



FACT SHEET

No. 6

Rangeland Watershed Program

U.C. Cooperative Extension and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Range Management Glossary Water Quality Terms

Basin Plan — See Water Quality Control Plan.

Bedload — The particles in a stream channel that mainly move by jumping, sliding or rolling on or near the bottom of the stream.

Beneficial use of water — Water used for the following purposes: domestic (*homes, motels, human consumption, etc.*), irrigation (*crops, lawns*), power (*hydroelectric*), municipal (*water supply of a city or town*), mining (*hydraulic, drilling*), industrial (*commerce, trade, industry*), fish and wildlife preservation, aquaculture (*raising fish, etc., for commercial purposes*), recreational (*boating, swimming*), stockwatering (*for commercial livestock*), water quality, frost protection (*misting or spraying crops to prevent frost damage*), heat control (*water crops to prevent heat damage*), ground water recharge, agriculture, etc.

Best Management Practice — A practice which is determined by **the state** to be the most effective and practicable method of preventing or reducing the amount of pollution generated by pollution sources. Determination is made after public participation and review of all other alternatives. (From the Federal Water Pollution Control Act)

Bioassay — Laboratory analytical test in which the effects of a waste stream or effluent upon living organisms are measured.

BOD — Biochemical Oxygen Demand.

California Environmental Quality Act — Established policy of environmental protection, maintenance, and enhancement. Created the EPA and the Environmental Impact Statement process.

Cease and Desist Order (C&D order) — Issued by Regional Boards for violation of waste discharge requirements and NPDES permits, or illegal discharge without waste discharge requirements.

Cleanup and Abatement Order (C&A order) — An order which requires a discharger to clean up a waste, abate its effects, and in a case of threatened pollution, take necessary remedial action.

Management Measure — New term replaces best management practices.

MOU—Memorandum of Understanding — An agreement between two agencies defining the responsibility of the respective agencies in the 208 program. Does not specifically provide for allocation of 208 monies for work performed.

Nonpoint source — Diffuse discharges of waste throughout the natural environment which are a major cause of water pollution. Difficult to pinpoint physically, but can be classified by type: urban runoff, agriculture, mining, septic tank leach fields, and silviculture.

NPDES Permit—National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System — Under state law, it is officially called a waste discharge requirement. It is required for all point sources discharges of pollutants to surface waters. It has the following characteristics: issued for up to five years; provides for inspection and monitoring; requires notice to the public, the EPA, and any other affected state; provides for the protection of navigation; and mandates a pre-treatment program.

Peak stream flow — The maximum expected flow of surface water at a waste management facility from a tributary watershed for a given recurrence interval.

Percolation — The movement of water through soil or rock; infiltration.

Point source — A discernible, confined, and discrete conveyance such as a pipe, ditch or channel, tunnel, conduit, well container, concentrated animal feeding operation or vessel from which pollutants are or may be discharged. Does not include agricultural stormwater discharges and return flows from irrigated agriculture.

Pollutant — Dredged spoil, solid waste, incinerator residue, sewage, garbage, sewage sludge, ammunition, chemical wastes, biological materials, radioactive materials, heat, wrecked or discarded equipment, rock, sand, cellar dirt and industrial, municipal, and agricultural waste discharged into water.

Pollution — An alteration of the quality of state waters by waste to a degree which unreasonably affects their beneficial uses or facilities which serve their beneficial uses.

Riparian vegetation — The vegetation along a watercourse which is distinguished from other vegetation by its dependence on the combination of soil moisture and other environmental factors provided by a permanent or intermittent stream.

Runoff — Rainfall or snow melt which is not absorbed by soil, evaporated, or transpired by plants, but finds its way into streams as surface flow.

Suspended solids — The small, solid particles in water that cause a cloudy condition. Particles of suspended sediment tend to settle at the channel bottom (settle able solids), but upward current in turbulent flow counteract gravitational settling.

Turbidity — A measure of the extent to which light passing through water is reduced due to suspended materials. Excessive turbidity may interfere with light penetration and minimize photosynthesis, thereby causing a decrease in primary productivity. It may interfere directly with essential physiological function of fish and other aquatic organisms, making it difficult for fish to locate a good food source and altering water temperature.

Waste Discharge Requirement — The order adopted by the Regional Boards regulating discharges of waste.

Water Quality Control Plan — Defines beneficial water uses, establishes water quality objectives to protect those uses, identifies water quality threats, and outlines corrective measures. It is used to develop discharge limits and guide Regional Board decisions on specific cases. There is a plan for each of California's 16 major watersheds.