

Introduction

This water quality monitoring fact sheet was prepared by the Irrigated Agriculture Program of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) and made available on November 30, 2008. The data were delivered by Central Coast Water Quality Preservation, Inc. (CCWQP) to the Water Board as part of the monitoring and reporting requirements for all dischargers enrolled under *Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharge from Irrigated Lands, Order No. R3-2004-0117*. Monitoring stations were selected to represent water quality in predominantly agricultural areas, but in some cases reflect mixed land uses upstream of the sites.

314SYF Santa Ynez River at Flordale

The Cooperative Monitoring Program sampled Santa Ynez River at Flordale 24 times (one sample per month) between January 2006 and December 2007.

Summary of Water Quality Data

Notable Measured Analytes for Water Quality Monitoring

Analyte/Parameter	Average	Range	Water Quality Criteria (WQC) or Guideline ¹	Percent Outside WQC or Guideline
Ammonia as N, Unionized	0.013 mg/L	0.001–0.042 mg/L	<0.025 mg/L ⁺	21%
Nitrate/Nitrite as N	17.1 mg/L	2.0–30.7 mg/L	<10.0 mg/L*	75%
Orthophosphate as P	2.93 mg/L	0.06–5.77 mg/L	<0.12 mg/L*	92%
Turbidity (NTU)	109 NTU	0–1767 NTU	<25 NTU*	26%
Conductivity	1.44 mmho/cm	0–1.76 mmho/cm	Ranges: ⁺ <0.75 No Problem 0.75-3.0 Increasing >3.0 Severe	8% 92% 0%
pH	7.0	6.2–8.4	7.0–8.3 ⁺	74%
Annual Median Dissolved Oxygen (% Saturation)	2006: 77% 2007: 19%	6–98%	>85% annual median ⁺	Std not met Std not met
Dissolved Oxygen	3.8 mg/L	0.5–9.7 mg/L	>5.0mg/L (GEN/WARM) ⁺ >7.0mg/L (COLD/SPWN) ⁺	74% 83%
Chlorophyll a	0.9 µg/L	0.0–1.6 µg/L	<40 µg/L*	0%
Water Temperature	20.7°C	15.1–29.3°C	Water Basin Specific	--

+ Indicates standard defined in the Water Quality Control Plan, Central Coast Basin (Basin Plan)

* Indicates guideline not described in the Basin Plan or not specifically stated as applicable to the beneficial uses of the site. Origin of the guideline is described in the individual discussion of the analyte/parameter.

The present and potential beneficial uses for **Santa Ynez River** as defined in the Basin Plan include Municipal and Domestic Supply (MUN), Agricultural Supply (AGR), Industrial Process Supply (PROC), Industrial Service Supply (IND), Ground Water Recharge (GWR), Water Contact Recreation (REC-1), Non-Contact Water Recreation (REC-2), Wildlife Habitat (WILD), Cold Fresh Water Habitat (COLD), Warm Fresh Water Habitat (WARM), Migration of Aquatic Organisms (MIGR), Spawning, Reproduction, and/or Early Development (SPWN), Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species (RARE), Fresh Water Habitat (FRESH), and Commercial and Sport Fishing (COMM).

Unionized Ammonia (as N)

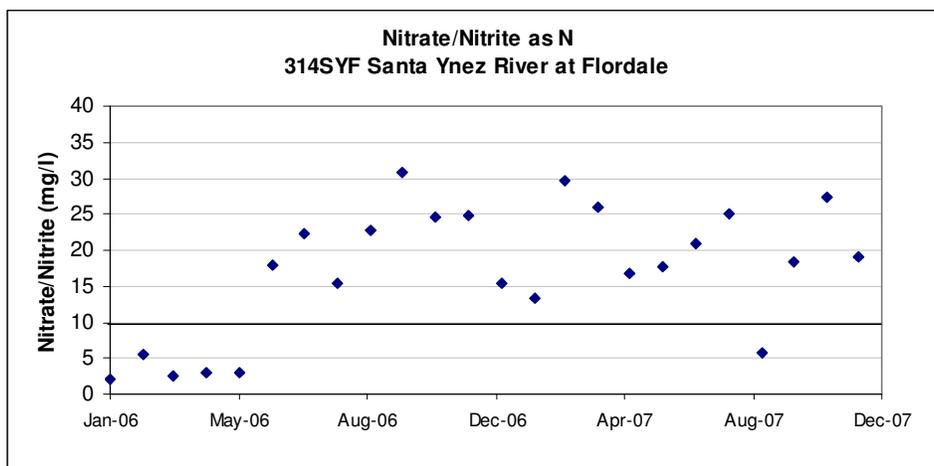
Unionized ammonia (as N) is a calculated value based on water temperature, pH, and total ammonium concentration. Ammonia can be toxic in water. With high water temperature and/or high pH, ammonia becomes unionized and is toxic at

