



MUNICIPAL NON-STORMWATER NUTRIENTS STUDY

What is it?

Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s), or “Storm Drains,” are infrastructure that conveys stormwater flows from developed areas into creeks, rivers, bays, and the ocean. Although this infrastructure is built to convey water from rainfall, these systems also transport non-stormwater flows, such as from landscape over-irrigation, fire-fighting activities, illegal dumping, and sanitary sewer overflows. Consequently, these flows often contain pollutants that can impair downstream waters.



Sampling non-stormwater discharge from MS4.

Historically, the owners and operators of these systems have been responsible for identifying and monitoring non-stormwater flows; however, in 2012, the San Diego Water Board received funding from SWAMP to train MS4 regulatory staff to conduct non-stormwater MS4 sampling inspections. The program then sampled for nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen), a pollutant of concern in non-stormwater discharges, in areas where storm drains discharge into waters listed under the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters. Results from the study indicated that several MS4 non-stormwater discharges exceeded the objectives from the San Diego Basin Plan for phosphorus and nitrogen.

Why is it important?

This monitoring effort accomplished two objectives: (1) It trained regulatory staff to conduct inspections to identify and sample non-stormwater flows that can be conveying pollutants to surface waters, and (2) it identified sources of nutrient pollution in areas where SWAMP and other monitoring efforts have found conditions to be impaired for nutrients and/or affected by eutrophication. The data from this study can help decision makers carry out informed management decisions or enforcement actions to protect the beneficial uses of receiving waters.



Non-stormwater discharge from MS4.

How will this information be used?

The San Diego Water Board will use the data from this study to assess potential sources of pollutants for water quality impairments under the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters. The data will also be conveyed to regulated MS4 owners or operators, who are required under Clean Water Act National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits to identify and address non-stormwater discharges from their storm drain systems.

The data will be available to the public through the California Environmental Data Exchange Network ([CEDEN](http://ceden.org)).

For more information, contact Chad Loflen (858-467-2727, cloflen@waterboards.ca.gov) or visit the [San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board website](http://www.san-diego-regional-water-quality-control-board.com).