

STATE WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN 2015 UPDATE
Comment Form

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Comments/Issues: Please see attached - written before your presentation. Suggestions pertain to water body ecosystems; pls consider what is appropriate for Plan. Ideas focus on expanded participation in stakeholder/interagency task forces, some you may initiate or lead. Of course, I see from your presentations that Reg. Bd watersheds cut across the "bands" of ecoregions as you divide the habitats among staff, but task forces can be germane to coasts, riparian valleys, etc.

Please use additional sheets if necessary.

SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS TO:

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Questions? Please call us at (916) 651-9476

STATE WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN SCOPING MEETING for
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

October 15, 2013, Aquarium of the Pacific, Downtown Long Beach

Proposed Input, Glenn Robertson, representing
Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (Region 8, Riverside)

Region 8 staff has discussed the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) Update, the first since 2005. The CDFW wants to solicit input on "target habitats and preliminary conservation strategies." The SWAP will incorporate climate change, increased economic and political stressors on habitats, and other threats to ecoregions.

Some of the following ideas include CDFW's presence, or proposed increased presence, in interagency task forces-- each task force working toward a watershed-scale or drainage-scale goal (ex: microcystin sources; sediment substrate restoration) that does not put the onus purely on CDFW to complete. Such distribution of staff time could address a wider number of measures that strengthen foundations of habitats. Ideas can be identified without the constraints of budget--then have secondary concern about the money (two-step process)--or there will never be action.

Board staff would caution CDFW staff to not immerse resources into new "studies," but instead use existing experience and local studies (Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP; universities, NGOs, etc.) plus those studies posted online from outside California. Give ideas for needed studies, including thesis topics, to others who can do the sampling, research, statistical analysis, or university work.

From a Water Board perspective, the following **strategies** serve to support Regional 8 Basin Plan beneficial uses (BUs, code key at end of this doc). The BUs as represented by various habitats and their riparian, wetland, estuarine, or marine waters:

1. Use interagency sampling data from SCCWRP, Counties, Cities, and Regional Board, to help correlate nutrients in dry/wet weather runoff to serious algal blooms in estuaries and nearshore ecosystems. Help narrow down the worst pockets of "soup" for growth of microcystin cyanobacteria, or toxic blue-green algae. Help determine epidemiology of waterborne pathogens now found to be rampant in otters, sea lions, etc. in Southern Calif. Note: SCCWRP is the repository of a great deal of nutrient data from many organizations, not just in CEDEN but they have several technical reference documents on nutrients and most of the other topics below.

Target Habitats: Upper/Lower Newport Bay, Huntington Harbour, Newport Coast, Seal Beach and SB Nat Wildlife Refuge/Naval Weapons Station. **BUs:** EST, SHEL, WILD, MAR, SPWN, BIOL, COMM, possibly RARE.

2. Restore rocky reefs by seeding plant/animal species (as mitigation work for permits?). Vigilant enforcement to prevent/minimize poaching. Plan for how to increase kelp holdfast sites, and to increase densities of depauperate species (abalone, rock lobster, nudibranchs, starfish, etc.). Plan for proper balance of sea urchin population, in light of ocean acidification. SCCWRP's Bight monitoring program surveying rocky reefs.
Target Habitats: Rocky habitat in ASBS areas along Newport Coast. **BUs:** MAR, WILD, BIOL, COMM, RARE.

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3. Similar program as in 2., above, continue what CDFW is already doing with the Newport Eelgrass Program, to coordinate program goals with other State, Federal, and regional water quality and resource agencies, and local stakeholders. SCCWRP has great data and references for status of eelgrass. List and divide up with agencies what local obstacles get in the way of achieving widespread eelgrass habitat in estuaries/bay muds, for halibut spawning and other benefits. Model future eelgrass bed distribution in estuaries with anticipated sea-level rise.

Target Habitats: Upper/Lower Newport Bay, Huntington Harbour, Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge/Naval Weapons Station. **BUs:** EST, SHEL, WILD, MAR, SPWN, BIOL, COMM, probably RARE.

4. Propose and participate in an interagency plan for watershed stakeholders to slowly release "pulses" of sediment along terrestrial streams, returning fines and sand to watershed:

- Discourage long-term retention of sediment in basins. Consider replacing sediment where streams have eroded to bedrock (SAR in Colton; Borrego Canyon Wash; Serrano Creek), benefitting sandy wash species. Encourage riparian planting to check sediment denudation and hydromodification, while creating habitat.
- Advise on selection and re-distribution of various clast sizes for optimum substrates and streambed health for micro and macro-invertebrates, anadromous fish species, sensitive species such as Santa Ana sucker, etc.
- Find who can incinerate (Ex: low T thermal desorption) and reuse dredged sediment from Upper/Lower Newport Bay, etc., to put some back upstream, instead of to offshore dumping sites.
- Influence natural sediment loading and migration out to the beaches/upper shelf; improves life in ocean water column from groundfish to sharks.

Target Habitats: Santa Ana River from below Seven Oaks Dam to Prado Dam, then to ocean. Most Region 8 watershed inland streams. **BUs:** WILD, WARM, COLD, BIOL, EST, MAR, SPWN, RARE, possibly COMM.

5. Encourage mitigation banking and in-lieu fee programs from projects focused on expanding recognized refugia around Santa Ana River/San Jacinto River/Coyote Creek watersheds. Have mitigation actively acquire or buy sites enlarging and creating new refugia sites already within movement corridor areas. Restore drainages systematically instead of isolated small sites. Planting would support hydrology in riparian corridors, fan scrub, etc. in these **Target Habitats:**

- Upper watershed of San Timoteo Creek: Beaumont, southeast Redlands, Oak Glen/Yucaipa area, and Riverside County Badlands;

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- Eastern Puente-Chino Hills/Coyote Hills, La Habra to Brea/Tonner Canyon, Chino Hills to Yorba Linda/ Santa Ana Canyon;
- Hawardin Hills, eastern Riverside to Perris; Gavilan Plateau to Wildomar/Menifee; ravines or hillside watercourses, with their isolated riparian segments;
- Alluvial fan systems with Riverside Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub habitat -- Rancho Cucamonga, Fontana, Rialto, Devore, Northern San Bernardino, Highland, Mentone
- Vernal pools and playas —San Jacinto River reaches (Mystic Lake, Lake Elsinore), Lakeview/ Nuevo, Hemet, San Jacinto

BUs: WILD, WARM, COLD, RARE, SPWN

Basin Plan Keys:

- EST – Estuarine Habitat waters
- SHEL – Shellfish Harvesting waters
- WILD- Wildlife Habitat waters
- WARM – Warm Freshwater Habitat waters
- COLD – Cold Freshwater Habitat waters
- MAR – Marine Habitat waters
- SPWN – Spawning, Reproduction, and Development waters
- BIOL – Preservation of Biological Habitats of Special Significance (sanctuaries, ASBS)
- COMM – Commercial and Sportfishing waters
- RARE – Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species waters support state/federal habitat