SWAMP
Surface Water
Ambient Monitoring
Program

San Joaquin River Basin Rotational Sub-basin Monitoring Project: Westside Sub-basin Report

What is it?

The San Joaquin River Basin Rotational Sub-basin Monitoring Project was a program to monitor the tributaries of the San Joaquin River watershed. The watershed was divided into five sub-basins, each of which was intensively monitored for one year on a rotational basis. The objectives of the project were to coordinate with other monitoring efforts, evaluate spatial and temporal trends both within and between sub-basins, identify beneficial use concerns and generate recommendations for future studies.

The Westside Sub-basin covers the lower, western portion of the San Joaquin River watershed, extending downstream from the Orestimba creek watershed to the Delta. Its 670 square miles are located almost entirely within Stanislaus County. The streams of this sub-basin flow east from the mountains of the Diablo Range to the valley floor towards the main stem of the San Joaquin River. They are naturally ephemeral but during the irrigation season the valley floor sections receive irrigation return flows.

As part of the San Joaquin River Basin Rotational Sub-basin Monitoring Project, the Westside Sub-basin was intensively sampled from November 2004 to November 2005. Sites were chosen to characterize both the upper, mountainous regions as well as the valley floor areas. The monitoring effort was coordinated with monitoring being conducted by the Westside Coalition (an organization formed in response to the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program). In 2010 SWAMP staff published a report which assessed attainment of key beneficial uses – drinking water, aquatic life, recreation and irrigation supply – of the Westside Sub-basin waterbodies.

Why is it important to the State?

The San Joaquin River watershed covers 17,720 square miles and is one of the two major rivers which drain California's Central Valley (the other being the Sacramento River to the north). The

waterbodies of the San Joaquin watershed provide multiple beneficial uses for agricultural, urban, recreational and environmental interests.

The Westside Sub-basin is one of the five sub-basins that are tributary to the San Joaquin River and it is an integral part of this important watershed. Land uses in the upper watersheds include recreation areas and cattle grazing, while the valley floor is dominated primarily by agriculture, including orchards and row crops.

Why is it important to me?

The Westside Sub-basin monitoring program was designed to address local watershed concerns, including impacts to recreation, aquatic life, irrigation supply, and drinking water beneficial uses. This report provides information about the condition of Westside Sub-basin waterbodies that can be utilized local water quality managers and other interested stakeholders, including the general public.

How will this information be used?

Data collected as part of this study provided background water quality information for inflows to the San Joaquin River and was assessed in combination with other available data during the development of the Clean Water Act Sections 305(b) and 303(d) Integrated Report for the Central Valley Region, which assessed overall water quality within the Central Valley of California and also identified impaired waterbodies (waterbodies not meeting their beneficial uses designations). The finding within this report also can help determine future program design by focusing resources toward identified concerns.

For more information go to: http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb5/water_issues/swamp/water_quality_reports/index.shtml#sjrivbasin