



CURRENTS

Citizen Monitoring Program Newsletter of the California State Water Resources Control Board

Spring 2004



What is Lakes Appreciation Month?

By Anita Sandoval and Fawn Sheradin, SWRCB, Citizen Monitoring Program

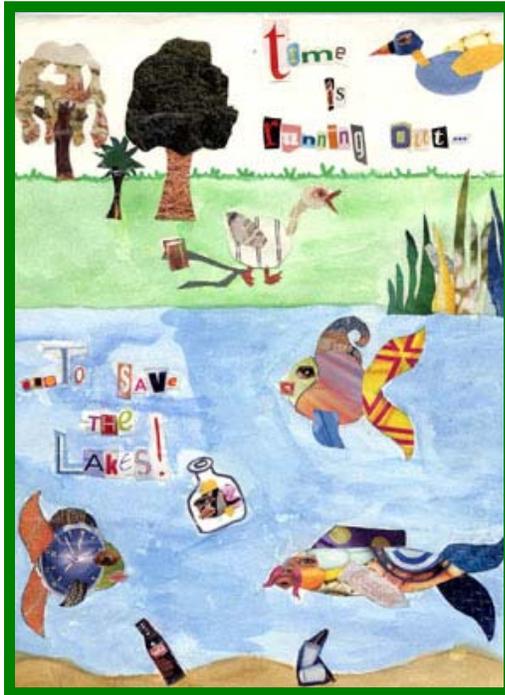
In celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Clean Water Act, the USEPA designated the month of July in 2003 as Lakes Awareness Month. In addition, the North American Lake Management Society (NALMS) sponsors Lakes Appreciation Month each July, in an effort to draw attention to the value and importance of protecting lakes and reservoirs from pollution in the U.S. and Canada.

During the summer months boating, fishing and swimming are favorite uses of lakes and reservoirs.

However, lakes are often considered a “free” resource by users and this can result in abuse and neglect. Lake pollution is caused by so many different activities, no one regulation will suffice to prevent it. Education and outreach

aimed at changing individual behavior are key components to any successful lake protection effort.

Remember, the choices we make as individuals, businesses, and communities can help keep America’s waters clean.



The NALMS and USEPA websites offer tips on how citizens can participate in lake pollution prevention, raise awareness about the value of lakes, and access educational materials on lakes and lake ecology. &

For more information go to: www.nalms.org/lakesappreciation/law.htm and www.epa.gov/owow/lakes/month/



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The 2004 Great North American Secchi Dip-In

By Kent State University



From **June 26 until July 18, 2004**, the Great North American Secchi Dip-In celebrates its 10th anniversary of collecting transparency data. The Dip-In began in 1994 as a pilot study in six Midwest states with funding from the USEPA's Clean Lakes Program. Since then more than 375 programs and 10,000 volunteers in the U.S.,



Kent State University students, Triniti Anderson (left) and Jacky Gorman, hold a Secchi disk. Both are members of the Secchi Dip-In staff.

Canada, and several other countries have generated 30,000 records. This data is used to map regional differences in transparency and to detect trends.

Now, water monitoring data including turbidity, pH, temperature, and dissolved oxygen collected from all types of water bodies can be

entered on the Dip-In website database.

Individuals and Monitoring programs are encouraged to use the Dip-In as a midsummer event to draw attention to their monitoring efforts.