¹ Water Quality Criteria (WQC) are defined in the Water Quality Control Plan, Central Coast Basin (also referred to as the “Basin Plan”) to protect beneficial uses such as drinking water, fish habitat, irrigation water, etc. WQC include general water quality standards for some analytes as well as specific criteria based on the defined beneficial uses. Other water quality guidelines were compiled to provide a standard in order to compare sites. Bold indicates beneficial uses that apply to this watershed.

much lower levels. The Basin Plan general water quality objectives state that unionized ammonia should not exceed 0.025 mg/L. Over time, ammonia should reduce to nitrate, so long-lasting levels of ammonia may indicate continuous discharges of waste. **Five of 24 samples (21%) exceeded the guideline. Four of the five exceedances occurred between February and June 2006. The average unionized ammonia concentration was 0.013 mg/L.**

Nitrate/Nitrite as N

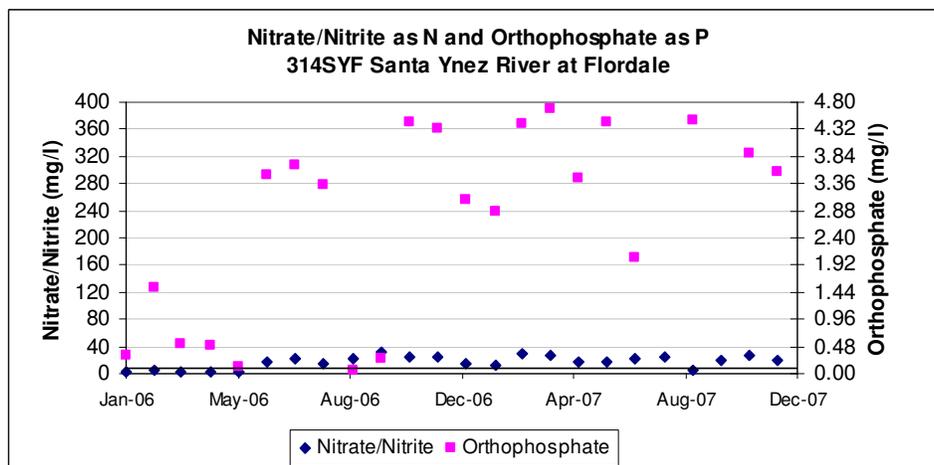
The Municipal and Domestic Supply (MUN) objective states in Table 3-2 of the Basin Plan that nitrate as NO₃ shall not exceed 45 mg/L. This value is equivalent to 10 mg/L of nitrate as N. Nitrite accounts for a small percent of total nitrate/nitrite, and therefore, nitrate as N criterion was used as a guideline for nitrate/nitrite. **Eighteen of 24 nitrate/nitrite samples (75%) exceeded the guideline. No samples exceeded prior to June 2006, while all but one sample exceeded during and/or following June 2006. The chart below shows increasing nitrate/nitrite concentration over the sample dates. The black horizontal line on the graph indicates the maximum value indicated in the guideline.**



Orthophosphate as P

The Basin Plan does not contain orthophosphate standards. The Central Coast Ambient Monitoring program (CCAMP) non-regulatory guideline for general water quality objectives states that orthophosphate concentrations shall not exceed 0.12 mg/L. **Orthophosphate concentrations exceeded the guideline in 22 of 24 samples (92%), with the nine highest exceedances occurring during or after November 2006. The average concentration at this site was 2.93 mg/L (24 times the guideline) and reached as high as 5.77 mg/L (48 times the guideline).**

The chart below shows the nitrate/nitrite and orthophosphate concentrations throughout the sampling period. The guidelines for nitrate/nitrite as N and orthophosphate as P state that their concentrations shall not exceed 10 mg/L and 0.12 mg/L, respectively, shown by the black horizontal line on the graph.



