

Protecting Water Quality at the Source

SOURCE WATER PROTECTION IS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE FOR ALL OF CALIFORNIA.

Large water utilities are required by the CDPH to conduct a Watershed Sanitary Survey every five years to examine possible sources of drinking water contamination. Metropolitan's most recent surveys were completed in December 2006 (Colorado River) and June 2007 (State Water Project) and include suggestions for how to better protect these source waters.

Source waters used by Metropolitan — the Colorado River and Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta — each have different water quality challenges. Both are exposed to stormwater runoff, recreational activities, wastewater discharges, wildlife, fires, and other watershed-related factors that could affect water quality. Treatment to remove specific contaminants can be quite costly and more expensive than measures to protect water at the source, which is why Metropolitan and other water agencies invest resources to support improved watershed protection programs.

EPA also requires utilities to complete one Source Water Assessment (SWA) that utilizes information collected in the watershed sanitary surveys. Metropolitan completed its SWA in December 2002. The SWA is used to evaluate the vulnerability of water sources to contamination and helps determine whether more protective measures are needed.

Water from the Colorado River is considered to be most vulnerable to contamination from recreation, urban/stormwater runoff, increasing urbanization in the watershed, and wastewater. Water supplies from Northern California are most vulnerable to contamination from urban/stormwater runoff, wildlife, agriculture, recreation, and wastewater.

For a summary of either the Watershed Sanitary Survey or the Source Water Assessment, please call (213) 217-6850.



Photo by MWD graphic artist Larry LaCom

Additional information about drinking water safety and standards can be found at:

California Department of Public Health

Office of Drinking Water, 1616 Capitol Avenue

PO Box 997377, MS 7400

Sacramento, CA 95899-7377

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/drinkingwater/Pages/Chemicalcontaminants.aspx>

Headquarters Office (916) 449-5600

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Office of Ground and Drinking Water (4601)

Ariel Rios Building

1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20460-0003

Safe Drinking Water Hotline

(800) 426-4791

<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/>

(General drinking water information)

<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/standard/index.html>

(Information on how drinking water standards are established)