labs and UC Davis-MPSL Granite Canyon with input from Scientific, Advisory, and Regulatory Groups. Enforcement/Application policy development: SWRCB staff with input from Scientific, Advisory, and Regulatory Groups. SWRCB Board members ultimately decide what the policy or plan will contain.

Sediment Quality Advisory Committee:

Regulated Community:

- Ports: Paul Johansen, Port of Los Angeles. Alt: Andy Jahn, Port of Oakland
- POTWs: Tom Grovhoug, Larry Walker Associates. Alt: Lisa Haney, LACSD
- Municipal Stormwater: Desi Alvarez, City of Downey. Alt: Sandy Mathews, California Stormwater Quality Association
- Industrial Stormwater: Tim Piasky, BIASC. Alt: Steve Arita, Western States Petroleum Association
- Industrial Direct: Susan Paulsen, Flowscience. Alt: Craig Johns, California Resource Strategies
- Federal Facilities: Teresa Marley, USN. Alt: Sandy Halvax, Southwest Marine Inc

- Legacy Pollutants: Paul Singarella, Latham & Watkins.

Environmental Community

- Elaine Carlin, Environmental Health Coalition,
- Mitzi Taggart, Heal the Bay
- Sarah Newkirk and Linda Sheehan Alt. Representing The Ocean Conservancy

Scientific Advisory Committee: Dr. Todd Bridges, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, ERDC, Dr. Dan Dauer, Old Dominion University, Tom Gries, Washington Dept. of Ecology, Chris Ingersoll, U.S. Geological Survey, Dr. Scott Ireland, U.S. EPA, Office of Water, Dr. Peter Landrum, NOAA, Great Lakes Environmental Research Lab, Edward Long, ERL Environmental, Donald D. MacDonald, MacDonald Environmental Services, Gail Sloane, Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Agency Coordination Committee: SWRCB, RWQCB, DFG, DPR, DTSC, SLC, BCDC, CCC and OEHHA.

Issues: The SWRCB must focus on the policy and regulatory aspects of this effort in addition to conducting good science to formulate numeric objectives. The SWRCB should clearly identify the appropriate application of SQOs for enclosed bays and estuaries with regard to deposited sediment and the implications of the misapplication of these SQOs to transported sediment. The Advisory group has stated that SQOs should not be based on the existence of empirical data alone as many of the legacy pollutants have dispersed widely in the environment but rather that SQOs will need to be developed with consideration for Cause and Effect relationships and a linkage to harm. The Advisory group recommended that the SQO policy must provide for enough flexibility so as to not cause further harm by disturbing sediments and to provide for natural attenuation of the constituents of concern. It was suggested that SQOs be developed on regional or site-specific basis. There was also some concern expressed about the definition of sediment, which will be addressed, as will the other issues in subsequent meetings.

Scientific issues included the first ever use of Benthic Community Index as the metric upon which to base objectives to protect Beneficial uses. This deviates from approaches which have focused on higher trophic level species indicators, human health indicators and ecological risk assessment indicators.

Schedule:

- January 2003: Project start, Workplan development, Database creation
- June 2003: Adopt workplan, begin Benthic assessment tool development, Data base development, Limited field sampling
- August 2005: Draft SQOs for review, Guidance development, data analyses, Summary of sediment quality project
- February 2007: Adopt SQOs

Contacts: Tom Grovhoug, LWA; Lisa Haney, LA Co. Sanitation District; Jim Marchese, City of LA - Bureau of Sanitation

Current as of: October 14th, 2003