GLOSSARY

303(d) List	Refers to section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act that requires each state to periodically submit to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) a list of impaired waters. Impaired waters are those that are not meeting the State's water quality standards. Once the impaired waters are identified and placed on the list, section 303(d) requires that the State establish total maximum daily loads that will meet water quality standards for each listed water body.
Acre-foot	The amount of water needed to cover one acre with water one foot deep, equal to 325,851 gallons.
Alluvial	Material deposited by transport of streams. Deposited in river beds, floodplains, and lakes.
Aquifer	An underground layer of porous, water-bearing rock, gravel, or sand.
Basin Plan	Also referred to as a Water Quality Control Plan, identifies: 1) beneficial uses to be protected; 2) water quality objectives for the reasonable protection of beneficial uses; and 3) a program of implementation for achieving the water quality objectives as established by the Regional Water Boards or State Water Board.
Bedrock	Solid rock that underlies loose material, such as soil, sand, clay, or gravel.
Beneficial Uses	Refers to the uses that streams, lakes, rivers, and other water bodies, have to humans and other life. Beneficial uses are outlined in a Water Quality Control Plan, also called a Basin Plan. Each body of water in the State has a set of beneficial uses it supports. Different beneficial uses require different water quality control(s). Therefore, each beneficial use has a set of water quality objectives designed to protect that beneficial use.
Benthic	Bottom-dwelling; describes organisms which reside in or on any underwater substrate.
Benthic macroinvertebrate	Bottom-dwelling (benthic) animals without backbones (invertebrate) that are visible with the naked eye (macro).
Best Management Practices (BMPs)	Schedules of activities, prohibitions of practices, maintenance procedures, and other management practices to prevent, eliminate, or reduce the pollution of water.
Biomagnification	The increase in concentration of a substance, such as the pesticide DDT, that occurs in a food chain.
Blue-green algae	See cyanobacteria.
Channel incision	Downcutting of a stream channel to produce a narrower width to depth ratio.
Channelization	The mechanical alteration of a stream which includes straightening or dredging of the existing channel, or creating a new channel to which the stream is diverted.
Chaparral	A biological community characterized by hot dry summers and cool moist winters and dominated by a dense growth of mostly small-leaved evergreen shrubs.
Chlorophyll a	A green pigment found in most plants, algae, and cyanobacteria.
Confined aquifer	An aquifer which has a confining (limited permeability) layer between it and the land surface.
Conjunctive use	The coordinated and planned management of both surface and groundwater resources in order to maximize the efficient use of the resource.
Cubic feet per second (cfs)	A measure of the amount of water (cubic feet) traveling past a known point for a given amount of time (one second), used to determine discharge.

Cyanobacteria	A phylum of bacteria that obtain their energy through photosynthesis. Found in unicellular and colonial forms.
Diatoms	A group of algae with a silica cell wall.
Discharge	Volume of water flowing in a given stream at a given place and within a given period of time, usually expressed as cubic feet per second.
Dissolved oxygen	The concentration of oxygen dissolved in water, expressed in milligrams per liter or as percent.
Elevation	The vertical reference of a site location above mean sea level, measured in feet or meters.
Endangered	In danger of becoming extinct.
Endemic	Native species found only in a particular geographic area with comparatively restricted habitat and distribution.
Erodibility	The ease by which a soil may be eroded by natural forces or human disturbances.
Eutrophic	Having waters rich in mineral and organic nutrients that promote a proliferation of plant life, especially algae. Decay of this plant life often leads to low dissolved oxygen content. Lakes can be naturally eutrophic or can become eutrophic due to human activities that increase water nutrient levels.
Eutrophication	The process of increasing nutrient and decreasing oxygen supply within a water body. Usually detrimental to aquatic life.
Evapotranspiration (ET)	The amount of water leaving to the atmosphere through both evaporation and transpiration.
Flagellates	Single-celled organisms with one or more whip-like flagella (appendage used in locomotion).
Flood Attenuation	When flood levels are lowered by water storage in floodplains and wetlands.
Floodplain	The flat area adjoining a river channel constructed by the river in the presence of climate, and overflowed at times of high river flow.
Fuel break	A natural or manmade change in fuel characteristics which affects fire behavior so that fires burning into them can be more readily controlled.
Fuel load	The mass of combustible materials available for a fire.
Geothermal	Of or related to the internal heat of the earth.
GIS	The combination of hardware and software used to store and analyze features located on the earth's surface.
Green algae	A large group of algae from which higher plants emerged.
Groundwater	Water that exists beneath the earth's surface in underground streams and aquifers.
Gully (erosion)	Severe erosion that creates channels greater than 30 cm deep.
Headwaters	Small streams and upland areas that are the source of larger streams and rivers.
Hydric soils	Soils that formed under conditions of saturation, flooding or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part.
Hydrology	The scientific study of the properties, distribution, and effects of water on the earth's surface, in the soil and underlying rocks, and in the atmosphere.
Hydrothermal	Having to do with hot water; especially, having to do with the action of hot water in producing minerals and springs or in dissolving, shifting, and otherwise changing the distribution of minerals in the earth's crust.