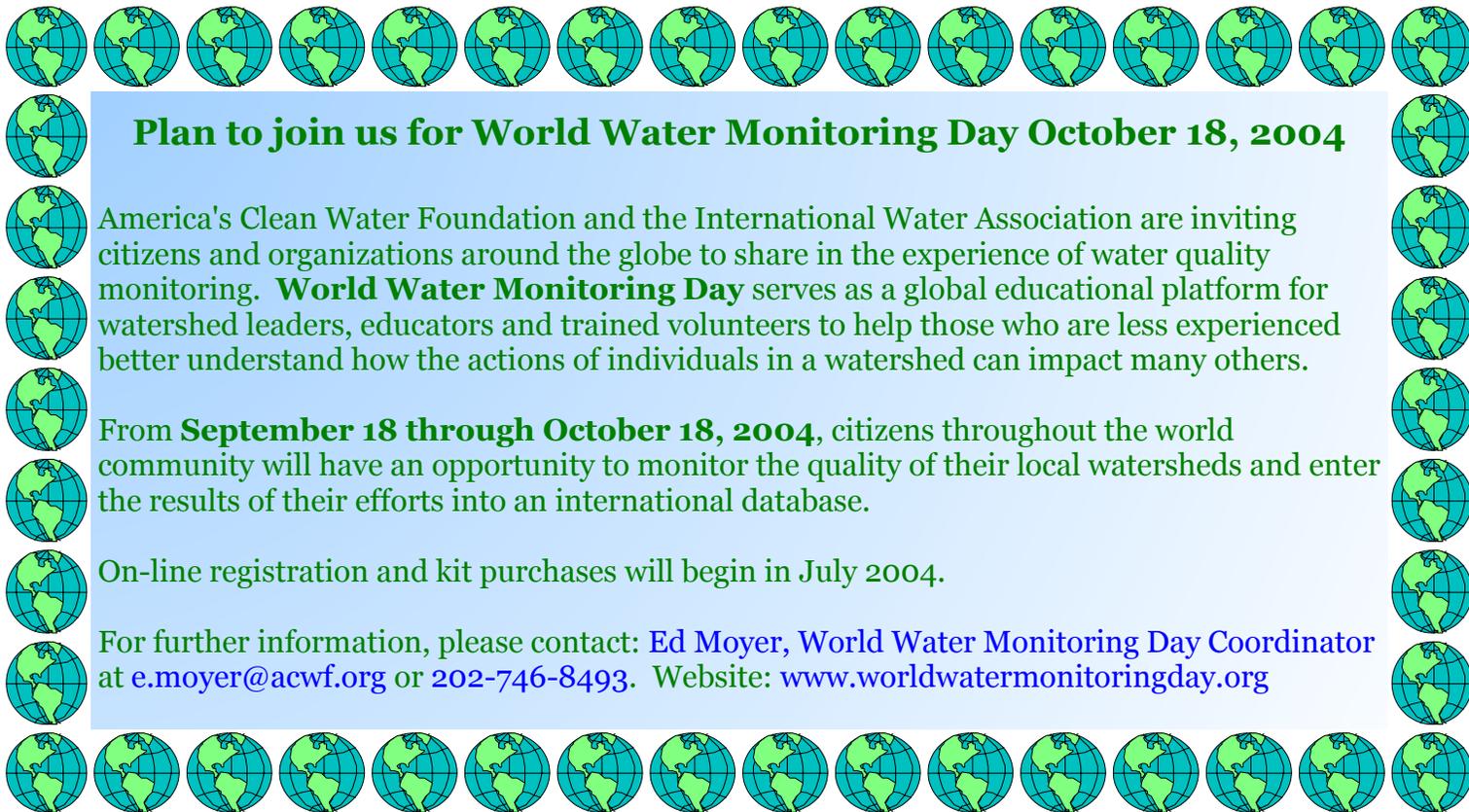
Various programs have had governors, federal and state representatives, and local officials "doing the Dip"—and educating the public a little as well.

The Dip-In website: <http://dipin.kent.edu> contains all the information needed to participate, data and trend analyses from past years, and technical information on different methods of measuring transparency. ☞

For more information on the Great North American Secchi Dip-In contact: DipIn@kent.edu or write to:

Secchi Dip-In
Department of Biological Sciences
Kent State University
Kent, OH 44242

Need to borrow a secchi disk or other monitoring equipment? Contact the Clean Water Team: cwtmail@dwq.swrcb.ca.gov



Plan to join us for World Water Monitoring Day October 18, 2004

America's Clean Water Foundation and the International Water Association are inviting citizens and organizations around the globe to share in the experience of water quality monitoring. **World Water Monitoring Day** serves as a global educational platform for watershed leaders, educators and trained volunteers to help those who are less experienced better understand how the actions of individuals in a watershed can impact many others.

From **September 18 through October 18, 2004**, citizens throughout the world community will have an opportunity to monitor the quality of their local watersheds and enter the results of their efforts into an international database.

On-line registration and kit purchases will begin in July 2004.

For further information, please contact: **Ed Moyer, World Water Monitoring Day Coordinator** at e.moyer@acwf.org or 202-746-8493. Website: www.worldwatermonitoringday.org

Gold Rush Mercury Hotspots

By Rick Humphreys, Senior Engineering Geologist, SWRCB

Mercury has been widely used for gold extraction since the dawn of recorded history. During the 19th and early 20th centuries California's gold rush gold miners used large amounts of mercury (est. 20 million pounds) and lost most of it to the environment. Most mercury lost is widely dispersed throughout the California watersheds subjected to gold mining. Dispersed mercury in these watersheds bioaccumulates and biomagnifies up the aquatic foodchain. In some watersheds, mercury concentrations in fish such as black bass are enough to warrant fish consumption advisories.



Hydraulic gold mine monitor.

Mercury is also still found in amounts constituting a local hotspot in these watersheds. Although mercury bioaccumulation and biomagnification are still important issues at hotspots, public exposure to mercury, either inadvertently or purposefully, also becomes an issue. High public exposure risk from mercury found near a marina at Scots Flat Lake in Nevada County caused the County to perform a hazardous materials cleanup of the area.



