

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Since people tend to be motivated to protect the resources they value, use, know best, and depend upon, the most effective solutions, in many cases, are created by those who have a direct stake in the outcome. In many cases the solutions to water quality and beneficial use problems depend on voluntary actions of people who live, work, play, or do business in the watershed. Accordingly, the watershed management approach is not simply another program to be "centralized" at the SDRWQCB. Instead, it is intended to be an "inclusive" approach where diverse interests (i.e., stakeholders) such as individuals, landowners, farmers, municipalities, local government, water districts, sewage collection and treatment agencies, and regulatory agencies work together to achieve water quality goals. In all watershed management areas, the SDRWQCB will attempt to identify an existing stakeholder group or establish a new stakeholder group to reach agreement on goals and approaches for addressing watershed problems, the specific actions to be taken, and how they will be coordinated and evaluated.

The degree of stakeholder involvement in watershed management activities will vary between watersheds. In some watersheds where local efforts are occurring, stakeholders may want to be involved in all aspects of watershed management. In other watersheds, stakeholders may only want to be involved at certain key decision points such as the adoption of the watershed management plan. The SDRWQCB will be guided by a three tiered approach in determining the degree of SDRWQCB involvement in the watershed and in preparing the watershed management plan. The three tiers are presented below in order of increasing regulatory control over watershed management activities. The first tier is based on collaborative, stakeholder-directed efforts to manage water resources in the watershed. The second tier is based on regulatory agency encouragement and oversight of watershed management activities. The third tier is based on SDRWQCB "command and control" regulatory actions through NPDES permits, waste discharge requirements, and enforcement orders.

Tier 1 -- Community Based, Stakeholder-directed Watershed Management

Tier 1 is the preferred approach and relies on community stakeholder initiative to assume a leadership role in coordinating and developing a watershed management plan. Locally based approaches may address water quality goals as well as economic and other interests of the community. Voluntary collaboration of all interested parties is likely to provide the most durable solutions. Locally based watershed management efforts will encourage community stakeholders to be part of the solution and will facilitate understanding and consensus on water quality protection goals and priorities. Under the Tier 1 approach, the SDRWQCB would be a participatory stakeholder by communicating its interests in protection of beneficial uses of water, achievement of Basin Plan water quality objectives, and other requirements of state and federal law. Within the constraints of available resources, the SDRWQCB would also support local watershed efforts with technical and educational assistance, such as conducting water

quality assessments, preparing state of the watershed reports, identifying water quality goals and targets, coordinating permit issuance, and monitoring programs.

Tier 2 - Regulatory Agency Encouraged Watershed Management

The Tier 2 approach relies on the SDRWQCB or another state or federal agency to take the lead in coordinating and developing a watershed management plan. The SDRWQCB or other agency may select this approach for high priority watersheds where there are Clean Water Act Section 303(d) impaired waters or other substantially threatened watersheds. Tier 2 efforts would be initiated after it has been determined that a successful, viable local community based effort is not developing. The SDRWQCB or other lead agency would notify the public of its intent to develop a state of the watershed report and, ultimately, a watershed management plan. Stakeholders would be invited to participate in the process and provide comments on the plans. In general, the SDRWQCB would adopt all Tier 2 watershed management plans.

Tier 3 - Regulatory Watershed Management

The Tier 3 approach relies exclusively on the SDRWQCB to take the lead in coordinating and developing a watershed management plan. The SDRWQCB may select this approach for high priority watersheds where there are Clean Water Act Section 303(d) impaired waters or other substantially threatened watersheds. Tier 3 efforts would be initiated after it has been determined that a local community based effort either is not developing or timely accomplishments are not occurring. The SDRWQCB will prepare a watershed management plan that emphasizes use of regulatory measures. Examples of regulatory measures include permitting and formal enforcement actions.

Regardless of the tier implemented in a watershed management area, the SDRWQCB is required to uphold the law. For example the SDRWQCB will continue to use NPDES permits and waste discharge requirements to regulate waste discharges as required under the federal Clean Water Act and the California Water Code. The SDRWQCB will continue to initiate enforcement actions where the need arises.