

Lahontan Water Board Program Fact Sheet FY 2016-17

Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP)

Overview

The Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP) is a statewide monitoring effort designed to assess the conditions of surface waters throughout the State of California. The program consists of three positions and is funded by the Waste Discharge Permit Fee (WDPF) “monitoring surcharge.”

“Ambient” monitoring considers all surface waters of the State. SWAMP seeks to monitor the status and trends in water quality for all surface waters (lakes, streams/rivers, wetlands, coastal waters) as well as targeted monitoring to answer specific regional questions.

SWAMP has two primary components: 1) “regional” monitoring led by the Regional Water Boards; and 2) statewide surveys led by the State Water Board. SWAMP also supports the development, deployment, and maintenance of a statewide database — the California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN) — to permanently store surface water monitoring data collected by all entities throughout California.

Key Efforts

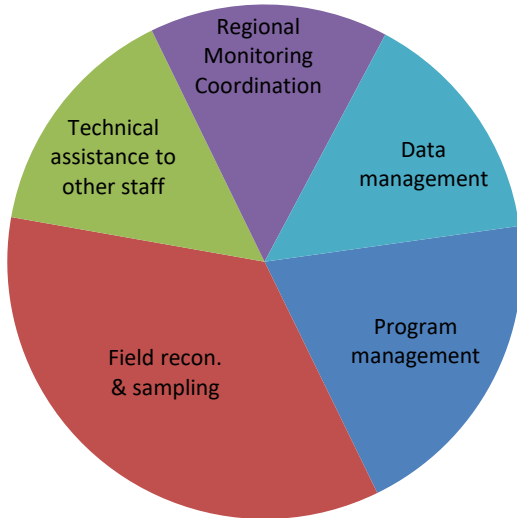
- Compare ambient water quality at selected sites to the water quality objectives contained in the *Water Quality Control Plan for the Lahontan Region* (Basin Plan) and the “California Toxics Rule.”
- Implement bioassessment sampling and rapid physical integrity assessments.
- Monitor waters which show potential bioaccumulation threats to provide data on fish contaminants as needed by the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (Cal-OEHHA) to develop “Safe Eating Guidelines” for at-risk waterbodies. 2017 sampling schedule includes E. Walker River, Fallen Leaf Lake, Big Pine Creek, Independence Creek and Bishop Creek. Additional efforts supported by discretionary funds will sample Topaz Lake, Palmdale Lake, Upper Twin Lake, Bridgeport Reservoir, and Mammoth Creek.
- Assist other regional board programs to answer water quality questions by providing water quality data; provide long-term trend data to evaluate changes in water quality and the effects of climate change, and support development of the 2018 Integrated Report. Support staff in permit and reporting requirements that result in SWAMP comparable data being uploaded to CEDEN.
- Implement a monitoring and response plan to Harmful Algae Bloom (HAB) reports in Lahontan Region.

Update on SWAMP Staffing at Region 6

Region 6 converted two SWAMP positions to civil service in FY 2016-17. Available contract funds decreased to support these positions. Remaining SWAMP contract dollars will continue to fund laboratory analyses, to fund chemical, physical and biological monitoring in the Lahontan Region, to assess results of these efforts and produce reports.



Staff Activities



Accomplishments

- Over the course of 199 site visits SWAMP contractors conducted 207 field collections, 10 toxicity collections and 191 chemistry collections. All data is made available in CEDEN.
- Maintained a user-friendly public webpage that provides easy access to SWAMP reports and data
- During 2016, the Region's SWAMP staff conducted a toxicity study for the Susan River, including toxicity evaluation identification and fish tissue sampling with assistance from Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- Created SWAMP fact sheets that summarize all data collected from 2006-2015 for all long term trend monitoring sites.
- Coordinated with the Region's TMDL Unit to adjust SWAMP sampling to obtain data needed to address impairments at 303(d)-listed water bodies.

Performance Targets for FY 2015-16 and 2016-17

To ensure that SWAMP results are timely and accessible to Water Board staff and the public:

- 1) Make available on CEDEN at least 50% of SWAMP-funded data within one year of sample collection
- 2) Make available on CEDEN at least 95% of data within two years of sample collection. This includes completion of laboratory analyses, rigorous quality assurance checks (i.e., data verification and validation), and data transfer.

Performance targets were met for prior years, and are expected to be met this year.

Unaddressed Work

- Regional Monitoring Coordination has not been addressed because of a vacancy and shift in funding. Vacancy is expected to be filled during FY 16-17.
- Focused data collection to determine effects of climate change. Additional sampling in headwaters to assess long term changes in water quality and flows to protect state's water supply.
- No work is being conducted to assess minimum flows needed to maintain beneficial uses.