United States Forest Service, dredging a hotspot.

were killed by mercury vapor generated from such a technique used in home gold recover. As

Additionally, mercury from hotspots also carries gold, thus is an attractive "find" for weekend gold miners. Heating is the easiest method for separating gold from mercury but mercury poisoning is a serious risk. In

1997, two people

as a result, the USEPA cleaned up an abandoned hydraulic gold mine sluice tunnel. The tunnel was frequently visited by "weekend" gold miners and local craftsmen who removed mercury for its gold content and mercury-impregnated wood for planter boxes.

Mercury hotspots are still being found. In early March 2003, a recreational gold miner reported a mercury hotspot in the South Fork of the American River near Coloma to staff at the State Water Resources Control Board. The recreational miner claimed to have recovered about two pounds of mercury while gold mining from the "hotspot" in about two months (January and February 2003). SWRCB staff visited the hotspot and

recovered about 4 ounces of mercury in about three hours from the river using simple suction recovery tools. Mercury was plainly visible as droplets ranging from 1 to 10 mm on bedrock in the river channel.



Mercury "panned" from the Dutch Flat sluice tunnel prior to cleanup.

Visible mercury in major rivers is rare. Consequently, when visible amounts are found, questions are raised regarding its effects on local biota, threat to human health, and threat to water quality.

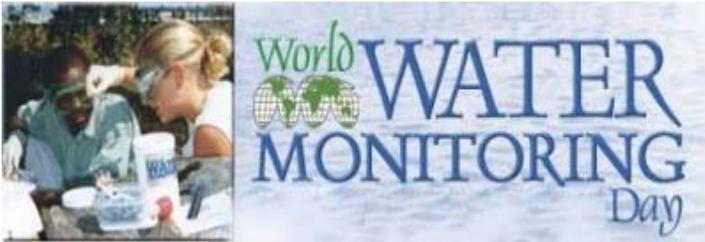
This recently discovered hotspot provides an opportunity to identify bedrock and sediment transport conditions that cause hotspots, to test a potentially low cost cleanup method, and to characterize the effects the hotspot has on local biota. A report that documents the results of the low-cost cleanup method test that was performed in October 2003 will be completed soon. &

For further questions please contact: [Rick Humphreys](mailto:Rick.Humphreys@dwq.swrcb.ca.gov) at HUMPR@dwq.swrcb.ca.gov



Results of World Water Monitoring Day 2003

By Fawn Sheradin, SWRCB, Citizen Monitoring Program



A total of 5,275 sites were registered for World Water Monitoring Day 2003, with 4,842 sites in the U.S. and 433 international sites. Data reported for pH, temperature, dissolved oxygen, and turbidity showed that 75% of registered sites in the U.S. were monitored and reported to the database, a slight increase from 2002. Every state in the U.S. was represented in WWMD 2003. The state of Iowa reported 49 sites in 2002 and 643 sites in 2003. This significant increase in sites has placed Iowa in the #1 rank for 2003 registered sites.

In California 74% of registered sites were reported to the database. However, the turbidity parameter ranked low for data reporting, possibly due to a lack of training and understanding on how to perform this test.

For information on turbidity, please refer to the following fact sheet: <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/nps/docs/Turbidity.doc>

The International Water Association, Earth Force, and LaMotte were very active partners in helping distribute information through web sites and publications. In collaboration, the SWRCB's citizen monitoring program contributed specialized assistance in promoting World Water Monitoring Day in California. USEPA was much more involved in 2003 with numerous press conferences. USEPA successfully promoted news of World Water Monitoring Day events being broadcast in several media markets in the U.S. ♡

The top 5 states are ranked below for number of registered participants and registered sites.

STATE	Registered Participants	Rank
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FL	14,635	1
MI	3,616	2
NY	2,480	3
CA	1,704	4
PA	1,242	5

STATE	Registered Sites	Rank
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IA	643	1
FL	386	2
PA	374	3
TX	345	4
CA	320	5

For more information on the results of World Water Monitoring Day 2003, please visit: www.worldwatermonitoringday.org



For the Sake of the Salmon to Suspend Operations

By Jim Rapp, Deb Merchant, and Betsy Kauffman of FSOS



Founded in 1995, For the Sake of the Salmon (FSOS) facilitated cooperative regional solutions to the decline in Pacific Coast salmon. Membership included 70-plus organizations representing agriculture, forestry, timber, fisheries, environment, power utilities, tribes, and local governments, as well as Federal and state agencies. FSOS successfully supported the efforts of watershed groups, local communities, businesses, tribes, landowners, industry, and government agencies in salmon and watershed recovery. FSOS helped groups with training workshops, resource sharing and networking, community outreach, habitat restoration grants, operational funding, technical resources, and a wide variety of capacity building services. FSOS is proud to have been honored by many of their members and stakeholders for filling a unique niche in the salmon and watershed community fostering pragmatic, practical, and inclusive programs such as Salmon Friendly Power, Watershed Circles, their Technical Assistance Directory, FSOS-news, and many more activities.

