

PREFACE



In the late 1700s humans began to notably alter the landscape of the Carlsbad Hydrologic Unit with the introduction of range-land grazing. By the late 1800s land uses had substantially turned to crop agriculture along the fertile valleys which flanked the major drainages of the watershed. By the late-1900s the landscape had been transformed to an urbanized condition over much of the valleys and into the steeper rocky scrub covered slopes that was previously untouched. Only since the 1970s has there been an increase in public appreciation of the natural environment and a recognition of the impact that human uses may be having on the natural environment. While there is an increase in environmental concern, and public policy is changing in response to public sentiment, the progress has

been incremental and sometimes inconsistent. There are several real and complicated factors that govern the rate of progress that can be made over any given period of time. These factors include current legislative and regulatory frameworks, existing infrastructure constraints, the need to maintain public and private property rights, and a general lack of fiscal resources to accomplish everything at once.

While there remain major hurdles to improvement of the natural systems, it is essential that we recognize the tremendous advances that have been made in a relatively short 30 years to change the course and even the definition of progress. Today, we measure progress not purely on an individual's accumulation of resources, but rather we have added to the definition a quality of life element that considers the public and private values of nature and natural lands. We consider environmental stewardship not as idealism, but as public service. We even view habitat conservation as prudent land-use planning. Environmentalism has become mainstream and never has the opportunity for having environmental concerns integrated into public policy been greater. However, it is essential that the transition from minority antagonist to majority advocate be accomplished in a manner that does not allow for the loss of focus on the ideals that define the environmental movement. This requires a collective and collaborative effort on the part of environmental leaders and public officials. It is also imperative that promotion and implementation of these ideals occurs in concert with existing policy and on-the-ground efforts in order to be both effective and efficient.

To aid in the establishment of cooperative efforts between watershed advocacy groups and public officials in the Carlsbad Hydrologic Unit, several steps are required. The first step was undertaken by the Regional Water Quality Control Board by providing water resources and water quality management guidance through the San Diego Basin Plan. The Basin Plan recognized that water resource planning must occur across political boundaries by establishing beneficial uses and objectives on a watershed-wide basis. The second step was taken when the Carlsbad Watershed Network was formed by various environmental non-governmental organizations that recognized the commonality of objectives that transcended the focused concerns of both specific areas and individual groups. The third step in this process is reflected by the State Water Resources which funded efforts of the Carlsbad Watershed Network and the Resource Conservation District, culminating in the preparation of this Carlsbad Watershed Management Plan.

Despite the name of the watershed, the study area extends well beyond the boundaries of the City of Carlsbad. It covers over 211 square miles incorporating substantial portions of the Cities of Oceanside, Vista, San Marcos, Escondido, Encinitas, and Solana Beach in addition to significant unincorporated portions of the County of San Diego. Plans of any kind can span a broad range of detail and focus. Some plans are meant to be regional in nature, while others are meant to form the basis of construction. Some plans expect a high degree of follow-on studies, while other are an end product in and by themselves. This watershed management plan for the Carlsbad Hydrologic Unit is meant to be a broad based plan with some watershed level detail. However, this format results from the need to frame overarching enhancement goals and characterize the features and issues within the large seven watershed plan area while at the same time address the desire of Network representatives to have specific enhancement opportunities identified and prioritized.

This watershed management plan is expected to:

- Capture the vision, goals and expectations of the communities and agencies within the Hydrologic Unit;
- Identify the present legislative, regulatory, and policy framework operative within the planning area;
- Characterize the current condition, beneficial water uses and water quality issues in the Hydrologic Unit;
- Identify the major projects and programs being implemented, planned, or suggested by participants in this planning process;
- Provide a direction for prioritizing efforts to remedy issues or protect uses and resources within the Carlsbad Hydrologic Unit;
- Recommend the types of studies and follow on research needed to further the watershed planning process;
- Form the framework of future water quality / water use protection efforts for projects and programs within the Carlsbad Hydrologic Unit, and;
- Motivate the agencies and citizens of the Carlsbad Hydrologic Unit to cooperatively work towards common goals and priorities, regardless of political boundaries or divergent mandates.

The plan is not meant to:

- Draw conclusions on issues that will require further research and scientific data collection;
- Prioritize projects amongst those proposed by either local jurisdictions or interest groups;
- Supersede other habitat planning or land use planning efforts unless they directly affect the water resources of the Carlsbad Hydrologic Unit;
- Represent the most up to date mapping, conditions or baseline data of the watershed that would have required field work and new map production (it is based on the best available regional mapping);
- Be an end product without follow on efforts and studies; or
- Replace the requirements of the Municipal Storm Water Permit (NPDES Order 2001-01).

To be most effective, this plan must be considered a “living document” subject to on-going revisions and updates. As new information is developed the plan and priorities should be revised to reflect the best available data. The document has been placed in a binder to help accommodate future changes and additions. The plan should also spawn more discrete and focused plans (by each of the seven watersheds or smaller sub-watersheds) that focus on manageable issues or areas warranting specific actions. This multi-level approach requires continued perseverance on the part of the Carlsbad Watershed Network and continued efforts to enlist support and participation by others, most importantly the local land-use agencies and policy-makers.

To be most efficient and complementary to existing efforts, it is recommended that the first actions to be pursued under this plan should focus on needs that lie outside of the regulated or otherwise mandated actions of public agencies. While current regulations are resulting in mandates that influence new land-use actions, there is little regulatory attention being given to correcting past damage or even on-going damage resulting from past actions. This is clearly the case for exotic species invasions and stream channel erosion, two of the most serious threats to effective watershed management throughout every one of the seven watersheds covered by this plan. Both of these issues require systematic treatment to be successful and both are likely to get worse over time if no actions are taken. Yet, both have fallen through the net of mandated actions, except where new land-use decision making is involved.

A successful watershed management plan and associated improvement program requires a large number of steps to resolve all of the problems associated with preserving and restoring the systems essential resources. This plan is one more step towards attaining this vision within the Carlsbad Hydrologic Unit. The plan simply identifies the direction that the next steps must take and documents the reasons for the journey so that those helping to take it will remember where they are heading and why they want to go there.

