

# **COORDINATED MONITORING PROGRAM FOR GUADALUPE RIVER WATERSHED MERCURY TMDL**

*AGREEMENT No. A4123A*

## **2019 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT**

*Prepared for*

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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As specified in the SFRWQCB 13267 Approval Letter dated October 24, 2018, the project team is to “Submit annual progress reports by June 30 of each year.” This report covers activities in the 2019 calendar year.

During 2019, the contractor completed two rounds of storm-flow sampling for the 2018-2019 water year. Fish tissue sampling was conducted in the fall of 2019.

An interim monitoring report for the 2018-2019 water years was submitted on March 5, 2020.

Some challenges were encountered during the 2019 fish sampling efforts including exceedances of temperature limits for the protection of steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), and limitations on bycatch of steelhead. General scarcity of target species and sizes necessitated a higher-level of sampling effort than anticipated. These are discussed below.

# 2 DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

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Fish sampling was conducted under a California Department of Fish and Wildlife Scientific Collecting Permit (SCP #S-183100007-18311-001), in accordance with a National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) 4(d) permit (#22546) to allow for incidental take of steelhead.

Biologists encountered 7 steelhead at Guadalupe Creek at Singletree Way on August 22 and stopped sampling as to avoid exceeding permitted incidental take limits. One steelhead was subsequently encountered at this location on October 16.

Permit conditions limited electrofishing to water temperatures at or below 18 °C and precluded all sampling methods when water temperatures exceeded 21 °C due to the potential for stress to steelhead.

A permit amendment was required to both permits to re-allocate steelhead take to seining, after temperatures exceeded the allowable limits for electrofishing. Fish collection permits were further amended to extend the sampling window to allow temperatures to

drop below thermal thresholds for steelhead. The need for an extension of the sampling period was discussed with the SFRWQCB and permission was granted on August 30 for an extension of the sampling window until October 31.

The goal of this effort was to secure 20 individuals of the target species within a particular size class at each sampling location. California roach were the target species at all sites except for Lake Almaden, where largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*) were targeted.

Sampling quotas were not met at all sites due to limitations on sampling methods, timing and site conditions including refuse and obstacles, low water levels, and general scarcity of target species. Due to the restricted use of the electrofisher because of thermal constraints, seining proved to require a higher level of sampling effort to meet sampling quotas.

Initial sampling performed at Lake Almaden yielded no individuals of the target species (largemouth bass). However, the related smallmouth bass (*Micropterus dolomieu*) of appropriate size was present in the initial catch. Based on discussions with Valley Water and Regional Board staff, the field team obtained permission to collect smallmouth bass if largemouth bass were not found during subsequent sampling events. However, the subsequent visit yielded nearly the entire quota of largemouth bass, subsidized with two individuals of bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*), a previously approved alternate. Therefore, collection of smallmouth bass was not required.

The 2019-2020 water year was characterized by limited rainfall. Year-to-date rainfall ranged from 10.5 inches at Vasona Pump Station and Alamitos gages, 24 inches at Almaden and Guadalupe Watershed gages, to a maximum of 31.6 at the Mount Umunhum gage. Storm-flow sampling was not conducted in the 2019-2020 water year.

## 3 REQUESTS TO WATER BOARD

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### 3.1 2019

The contractor worked with Valley Water and the Water Board to address issues associated with fish tissue sampling as described above. No other requests were made to the Water Board during 2019.

### 3.2 2020

Valley Water does not anticipate any further requests of the Water Board during 2020.