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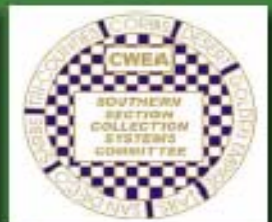
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State of the San Gabriel River Watershed Symposium Recap

By Wendy Wert

On July 20, 2011 the Council for Watershed Health (Council) hosted a State of the San Gabriel River Watershed Symposium, in Whittier, CA. This Symposium presented results from a 5-year State of the Watershed Report, which represents the culmination of a successful, cooperative watershed scale monitoring program. The Symposium opened with remarks from Executive Director, Nancy Steele who set the stage for this collaborative program. Nancy stated that the Council and its partners envision a healthy, sustainable San Gabriel River Watershed that meets the water quality, water supply, recreational and habitat needs of its human and biological communities.



Speakers (lt to rt) Nancy Steele, Brock Bernstein, Sharon Green, Kristy Morris, Eric Stein, and Karen Larsen.

Dr. Brock Bernstein related that in 2004 that key stakeholders formed the San Gabriel River Regional Monitoring Program (SGRRMP) to establish a monitoring framework to go back to the baselines presented in the Clean Water Act and answer the following Questions:

1. What is the condition of the streams in the watershed?
2. Are conditions at the areas of unique interest getting better or worse?
3. Are receiving waters near dischargers meeting water quality objectives?
4. Is it safe to swim?
5. Are locally caught fish safe to eat?

Speaker Sharon Green continued the discussion with an overview of the San Gabriel Watershed, which encompasses over 689 square miles, contains over 1,236 miles of streams that traverse a magnitude of environments on their journey from the San Gabriel Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. The San Gabriel River Watershed supports a population of more than 2.3 million people. Speaker Gary Hildebrand then broadened the discussion to examine the magnitude of diversity that the San Gabriel River Watershed encompasses. The watershed includes 48 cities and three counties. Precipitation throughout the watershed is variable from 27 inches in the mountainous areas to 12 inches observed in the coastal areas in an average year.

Dr. Kristy Morris explained that, since 2005, SGRRMP has performed rigorous scientific monitoring at targeted and randomly selected sites distributed throughout the watershed during dry weather. The program capture data from the mountainous upper watershed, the highly urbanized lower watershed and the main channel. The SGRRMP has successfully shown that an integrated watershed monitoring program can provide context to these essential management questions, while improving monitoring efficiencies.

Speaker Scott Johnson and Dr. Eric Stein answered question 1, by explaining that the stream condition was assessed through the measurement of multiple indicators, which include biological communities, chemicals of concern, toxicity, and physical habitat. In general the healthiest ecosystems were located in the undisturbed portions of the stream, however, higher water toxicity was also found in these areas. Speaker Karen Larsen explored question 2, over a five-year period, the SGRRMP studied three key watershed habitats to determine how chemistry, toxicity, biological communities, and physical habitat conditions might be improving or declining over time. Karen explained that no clear trends emerged over the five years and that a categorical approach could support resource optimization. Speaker Phil Markle, on question 3, explained that nearly every chemical constituent, including nutrients, metals and organics that were assessed against a water quality standards were within the Basin Plan thresholds regarded as safe for human and aquatic life. Phil also detailed the few exceedances that were observed during the 5-year study: diazinon, a pesticide that EPA has banned and ammonia, which was reduced through treatment of discharged waters. Speakers Gerry Greene, Bernard Franklin, Jim Hughes, and Lisa Northrop discussed question 4, the human health implications associated with swimming in the streams and lakes in the watershed. E. coli levels during 2007-2009 were typically below California standards indicating that it is safe to swim, with occasional exceedances on weekends or holidays when recreational use was high. Speakers Michael Lyons, Shannon Grund, and Scott Johnson explained question 5, by stating three fish species (tilapia, red ear sunfish, and bluegill) did not exceed consumption thresholds, while largemouth bass, striped millet and common carp caught in certain areas had contaminants at levels that warrant limiting consumption by humans.



Attendees in Whittier (lt), Speakers Jim Hughes, Lisa Northrop, Bernard Franklin and Gerry Greene (rt).

Keynote Speaker, the Honorable Mary Ann Lutz then presented a challenging view of the path forward for the stewards of the San Gabriel River Watershed. There are apparent contradictions in watershed goals and resource allocations. Historically, new regulations have promulgated litigation in this region. Litigation does not result in improvements in water quality, but rather further depletes already taxed resources. The path forward then is through an integrated approach to water quality that establishes a collaborative cooperative culture, which supports the development of effective science based regulations. Mary Ann challenged cities and counties to acknowledge that environmental quality is one of the many vital services that they are commissioned to provide.

WEFTEC Conference Coming to Los Angeles Oct 15-19

By WEF - Los Angeles will host the largest and most significant water quality event in North America when WEF convenes the 84th Annual Technical Exhibition and Conference at the LA Convention Center October 15-19. With attendance at around 17,000 professional the event will have an economic impact of around \$30 million. To register visit www.weftec.org.

Here are just a few Los Angeles speakers. Spot someone you know? Don't miss their presentation!

- Berko, Kwasi, City of Los Angeles ~ Wet Weather Hydrodynamic Modeling as a Planning Tool for the City of Los Angeles
- Cox, Huub, City of Los Angeles ~ Multi-Agency Approach to Implementing the Monitoring Requirements of the Ballona Creek Metals and Estuary Toxic Pollutants TMDL
- Drennan, Philippa, Loyola Marymount University ~ Green Roofs: Developing a Native Plant Palette for Use in Southern California
- Eskridge, Kari, LA County DPW ~ Reducing SSO's through CCTV Inspection
- Flores, Michael, RMC Water and Environment ~ Implementation of a Risk-Based Approach to Sanitary Sewer Asset Management (71)
- Hanks, Keith, City of Los Angeles ~ Los Angeles Sewers, Past, Present, and Future
- Jackson-Fossett, Cora, City of Los Angeles ~ Dangerous Liasons: How Stakeholders Can Make or Break Your Wastewater Projects
- Lau, Rowena, City of Los Angeles ~ Impacts of Sewer Capacity Assessment in Los Angeles
- Lee, Andy, LACSD ~ Removing Hydrogen Sulfide from Digester Gas Using Aerobic and Anoxic Biological Trickling Filters
- Lew, Albert, City of Los Angeles ~ A Los Angeles Marathon – Building 60 Miles of Sewers a Year
- Mansell, Bruce, Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts ~ Pilot-Scale Testing of a High Recovery NF/RO Integrated Treatment System for Indirect Potable Reuse (48)
- Munakata, Naoko, LACSD ~ AOP Treatment of Nitrosamines in Recycled Water
- Smal, Nick, LACSD ~ Pilot Study of Advanced Treatment Processes to Recycle JWPCP Secondary Effluent
- Tremblay, Ray, LACSD ~ Maximizing Recycled Water Use in Southern California
- Villacorta, Brian, LACSD ~ Service and Success Go Hand-in-Hand: A Look at the LACSD Engineering Mentoring Program





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Photo by Paul Cockrell



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SPECIAL EVENTS CALENDAR

Oct 15-19 th	WEFTEC; Downtown, Los Angeles, www.weftec.org
Oct 16 th	4 th Annual Bike Ride for Water for People; LA, www.waterforpeople.org
Oct 17 th	Everyone Extravaganza; The Conga Room, LA Live, www.waterforpeople.org
Nov 3 rd	LA's Collection System and Plant Maintenance Training Day; Los Angeles, www.labsofcwea.com
Nov 10 th	IW Tour; Location TBD, www.labsofcwea.com

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