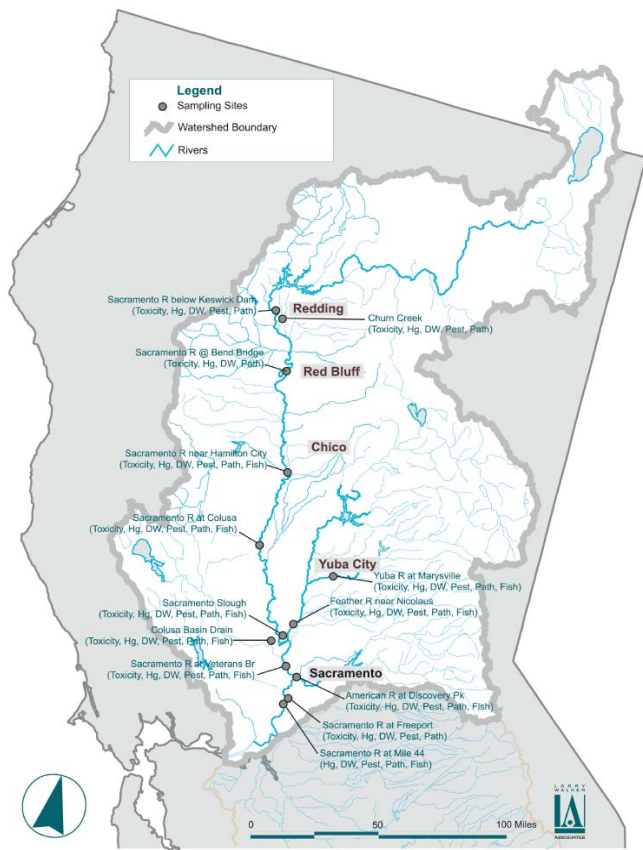


# A Regional Monitoring Program for the Sacramento River Watershed



SRWP Monitoring Program Sampling Sites, 2005-2007

## Monitoring in the Sacramento River Watershed

The Sacramento River Watershed Program (SRWP) has been monitoring the Sacramento River and its major tributaries since 1998. The SRWP's monitoring program was started because there was a need to better understand water quality in the Sacramento River Watershed.

Thus far, over \$5 million has been spent on the SRWP Monitoring Program through grant funding from the USEPA and more recently a Proposition 50 Watershed Program grant. In implementing its monitoring program, the SRWP has collaborated with monitoring efforts of other agencies including the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, U.S. Geological Survey, California Department of Water Resources and Department of Fish and Game.

The goals of the monitoring program were to develop a cost-efficient, coordinated monitoring program that assessed baseline conditions in the Sacramento River's main stem and its tributaries; one that identified causes, effects and extent of problems; and one which could be used to measure improvements in management.

## Launching an Effort

Encouraged by its monitoring success, SRWP is launching an effort to develop a long-term, sustainable regional monitoring program for the Sacramento River Watershed. A major portion of the funding for the program must come from the program's stakeholders. The major drivers for monitoring and potential stakeholders are listed here:

### **Drivers**

- Pelagic Organism Decline (POD) in the Delta
- Central Valley Drinking Water Quality Policy
- Sediment quality objectives
- 303(d) list, TMDLs, and 305(b) report
- NPDES permits with receiving water monitoring requirements
- Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program
- Delta islands drainage

### **Potential Stakeholders**

- Wastewater Dischargers
- Stormwater Dischargers
- State Water Resources Control Board
- Regional Water Quality Control Boards
- California Urban Water Agencies
- State Water Contractors
- California Department of Water Resources
- California Department of Public Health
- Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program
- CALFED agencies and Interagency Ecological Program members
- Non-Government Organizations

## Purpose

An RMP could serve many purposes, including:

- Determine background pollutant concentrations for permitting and assessing compliance with water quality standards
- Understand pollutant fate and transport, linking water quality to beneficial uses and sources to impairment
- Establish baseline conditions for water quality, sediment quality, biodiversity and ecological health
- Evaluate emerging contaminants
- Evaluate status and trends in conditions over time

## Objectives

The multi-faceted objectives of the RMP could include:

- Monitor ambient water quality within the watershed in a science-based, watershed approach
- Communicate and coordinate with separate monitoring efforts to prioritize and focus public sector efforts
- Contribute to a comprehensive water quality and sediment monitoring database
- Provide regular, integrative assessment reporting and program evaluation
- Respond to new information and changing priorities to inform decision-makers

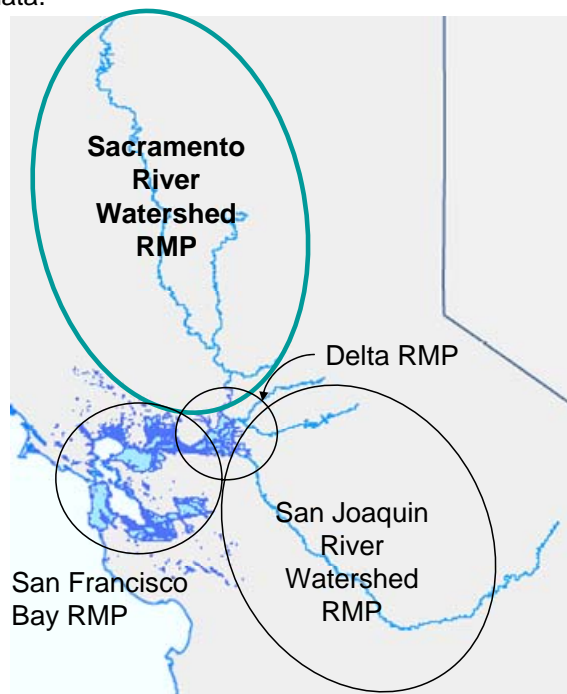
## Incentives

The overall benefit of an RMP would come from collectively understanding water quality problems. Specific incentives that an RMP would provide include:

- Coordination with regulators to prioritize and adaptively manage pollution issues with a watershed-scale perspective
- Satisfy NPDES permit compliance monitoring requirements
- Provide actual (rather than conservatively assumed) background concentration data
- Establish standards for sampling and analysis to generate comparable, high-quality data
- Leverage other monitoring efforts to minimize redundancy and overlap

## Linking to the Bay-Delta Estuary

Due to the vast range of regional conditions and interests in the San Francisco Bay Estuary and its watershed, monitoring may not be administered over the entire area by one entity. Each RMP would coordinate its monitoring to ensure consistency, comparability, and utility of monitoring data.



## Challenges

The main challenges to address in developing an RMP with sufficient, equitable, reliable funding include the following:

- Participants lose some independence while they commit for the long-term
- Coordination among various stakeholders with potentially divergent interests may be contentious
- Different pollutants of concern may apply in different areas of the watershed
- Concerns identified at a distant site may incorrectly implicate a discharger
- Monitoring at distant sites would not identify localized hot spots
- May forego monitoring many water bodies that are currently monitored by NPDES dischargers

The Sacramento River Watershed Program was founded in 1996. The SRWP was certified in 2002 as a California not-for-profit corporation. The mission of the SRWP is to ensure that current and potential uses of the watershed's resources are sustained, restored, and where possible, enhanced, while promoting the long-term social and economic vitality of the region. For more information, visit [www.sacrriver.org/](http://www.sacrriver.org/).



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