Turbidity

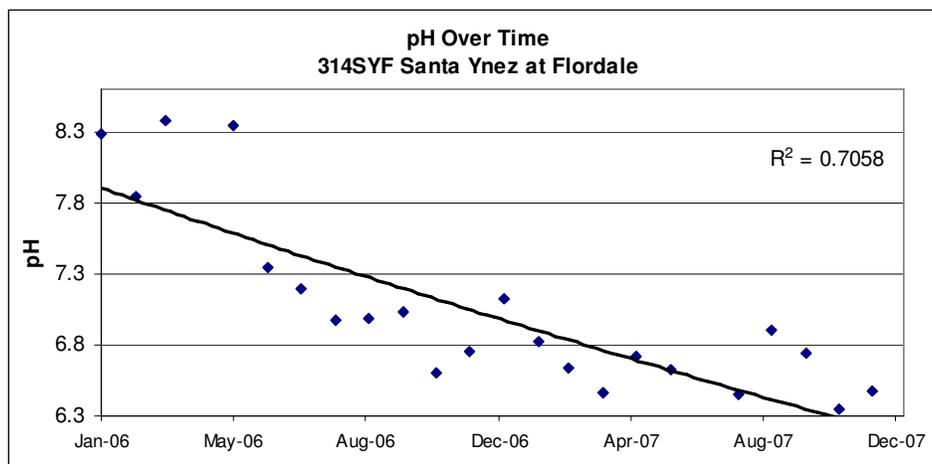
The Basin Plan states: “Water shall be free of changes in turbidity that cause nuisance or adversely affect beneficial uses.” Sigler et al.² shows that turbidity levels of 25 NTU or greater caused reduction in juvenile salmonid growth due to interference with their ability to find food. Turbidity is often affected by suspended material in runoff. **Six of 23 turbidity readings (26%) exceeded the guideline, reaching as high as 1767 (June 2007). The five highest exceedances occurred between January and June. Turbidity levels in Santa Ynez River at Flordale averaged 109 NTU. However, the standard deviation was 366 NTU, indicating extreme (high and low) readings.**

Conductivity

Conductivity is measured from a water sample. Based on Table 3-3 of the Basin Plan showing Guidelines for Interpretation of Quality of Water for Irrigation, conductivity below 0.75 mmho/cm causes no problems to irrigation, between 0.75 and 3 mmho/cm causes increasing problems, and conductivity above 3 mmho/cm causes severe problems. The conductivity level can be greatly affected by geologic and biological influences and is not necessarily related to agricultural activities. **Two of 24 conductivity samples (8%) indicated no problems to irrigation water; 22 samples (92%) indicated increasing problems; no samples indicated severe problems.**

