



News Release

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SRWP Releases Watershed Monitoring Report

(Woodland, CA) The Sacramento River Watershed Program (SRWP) has released its first comprehensive watershed monitoring report. The report evaluates the water quality in the Sacramento River Watershed by measuring and tracking the levels of various contaminants throughout the State's most productive watershed.

The study found that most sites analyzed meet water quality objectives and that the Sacramento River is a high quality source from which to draw water for municipal use. Drinking water quality along the river and its major tributaries also consistently met the State's goals and objectives. The report does point out that the quality of drinking water in the Central and Southern Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta diminished as it was exposed to discharges within the Delta, waters from the San Joaquin River and saltwater intrusion.

Encouraging trends were also identified. Organophosphate pesticides are trending downward in response to restrictions on the use of diazinon and chlorpyrifos and resulting changes in their use in both agricultural and residential applications.

Despite the legacy of contaminants left from the mining era, metals were found to not be a general problem in the Sacramento River Watershed. However, mercury and methyl mercury were found in the Watershed at concerning levels, through accumulation in certain fish, like the striped and largemouth bass, where mercury levels can exceed those deemed safe by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Additional findings are detailed in the report and cover the major uses and activities in the Sacramento River Watershed, including drinking water, recreation, fishing and aquatic life.

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The SRWP began monitoring the Sacramento River and its major tributaries in 1998. Since then, the program has been tracking various contaminants in the water and aquatic life to establish the condition of the River and water-quality trends. This report looks at the first six years of monitoring, which is essentially a baseline of data against which future monitoring can be compared.

The SRWP monitoring program was started because there was no ongoing monitoring program for the Sacramento River Watershed and there was a need to better understand water quality in the Watershed. The six-year, \$4 million effort was made possible through grant funding from the US EPA, matching funds from the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District, and the collaboration of several local, state, and federal agencies.

Founded in 1996, the Sacramento River Watershed Program is a collaborative, consensus-based group of stakeholders with long-term interests in sustaining and enhancing a 27,000-square-mile watershed that covers 17 percent of California's total land mass—from the Oregon border to the Delta.

For more information on SRWP or to view a copy of the Monitoring Report Summary, visit www.sacriver.org.

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