

LOS ANGELES RIVER WATERSHED MONITORING PROGRAM & WATER QUALITY TESTING & NOTIFICATION PROTOCOL



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LA Sanitation

LARWMP: Why Be Involved?

- Required in DCT & LAG Permits
- Plan: Due by December 31, 2007
 - Developed by various stakeholders
 - Patterned on a similar plan for the San Gabriel River
 - Plan submitted on December 21, 2007

Monitoring in LA River Watershed?

- **Prior to LARWMP**

- Most monitoring restricted to areas near POTW discharges
- Most of watershed not monitored
- LARWMP monitors the entire watershed; a more regional approach
- Stakeholders chose Council for Watershed Health to help develop, manage, and coordinate program
- Question-driven program

LARWMP Addresses 5 Key Management

1. What are the conditions of streams in the watershed?
2. Are conditions at areas of unique interest getting better or worse?
3. Are receiving waters near discharges meeting water quality objectives?
4. Is it safe to swim?
5. Are locally caught fish safe to eat?

Implementation

- **Monitoring started in 2008**
- **Annual Reports are produced**
- **State of Watershed Reports**
 - Produced every 5 years
 - 1st in 2013

Results of LARWMP Monitoring

What are the conditions of streams in the watershed?

- Strong relationship between **physical habitat and biological community**
- Degraded water quality conditions (**metals, nutrients, & benthic organisms**) are more prevalent in urban regions.

Results (cont.)

- Are conditions at areas of unique interest getting better or worse?
 - At the **concrete-lined confluence channels**, habitat and biological communities are degraded compared to natural sites (i.e., upper watershed)
 - Wetland sites have better habitat quality at **upper watershed compared to lower**

Results (cont.)

- Are receiving waters near discharges meeting water quality objectives?
 - Yes, but degraded water quality conditions were observed.
 - POTW effluent often has less **fecal bacteria, dissolved metals, and suspended solids** than the LA River; effluent improves the water quality of the River by diluting pollutants.

Results (cont.)

- **Is it safe to swim?**
 - Kayaking areas occasionally exceed bacterial levels (10% to about 25% @ Sepulveda Basin & above 50% @ Elysian Valley)
 - Testing and Notification Protocol drafted
 - Review comments from stakeholders received
 - Responses are being drafted
 - Working with SCCWRP for a potential bacterial source tracking study

Results (cont.)

- Are locally caught fish safe to eat?
 - Common **carp** and largemouth **bass** from **Debs Lake** (Montecito Heights) and **Reseda Lake** are safe to eat.
 - Serving size and frequency of consumption are dependent upon the **fish species and site** based on mercury and PCB contaminant levels.
 - **DDT** and **selenium** do not seem to be a concern at any site.

Sampling & Testing Protocol

- Sampling & testing: Memorial Day to September 30
- Twice per week, instead of 5Xs/month
- Tabulated data will be posted at www.lacitysan.org/waterquality



Color-Coded Results

LA Sanitation will color-code results as follows:

GREEN

Water quality is suitable for recreational activities, but swimming is still prohibited. Test results indicate bacteria levels lower than 235 MPN, the limit for “REC-1.”

YELLOW

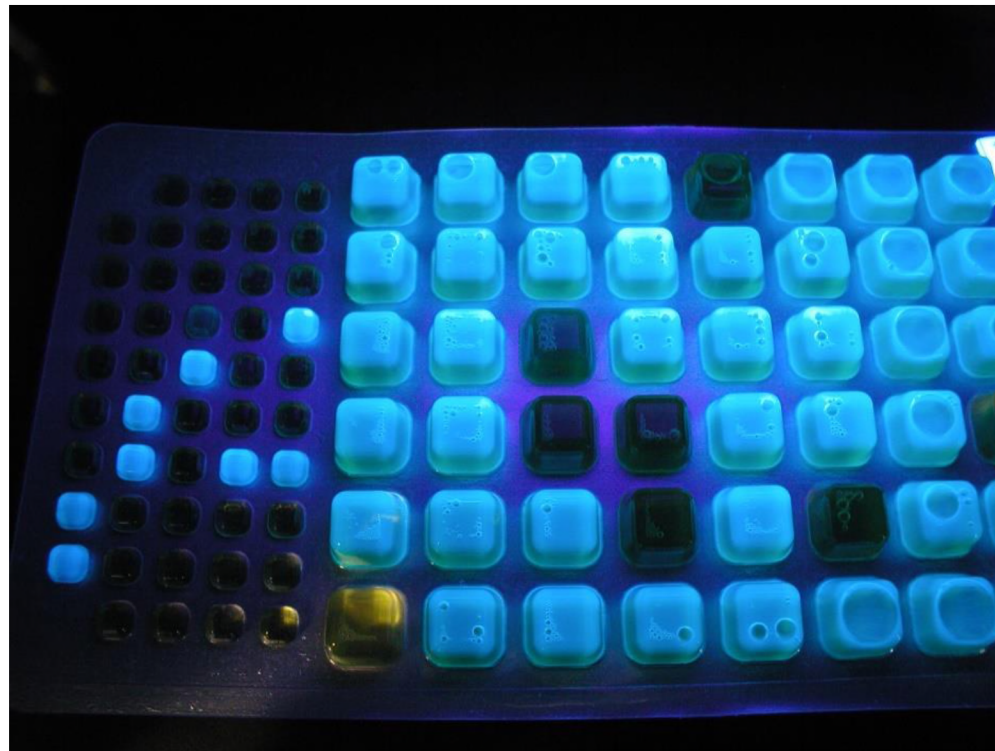
Users should exercise increased caution. Test results indicate bacteria levels between 235 MPN (“REC-1”) and 576 MPN (“Limited-REC-1”). **Precautionary Notice**

RED

LA River not suitable for recreational activities. Test results indicate bacteria levels exceeding 576 MPN (“Limited-REC-1”). **Closure Advisory**

REC-1 Standard Exceedance

When *E. coli* levels exceed the REC-1 standard (235 MPN/100mL), LA Sanitation will distribute a “**Precautionary Notice**” and the test results via email to the distribution list



Sewage Spill or “LREC-1” Standard Exceedance

- When a **sewage spill** that affects the recreational zones are confirmed -OR-
- When single-sample test results exceed the “Limited REC-1 (LREC-1)” level of **576 MPN**,
- A “**Closure Advisory**” recommending a temporary suspension of river recreation will be shared with the following (no later than the same day the Finding of Concern is confirmed):
 - Relevant City Offices
 - MRCA
 - LA Sanitation website
 - Distribution list
 - LACDPH website
 - LA Sanitation’s social media
 - LA Stormwater website
 - LA Sanitation & MyLA311 Call Centers

Closure Advisory

- When a **sewage spill** affects the recreation zone, the Closure Advisory will remain in effect and daily sampling will commence until **two consecutive samples no longer exceed** the 576 MPN/100mL level.
- When a sampling location **exceeds the 576 MPN** level, **accelerated monitoring** will be initiated.



Accelerated Monitoring

- The location will be re-sampled **within 48 hours**.
- If the **re-sample** exceeds the 576 MPN level, then the station will be sampled again within **another 48 hours**.
- When a sample indicates that the location is again within the 576 MPN level, the Closure Advisory will be rescinded and routine (twice per week) sampling will resume.



Closure of the River

- MRCA will enact the closure of the River.
- MRCA will suspend River recreation during, and for **72 hours following, a rain event.**



Questions?



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