



baywire

News and Updates from the Governing Board of
the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission

BAYWIRE

February/April 2011 Edition

Regional Water Board Head Updates Governing Board on TMDL Program

At our February 2011 meeting, Sam Unger, Executive Officer for the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, addressed the status of impaired water bodies in the Santa Monica Bay watershed and offered updates on regional Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs).

The TMDL Program is required by the federal Clean Water Act to address impaired water bodies in a region, by developing technical analyses of the pollutant problem and establishing methods by which to reduce the pollutants to acceptable levels. The LA Regional Water Board has been under a consent decree for over a decade, requiring it to meet the federal TMDL requirements, and has been actively working to address the pollutant loads, according to Unger.

The LA Region has focused on several pollutants, including trash, bacteria, metals, nutrients, salt and chloride, and agricultural pesticides. The first regional TMDL was established in 2000 for trash along a portion of the San Gabriel River, and there are now 36 Regional Board TMDLs established. Many of the TMDL requirements have been included in various permit conditions throughout the watershed as well as on various other Orders placed by the Regional Board on entities that it regulates.

There have been numerous successes in the Santa Monica Bay watershed, said Unger, despite limited Regional Board staff resources to implement the program. These successes include a reduction in bacterial exceedances, measurable trash reductions, and a significant nitrogen reduction in various rivers in the region. Despite the successes, continued regulatory, legal, and administrative challenges remain.

Results of the Green Solutions Phase II Project Are Now Available – Great News for Multibenefit Projects to Clean Up Runoff in Santa Monica Bay Watershed

A practical, quantified strategy to help public agencies solve serious water quality problems was presented to the SMBRC Governing Board at its April meeting. Esther Feldman, of Community Conservation Solutions (CCS), presented results from the “Green Solutions Project, Phase II,” a project conducted in partnership between the SMBRC, CCS, and the State Coastal Conservancy. Green Solutions is strategy for improving water quality while creating new park, habitat, and open space lands in communities with great needs for those amenities.

The analysis, developed by the team of SMBRC, CCS, Psomas Inc. and GreenInfo Network, found that:

- There are 212 high-priority potential project sites in the Santa Monica Bay watershed comprising over 3,000 acres that are suitable for Green Solution water quality improvement projects.
- Implementing Green Solution projects on these sites could treat polluted runoff from up to 13,000 acres of the Santa Monica Bay Watershed.
- Green Solutions can create up to 1,200 acres of new Parks, habitat & open space in the Santa Monica Bay Watershed.
- Implementing Green Solutions on roads and rights-of-way could treat runoff from up to 2,600 acres.
- Implementing Green Solutions on high pollutant-loading private land uses could keep runoff from nearly 3,000 acres of land out of the public drainage system.

Ms. Feldman noted that by integrating watershed hydrology, storm drain information, pollutant loading, community needs, and conservation priorities, the analytical, prioritized Green Solution approach presents a practical and strategic way to efficiently improve water quality in the creeks, rivers, beaches and ocean waters of the Santa Monica Bay watershed. This approach would also create a network of new green areas in communities lacking parks, open space, and other natural habitat.

For more information contact Shelley Luce at sluce@santamonicabay.org or Esther Feldman at efeldman@conservationsolutions.org.

Volunteers Wanted for Ballona Wetlands Baseline Assessment & Scientific Monitoring

The Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation wetlands monitoring program is looking for volunteers and interns interested in working outdoors and in the laboratory to contribute to studies of coastal wetlands ecology. Opportunities include a wide range of scientific topics and sampling procedures from water quality to invertebrates and mammals. The program includes lab work (taxonomic identification and invertebrate sorting) and data entry/analysis, and can accommodate a diversity of interests.

For more information, please contact: Karina Johnston (kjohnston@santamonicabay.org), or check out our website: www.ballonarestoration.org.

Ballona Wetlands Monthly Open House and Outreach Program

The Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation hosts monthly Ballona Wetlands Open Houses, featuring guided walking tours, that allow the general public and local youth organizations to access restricted areas of the wetland and experience our unique ecosystem first-hand.

Volunteers can help by participating in tours, preparing education materials, tabling events at Farmer's Markets, networking within the community, and generally spreading enthusiasm about the Ballona Wetlands and the Restoration Project efforts. The goal of the outreach program is to deliver knowledge to the community about the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation's monitoring activities, restoration programs, and involvement opportunities.

For more information, please contact Elena Tuttle (etuttle@santamonicabay.org).

Meet the New Administrative Manager

The Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation is pleased to announce the hiring of Marcelo Villagomez as the new Administrative Manager. Born in Guanajuato, Mexico, Mr. Villagomez earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from UC Berkeley (Economic Development) and a Masters of Public Administration from Harvard University. He recently moved to the Los Angeles region from Boston, where he lived in a community where sustainable living is a top priority. We are very excited to have Marcelo as a member of our dedicated team as we work to restore Santa Monica Bay. Welcome Marcelo!

Boater Education Program Hires New Staff Member

Joining us from the east coast is Victoria (Vicki) Ippolito, the newest member of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation's Boater Education Program. Vicki recently graduated with a Master of Science degree in Fisheries Science and minor in Environmental Science from Louisiana State University, where her research focused on evaluating remote setting technologies for oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*) seed production in Louisiana. She will be assisting the Foundation in educating the Southern California boating community about boat-generated pollution and ways to protect our oceans, lakes, and rivers. A few interesting facts about Vicki: she reconstructed (after a major hurricane) and operated an oyster hatchery in Grand Isle, LA; she worked at a pizza parlor for five years and never made a pizza; she loves to SCUBA; and she is a certified first responder for stranded marine mammals. Welcome Vicki!