

Speak Up for Clean California Waterways

Impaired Waters List

Every two years, California must compile a list of the state's "impaired," or seriously polluted, water bodies. These are waters too polluted for activities that Californians used to enjoy, like fishing, swimming and boating, or are too polluted to support fish, birds and other wildlife. This "303(d) List" of polluted waters also identifies the source of pollutants responsible (if possible). The State and stakeholders use this information to design and implement plans to clean up the waterways so they can be fully usable again.

Submit Data and Information for the 2012 303(d) List

The State Water Board is gathering water quality data and information to update the statewide list of severely polluted waters for 2012. By law, the State and Regional Water Boards must consider any information that you submit, but the better-substantiated data will get more attention. **Submit data and information by August 30 to:**

<p>Mr. Jeffrey Shu State Water Resources Control Board Division of Water Quality P.O. Box 100 Sacramento, CA 95812-0100</p>

Relevant data and information includes but is not limited to:

- Water quality monitoring data,
- Photos of water quality impairments (particularly trash),
- Information such as trash counts, reports of fish kills, or algae blooms.

The State Board's Data Form should accompany all submissions if at all possible. Download the simple, one-page form at www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/tmdl/docs/2012_ir_cvshvt2.doc.

Using the 303(d) List to Ensure Healthy Flows for Fish



The State Water Board already recognizes how alterations in natural flow can contribute to violations of water quality standards; for example, by increasing the concentrations of pollutants. The state has identified low natural flows as a potential *source* of impairment of 47 water body-segment pollutant combinations. California generally does not recognize low natural flows, streamflow alterations, or similar flow issues as *independent causes* of impairment.*

However, alterations in natural flows in fact can cause impairments, such as where natural flows in "cold freshwater habitat" have been reduced to where the shallow water becomes too warm to be fish habitat. In this example, the water body should be listed as impaired because of both low natural flow *and* temperature, not solely temperature. The distinction is important because if a creek is solely listed for temperature, the mitigating action could be (for example) planting trees along the banks to create shade. If a creek is listed for both flow and temperature, action would also be triggered to increase flows. Other states have identified flow issues as independent causes of impairment for 109 water bodies nationwide. "Flow Alterations" is listed as a cause of impairment for 101 water bodies in DC, ID, MI, WY and OH. Additionally, "Hydromodification," "Pumping," "Water Diversion," "Reduced Tidal Flushing" and "Low Flow Alterations" have also been listed as causes of impairments.

See http://iaspub.epa.gov/tmdl_waters10/attains_nation_cy.cause_detail_303d?p_cause_group_id=545.

Ensuring the 303(d) List Fully Reflects Groundwater Contamination

Groundwater is often hydrologically connected to surface water, and tributary groundwater can provide substantial flows to streams, rivers, and lakes. As a result, polluted groundwater poses a serious threat to many surface waters. The state has started to incorporate groundwater as a "source" of surface water pollution: the 2006 303(d) List contained only two references to groundwater, but the 2010 303(d) List has 27 water body-segments that identify groundwater as a source of impairment. However, Regional Boards can and should go further; for example, by increasing the scope of these listings, by identifying the groundwater basins causing impairment, and by assigning loads to reduce that groundwater pollution.

*There are only two California waterways for which flow issues have been identified as an independent *cause* of impairment: Ballona Creek Wetlands, listed for "Hydromodification" and "Reduced Tidal Flushing," and Ventura River, listed for "Pumping" and "Water Diversion."

The State Water Board Needs to Hear From You

These are your waters. You know them better than anyone.

Compile your data and information on your local impaired waterways, and if possible fill out the simple 2012 Data Submittal Information Form **by August 30**. Always provide as much descriptive detail as possible, including:

Water Quality Data

- Name and exact area of the water body and monitoring sites
- Directions to the site from a major highway, and GPS coordinates
- Date and time measurements collected
- Names of sampling team members & contact information
- Explanation of water quality standards not being met
- Supporting or associated analytical data such as a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), relevant metadata, or description of sampling methodology used

Photographs

- Thorough description of photograph(s)
- Description of the spatial and temporal representation of the photographs
- Linkage between photograph-represented condition and condition that indicates impacts on water quality
- Photographer's rationale for area photographed and camera settings used
- Verifiable contact information including phone, email, mailing address, and website if applicable

Narrative, Qualitative, and Anecdotal Data

- Description of events or conditions that indicate impacts on water quality
- "Linkage" between the measurement endpoint and the water quality standard of interest
- Scientifically defensible explanation of water quality problems
- Analyst's credentials and training
- Name and exact location of the water body and monitoring sites with precise directions to location for which you are submitting information (latitude and longitude coordinates if possible)

Learn More about the 303(d) Process

See the State Water Board Data Solicitation Notice at:

www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/tmdl/integrated2012.shtml.

Download the 2012 Data Submittal Information Form at

www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/tmdl/docs/2012_ir_cvshtv2.doc.

View the State Water Board's Interactive Map of California's 303(d) List and learn about local impaired waterways:

www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/tmdl/integrated2010.shtml.

Visit California Coastkeeper Alliance's Severely Polluted Waters page at www.cacoastkeeper.org.



The image shows a form titled "2012 Integrated Report Data Submittal Information Form" with a small "Enclosure 2" label in the top right corner. The form is divided into several sections: "Contact Information" (with fields for First Name, Last Name, Organization, Mailing Address, Email, and Phone), "Submittal Information" (with checkboxes for Region data intended for: North Coast, San Francisco, Central Coast, Los Angeles, Central Valley, Lakeview, Colorado River, Santa Ana, San Diego), "GIS map layers included:" (with checkboxes for Yes, Aquaculture, Other Organics, Toxicity, Pesticides, Pathogens, Fresh, and Other Inorganics), "Pollutant Categories:" (with checkboxes for All, Aquaculture, Pesticides, Miscellaneous, and Other Inorganics), "Time Period Data Collected:" (with a date range field), "Summary of Data (Explanation of data included in submission or instructions on using data.)", "Submittal format:" (with checkboxes for Electronic and Hard Copy/Paper), and "Internal Use Only (by Water Boards)" (with fields for Control # and Date Received). At the bottom left, there is a small reference number "2012-IR-FR-01-2012".

Questions? Contact Sara Aminzadeh at California Coastkeeper Alliance (415.794.8422 or sara@cacoastkeeper.org).