

City of Agoura Hills
NPDES Annual Report 2010-2011
Assessment of Program Effectiveness

VI. Assessment of Program Effectiveness

PERMIT COMPLIANCE

The City of Agoura Hills has maintained full compliance with the NPDES permit requirements, and due to the increasing effort of water quality programs the City felt it necessary to hire in-house staff to perform day-to-day assignments while still relying on consultants for technical advice and staff augmentation.

EFFECTIVENESS EVALUTATION

One indicator of the effectiveness of the City's stormwater management program is the awareness among the general public concerning the sources of stormwater pollution. The biggest barrier to conquering the problem of stormwater non-point source pollution is lack of knowledge among the general public of the problem itself. Most people want to do the 'right thing', when made aware of how their actions can potentially have a far-reaching impact on the local surface waters. Watershed awareness is also evident through the City's compliant log with reports of illicit discharges.

The last couple of fiscal years the City participated in several watershed events aimed at public outreach, and development of a TMDL video. In addition, this year the City:

- ✓ Outreach to schools by contracting with a company that brings interact exhibits to the 4th grade classroom;
- ✓ Upgraded its webpage by adding links to environmental websites, added PSAs, and educational items;
- ✓ Partnered with the County of Los Angeles for an annual public outreach campaign;
- ✓ The City continued its contract for an innovative solution to water quality with the installation of an ozone treatment unit appeared in the Fall 2009 League of Cities PW Officers newsletter, Ventura Star, and Acorn;
- ✓ Doubling Street Sweeping article appeared in Ventura County Star; and
- ✓ Handed out campaign materials and Living Lightly in the Watershed books at the City Walk (concerts in the park); and
- ✓ Sent out mailers to each business and resident to let them know about increased street sweeping.

Furthermore, the City has been working with its WMC partner agencies to place signs at the watershed boundaries that inform the public of entrance to the watershed and laws regarding prohibited dumping. As the Principal Permittee's Public Education and Outreach campaign is now underway the City has identified ways to supplemental their program that will address our most pressing issues such as sediments, nutrients, trash, and indicator bacteria.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

A major strength of our storm water program is that it enjoys the full support of both the departmental staff and the City Council. Having this kind of support lends to the program a genuine teamwork approach with full commitment to affecting a positive difference in the health of our watershed. Another strength of the City's stormwater program has been participation in watershed-wide monitoring program that was funded by grants. Last but not least, a major strength of our storm water program is our partnership with the other watershed Cities through the Watershed Management Committee. Our WMC has greatly enhanced the effectiveness of our agencies programs through the development of the Integrated Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Plan for the Malibu Creek Watershed and the Regional Watersheds Implementation Plan. Both of these documents include measures to improve water quality through structural solutions as well as the public's perception of environmental stewardship.

One weakness of our storm water program relates to coordination of permit compliance issues with services contracted through LA County. During this Permit cycle it was brought to our attention by Regional Board staff that the City must have a detailed understanding of how County services are implemented such that all permit requirements are being met. To date, the County services contracts are oriented to a "full service" mode, where in the City contracts the work over to the County and can then rest assured that everything is being handled appropriately. We continue to address this weakness by building in a status reporting mechanism from the County to the City for NPDES related services. We have notified the County Contracted Services Coordinator of the need, and have conducted face-to-face meeting to address this problem.

Another program weakness lies in the evaluation methods for program effectiveness. We are working to identify more concrete indicators to use in determining program effectiveness. One idea involves the use of a web-based survey of the general public visiting our Stormwater Program website.

HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Grant funding was also secured for a watershed-wide monitoring program through a joint application with the Cities of Malibu, Agoura Hills, and Calabasas. This grant program has been completed and currently provides the watershed historical data valuable to the development of bio-objectives for the watershed. We are also using the information to focus efforts at the watershed level of implementation projects, and special investigation and abatement projects.
- The Watershed Management Committee has been working together to develop a urban runoff reduction plan that incorporates all of the requirements of the NPDES permit to be applied in a regionally consistent manner, that identifies and puts in motion additional programs that make sense for this watershed, and that includes concrete indicators for

evaluation of program effectiveness. This plan is the Integrated Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Plan for the Malibu Creek Watershed and the Regional Watershed Implementation Plan.

- Successfully maintaining the grant-funded Malibu Creek Watershed Coordinator position at the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains. The Malibu Creek Watershed coordinator actively brings together watershed partnerships and makes things happen.
- Manage the watershed's Compliance Monitoring Program.
- Conduct special monitoring project to determine the source of bacteria exceedances.
- Installation of an Ozone Treatment Facility as a pilot project.

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

The Cities of Calabasas, Agoura Hills, Hidden Hills, Malibu, Westlake Village and the County of Los Angeles have been actively using the Watershed Management Committee forum to coordinate regional solutions and help each other implement consistent programs for Permit compliance. The success of the annual joint training workshop for development construction inspectors and award of the Proposition 13 Watershed-wide monitoring grant are two examples of the on-going interagency coordination in this watershed.

FUTURE PLANS

Staff will continue discussions with the County's City Services Coordinator to fully implement status reporting on NPDES related services that are contracted out to the County.

We are eager to implement measures developed through the Integrated TMDL IP for MCW and improved water quality as a result.

SUGGESTIONS

Aside from the need for improving communication between County services and City staff and implementing better effectiveness evaluation methods, the existing stormwater program is well suited to effect a positive change in the health of our receiving waters.