Last year the fiscal crises in Oregon and California led both states to eliminate their longtime general funding support for FSOS. These decisions followed actions over the last three to four years by Federal natural resource agencies to reduce their general operating support for FSOS, and Washington State's decision to end its general support contribution. FSOS had successfully responded to these earlier challenges by securing private foundation and government grant funding, and particularly by pioneering fee-for-service agreements with these same federal and state members to develop and manage specific programs on their behalf.

Unfortunately, recent economic conditions have

increasingly limited opportunities for both private and government grants, and member agencies have diminished funding to devote to the kinds of "outsourced" projects we have successfully managed for them. FSOS continued to work on new initiatives through 2003 and into 2004— expansion of Salmon Friendly Power into Washington State, a state-wide California watershed circuit rider program, and a partnership with Salmon-Safe, Inc. to provide and manage a parks certification program, to name a few. Nonetheless, these new plans have been too slow in coming into fruition to make up for our financial challenges in the wake of the California and Oregon fiscal crises.

The FSOS Board of Directors carefully considered our current and projected funding prospects, and determined that FSOS should begin to work towards suspending operations and take action to formally dissolve our non-profit. The FSOS Board is scheduled to take a formal vote of the corporate dissolution on April 23rd, the formal date of dissolution will be May 31st.

FSOS would like to thank all of the organizations and people who have been supportive during the past nine years and have worked tirelessly to promote the community-based salmon and watershed restoration work we consider so important. ♪

For further questions, please contact: [Executive Director, Jim Rapp](#) at (503) 542-8386 or jrapp@4sos.org

Office hours **will** be limited after April 30th, if **immediate** assistance is needed please contact: [Jim Rapp](#) at (503) 515-1598 or jquincey@earthlink.net

Announcements of Upcoming Events:



Citizen Water Quality Monitoring *Train the Trainers Workshops*

June 11 and 12, 2004 - Fresno

Contact Pam Buford at (559) 445-5576 or email BufordP@rb5f.swrcb.ca.gov

June 25 and 26, 2004 - Redding

Contact Beth Doolittle-Norby at (530) 224-4783 or email doolitb@rb5r.swrcb.ca.gov

For more information regarding the Citizen Monitoring Program and Clean Water Team go to:
<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/nps/volunteer.html>

Sierra Nevada Alliance

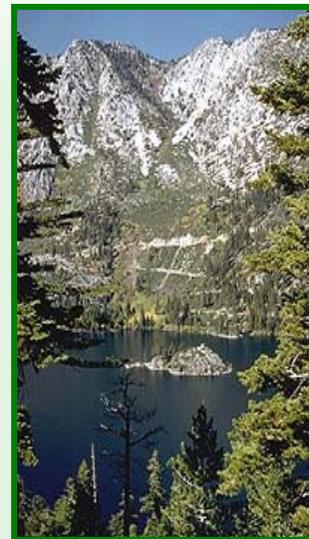
Annual Conference

Loving the Sierra

Inspiration for the Decades Ahead

August 7 and 8, 2004—South Lake Tahoe

For more information visit: www.sierranevadaalliance.org/conference



For a more detailed list of water related events, please visit the SWRCB's calendar: <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov> and the Clean Water Team webpage: <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/nps/volunteer.htm>

Contact Information:

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CWTmail@dwq.swrcb.ca.gov

Clean Water Team Web Site:
www.swrcb.ca.gov/nps/volunteer.html

Clean Water Team Contact:

Statewide Citizen Monitoring Coordinator (Region 5 & 6 interim)

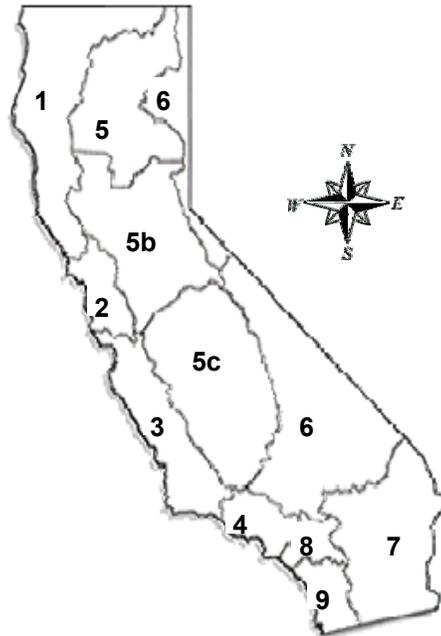
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