CALIFORNIA STREAM BIOASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

(Protocol Brief for Biological and Physical/Habitat Assessment in Wadeable Streams)

The California Stream Bioassessment Procedure (CSBP) is a standardized protocol for assessing biological and physical/habitat conditions of wadeable streams in California. The CSBP is a regional adaptation of the national Rapid Bioassessment Protocols outlined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in "Rapid Bioassessment Protocols for use in Streams and Rivers" **(EPA/841-B-99-002)**. The CSBP is a cost-effective tool that utilizes measures of the stream's benthic macroinvertebrate (BMI) community and its physical/habitat characteristics to determine the stream's biological and physical integrity. The purpose of this Protocol Brief is to introduce the techniques of bioassessment to aquatic resource professionals and help standardize data for statewide bioassessment efforts. The Protocol Brief is only a summary and does not contain all the necessary information that may be required to understand the concepts of bioassessment and to implement a successful monitoring program. Additional information and updates on bioassessment can be obtained by visiting the **DFG Aquatic Bioassessment Laboratory website at www.dfg.ca.gov/cabw/cabwhome.html**.

History of the CSBP

The CSBP was originally developed in 1993 to measure biological response from point-source discharges of chemical contaminants, inorganic sediment and elements of organic enrichment. The method was based on sampling the single richest habitat in a stream reach; this was the most common technique at the time (Rosenberg and Resh 1993, Loeb and Spacie 1994, Lenat and Barbour 1994) and consistent with the U.S. EPA's Rapid Bioassessment Protocols (RBP) (Plafkin et al. 1989). In 1995, the CSBP was adapted for use in ambient and non-point source pollution monitoring programs and this version was reviewed by a Technical Advisory Committee assembled by DFG and the U.S. EPA. The 1996 edition of the CSBP was widely distributed in California and accepted as the state's standardized RBP protocol (Davis et al. 1996 U.S. EPA 2002). A 1999 revision added quality assurance and control (QA/QC) techniques to ensure high quality field collections, laboratory analysis and taxonomic consistency.

As of 2003, the CSBP is the most often used RBP protocol in California (Barbour and Hill, 2003). This unique protocol allows the user to produce biological and physical/habitat data that can be used to measure differences between sites, compare to a regional Index of Biological Integrity (IBI) (Ode *et al.* 2003) and help diagnose response to individual stressors. In addition to the high gradient riffle based procedure, the 2003 edition of the CSBP describes techniques for use in unique channels and a technique for low gradient channels that blends elements of the CSBP with those of a multi-habitat technique recommended by the U.S. EPA (Barbour et al. 1999).

The CSBP 2003 has four notable changes to the existing protocol; 1) the stream reach for the assessment is no longer defined by a set of five pool-riffle sequences, but rather by a discreet length of 100 m (300 ft); 2) the area of benthos sampled has been reduced from 1.6 m^2 (18 ft^2) to 0.8 m^2 (9 ft^2); 3) although 3 independent samples will be collected at each reach, there is now an option to composite the 3 samples in the laboratory and reduce the total number of BMIs identified at each reach from 900 to 500; and 4) there is a new QA/QC procedure to collect a set of duplicate samples

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