Impaired Water Body	Surface waters identified by the Regional Water Quality Control Boards as impaired because water quality objectives are not being achieved or where the designated beneficial uses are not fully protected after application of technology-based controls. A list of impaired water bodies is compiled by the State Water Resources Control Board pursuant to section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act (CWA).
Impervious Surface	Surface (such as pavement) that does not allow, or greatly decreases, the amount of infiltration of precipitation into the ground.
Infiltration Rate	The rate at which water penetrates the earth's surface.
Intermittent stream	A stream that ceases to flow for periods of time.
Invasive Species	Plant or animal species from another geographic region that, once introduced, out compete native plants or animals and take over a habitat area.
Lacustrine habitat	Inland depressions or dammed river channels characterized by standing water. Includes lakes, ponds, and reservoirs.
Land Use	A group of similar on-the-ground human uses described as a single category.
Large Woody Debris	Logs, stumps, or root wads in the stream channel, or nearby. These function to create pools and cover for fish, and to trap and sort stream gravels.
Limnology	The scientific study of bodies of fresh water for their biological, physical, and geological properties.
Load reduction (of pollutant)	The decrease of a particular contaminant in the impaired waterbody resulting from the implementation of a project.
Magma	Molten rock that is found beneath the surface of the earth.
Meandering	When a stream channel has a winding or sinuous path.
Metamorphic rock	A rock formed from preexisting solid rocks by mineralogical, structural, and chemical changes, in response to extreme changes in temperature, pressure, and shearing stress.
Micro-irrigation	Low-pressure irrigation systems that spray, mist, sprinkle or drip.
Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4)	Any pipe, ditch or gully, or system of pipes, ditches, or gullies, that is owned or operated by a governmental entity and used for collecting and conveying storm water.
National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit Program	Controls water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants into waters of the United States. Point sources are discrete conveyances such as pipes or man-made ditches. Since its introduction in 1972, the NPDES Permit Program has been responsible for significant improvements to our Nation's and State's water quality.
Non-governmental organization (NGO)	Private sector voluntary (and usually not-for-profit) organization.
Non-native species	Plant or animal species brought into an area from another geographic region.
Nonpoint Sources (NPS) Pollution	Water pollution that does not originate from a discrete point, such as a sewage treatment plant outlet. NPS pollution is a by-product of land use practices, such as farming, timber harvesting, and construction management. Primary pollutants include sediment, fertilizers, pesticides and other pollutants that are delivered to surface and ground water via precipitation, runoff, and leaching. From a regulatory perspective, pollutant discharges that are regulated under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit (NPDES) are considered to be point sources. By definition, all other discharges are considered NPS pollution.
On-site wastewater treatment system (OWTS)	System for wastewater disposal typically consisting of a septic tank and soil absorption field, commonly called a septic system.

