

**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD
BOARD MEETING SESSION--DIVISION OF WATER QUALITY
MARCH 8, 2006**

ITEM 3

SUBJECT

INFORMATIONAL ITEM: PROPOSED RESPONSES TO FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EXTERNAL SCIENTIFIC PLANNING AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (SPARC) REGARDING THE SURFACE WATER AMBIENT MONITORING PROGRAM (SWAMP)

DISCUSSION

SWAMP was created in November 2000. SWAMP is envisioned to provide the State Water Resources Control Board and the nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards with comprehensive information on the status of beneficial uses in surface waters. The purpose of SWAMP is to provide a statewide framework for coordination of high quality, consistent, and scientifically defensible methods and strategies to improve water quality monitoring, assessment, and reporting. SWAMP is framed around beneficial use assessment and regulatory responsibilities. To meet Clean Water Act objectives, SWAMP should answer the following questions:

1. What is the overall water quality?
2. To what extent is water quality changing over time?
3. What are the problem areas and areas needing protection?
4. What level of protection is needed?
5. How effective are clean water projects and programs?

A triennial external scientific review is part of SWAMP's ongoing programmatic review process. The most recent review was initiated in October 2005; preliminary recommendations were made by SPARC and were presented at the December 9, 2005 State Water Board Workshop.

The preliminary SPARC report is available on the SWAMP Web site at http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/swamp/reports.shtml.

SPARC meets again on March 21 and 22, 2006 to consider State Water Board staff responses to the recommendations before finalizing their report. A final report will be completed by March 31, 2006 that includes a chapter prepared by State Water Board staff on how SWAMP will respond to the external review.

At this Board Meeting, the State Water Board staff will discuss the findings and recommendations by SPARC for improving SWAMP. The State Water Board staff will present their responses to each of the recommendations, including timelines and milestones. The State Water Board staff also seeks public comment on their responses to SPARC recommendations. A SPARC panel member will be in attendance.

POLICY ISSUE

This is an information item only.