



## SANTA ANA REGIONAL ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING PROGRAM

### What is it?

In 2012, the Santa Ana Regional Water Board initiated the development of a Regional Assessment and Monitoring Program to provide coordinated long-range guidance and direction for the Santa Ana Regional Water Board's monitoring and assessment activities. This program is being developed with the goal of providing resource managers, decision makers, and the public with timely information for understanding the condition of surface waters in the Santa Ana Region. The Program will address the relevant goals of several water board programs, including the Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP), Total Maximum Daily Load Program (TMDLs), Basin Planning Program, Stormwater Program, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program, and other regulatory programs. It will also include an assessment of existing regional monitoring programs and data. In addition, a Regional Monitoring Plan will be developed to guide the program and describe the regular and periodic monitoring activities needed to provide a fuller understanding of water quality conditions in the region. The plan will also answer water

quality questions related to the Regional Water Board's primary mission—the protection of beneficial uses. As part of the development and implementation of the Regional Assessment and Monitoring Program, tasks and activities will be expanded and coordinated with ongoing and emerging stakeholder monitoring efforts.



Bacteria monitoring on Mountain Home Creek with Ed Kashak.  
Photo courtesy of William Rice.

## **Why is it important?**

To properly and reasonably protect the beneficial uses of waters in the Santa Ana Region, the Santa Ana Regional Water Board must have a satisfactory understanding of the conditions of those waters. To support this understanding, it is critical to have appropriate water quality monitoring data which characterizes those conditions.



Bacteria monitoring on Mountain Home Creek with Mike Perez.  
Photo courtesy of William Rice.

Regional Water Board staff have generated and acquired focused or targeted water quality monitoring data over time. It is generally understood from these specific and/or isolated efforts that water quality in the Santa Ana Region is changing and improving in some areas, while stagnating or degrading in other areas. The data, however, have not yet

been evaluated for broader trends, patterns, or gaps across the years. Accordingly, the Regional Water Board is developing a Regional Assessment and Monitoring Program to guide the review of existing programs and data, and to ensure that additional data are generated in a coordinated and consistent manner. The program will ensure that shrinking monitoring resources are directed to priority issues, and that any data collected are made available not only for the Regional Water Board's assessment and regulatory functions but also for informing the public about water quality conditions.

## **How will this information be used?**

The Regional Assessment and Monitoring Program will involve a coordinated approach in generating data for all of the Regional Board's surface water programs, including SWAMP, Stormwater, Basin Planning, TMDLs, and Compliance/Enforcement. The goal is to develop a program that can answer priority water quality and beneficial use questions over the long term and provide a consistent framework and schedule for reporting on monitoring results. Current financial strains on many of the Regional Water Board, permittee, and NGO monitoring programs

highlight the need for all monitoring activities to be conducted in a coordinated and consistent manner. The Board staff expects that this effort will pass cost savings to the discharger community and provide a more robust monitoring framework to guide water quality decisions.

For more information, contact William Rice, Santa Ana Regional Water Board, at (951) 782-4459 or [William.Rice@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:William.Rice@waterboards.ca.gov).