Overdraft (groundwater)	Condition of a groundwater basin in which the amount of water withdrawn by pumping exceeds the amount of water that recharges the basin over a period of years during which water supply conditions approximate average.
Peak Flow	The maximum instantaneous rate of flow during a storm or other period of time.
Percolation	The act of surface water infiltrating into and through the ground.
Perennial stream	A stream that flows year-round.
Point source	Source of pollution that involves discharge of wastes from an identifiable point, such as a sewage treatment plant.
Pool and riffle sequence	An alternation between a deep zone (the pool) and a shallow zone (the riffle) along the sand and/or gravel bed of a stream.
Precipitation	The liquid equivalent (inches) of rainfall, snow, sleet, or hail collected by storage gages.
Recharge (groundwater)	A hydrologic process where water moves downward from surface water to groundwater.
Reoperation	System reoperation means changing existing operation and management procedures for such water facilities as dams and canals to meet multiple beneficial uses. System reoperation may improve the efficiency of existing uses, or it may increase the emphasis of one use over another.
Rill (erosion)	Small channel (less than 30 cm deep) formed when surface erosion occurs due to runoff.
Riparian Area	Interface between land and streams or other water bodies.
Riparian Vegetation	Vegetation growing on or near the banks of a stream or other body of water in soils that are wet during some portion of the growing season.
Riverine habitat	Habitat characterized by intermittent or continually running freshwater.
Runoff	Water that runs across the top of the land without infiltrating into the soil.
Secchi disk	A circular disk used to measure water transparency in oceans and lakes.
Sediment	Fragments of rock, soil, and organic material transported or deposited into streambeds by wind, water, or gravity.
Sedimentary rock	Rock formed by the deposition of the weathered remains of other rocks or biological products and by precipitation from solution.
Sedimentation	The deposition or accumulation of sediment.
Septic system	See on-site wastewater treatment system.
Sheet (erosion)	Removal of fairly even layer of soil when surface erosion occurs due to runoff.
Silicic	A term used to describe magma or igneous rock rich in silica.
Stakeholder	An individual, group, coalition, agency, or other entity that is involved in, affected by, or has an interest in the implementation of a specific program or project.
Stormwater	Water generated by runoff from land and impervious surfaces during rainfall and snow events.
Stream gage	The site on a stream where hydrologic data is collected.
Stream gradient	The change of a stream in vertical elevation per unit of horizontal distance.
Streamflow	The active flow of water within a stream, river, or creek.
Subsidence	The sinking or settling of land to a lower level in response to various natural and man-caused factors, for example: (1) earth movements; (2) lowering of fluid pressure (or lowering of ground water level).
Surface water	Water that is flowing across or contained on the surface of the earth, such as in rivers, streams, creeks, lakes, and reservoirs.
Sustainable	Capable of being maintained over the long term without environmental, social or economic damage.

Terminal basin	A closed drainage basin that retains water and allows no outflow to other bodies of water.
Threatened	A species likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future if certain conditions continue to deteriorate.
Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)	A written plan that describes how an impaired water body will meet water quality standards. It contains: (1) a measurable feature to describe attainment of the water quality standard(s); (2) a description of required actions to remove the impairment; and, (3) an allocation of responsibility among dischargers to act, either in the form of actions or through the establishment of water quality conditions for which each discharger is responsible.
Tributary	A smaller river or stream that joins a larger one and contributes to its water flow.
Ultramafic minerals	Minerals low in silica and high in magnesium and iron.
Unconfined aquifer	An aquifer in which there are no confining beds between the top of the aquifer and land surface.
Velocity	The speed at which water is flowing in a river or stream. Usually given in terms of cubic feet per second.
Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs)	Requirements that are adopted by the Regional Water Quality Control Boards to protect the waters of the state for the use and enjoyment of the people of California.
Waste water treatment facility	Facilities that store and process municipal sewage before release.
Watershed	An area of land that drains down slope to the lowest point.
Weir	A low dam placed across a stream or river to raise its level or divert its flow.
Wildfire	A sweeping and destructive conflagration, especially in a wilderness or a rural area.