pH

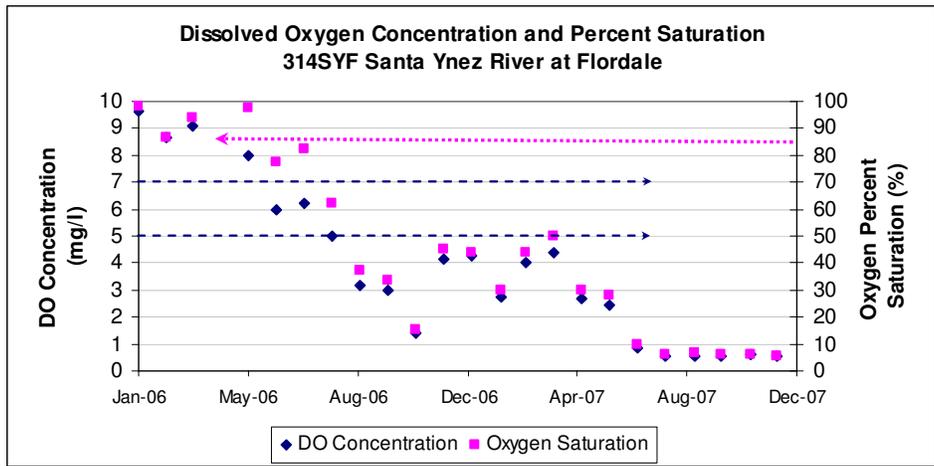
Multiple beneficial uses have objectives for pH. The Basin Plan general water quality objective for pH is between 7.0 and 8.5; MUN, AGR, REC-1, and REC-2 pH objectives are between 6.5 and 8.3. The standard, therefore, is 7.0-8.3 if one or more of MUN, AGR, REC-1, and REC-2 is defined as a beneficial use. pH above 9 can cause skin irritant to humans and makes water inhospitable to many species. pH below 7.0 is acidic. **Seventeen of 23 pH samples (74%) were outside the standard, two samples (9%) were in exceedance, and 15 samples (65%) fell short of the standard. All samples after January 2007 fell short of the pH standard. The pH levels decreased dramatically over the sample dates, as shown in the chart below.**



Dissolved Oxygen Concentration and Dissolved Oxygen Saturation

The Basin Plan general water quality objectives state annual median dissolved oxygen shall remain above 85% saturation. General and WARM objectives state that the dissolved oxygen concentration must remain above 5.0 mg/L at all times, and SPWN and COLD objectives state that the dissolved oxygen concentration must remain above 7.0 mg/L at all times. **Seventeen of 23 samples (74%) did not meet the general and WARM concentration standard and 19 samples (83%) did not meet the COLD and SPWN concentration standards. Dissolved oxygen did not meet the saturation standard during 2006 or 2007, with median annual values of 77 and 19% saturation, respectively. Decreasing trends are apparent in the data, as shown in the chart below. All samples following August 2006 showed dissolved oxygen concentrations less than 5.0 mg/L and saturation levels below 50% saturation. All samples following June 2007 had dissolved oxygen concentrations less than 1.0 mg/L and saturation levels less than 10% saturation.**

² Sigler, J.W., T.C. Bjornn, & F.H. Everst. (1984). *Effects of chronic turbidity on density and growth of steelhead and coho salmon*. Transactions of the American Fisheries Society. 113:142-150.



Chlorophyll a

Healthy and appropriate Chlorophyll a levels are not defined in the Basin Plan. Chlorophyll a indicates phytoplankton growth, a necessary component of healthy water bodies. Because turbidity causes interference for the Chlorophyll a probe, measurements of Chlorophyll a may not be accurate when turbidity is above 1000 NTU. Chlorophyll a levels over 40 µg/L are considered problematic by North Carolina Administrative Code (NCAC). **No readings exceeded the guideline. The Chlorophyll a readings averaged 0.9 µg/L.**

Temperature

Sullivan et al.³ states that the maximum weekly average temperatures for protection of steelhead or rainbow trout, and coho salmon are 19.6 and 19.7°C respectively. **The temperature averaged 20.7°C and ranged from 15.1 to 29.3°C. Though weekly averages were not taken, the temperatures taken at this site indicate averages that regularly exceed the maximum temperatures for fish protection.**

Summary of Toxicity Data

Species with Significant Mortality

	Feb-06	May-06	Aug-06	Sep-06	Feb-07	Mar-07	Apr-07	Oct-07
Invertebrate (Water Column)	No		No	No	No	No		Yes
Invertebrate (Sediment)		No					Yes	
Fish (Water Column)	No*		No	No	No	No		No
Algae (Water Column)	No		No	No				Yes

*Indicates significant effect on growth or reproduction (even though mortality did not have a significant effect)

Significant effect is determined by statistically significant rates of mortality, growth, or reproduction compared to a control sample and provides an indication that something is affecting plant or animal life in the stream. Invertebrates show significant sensitivity to organophosphates and pesticides. Significant effect to algae often indicates the presence of herbicides and metals such as copper. Fish are less sensitive to organophosphates but can be impacted by other pollutants such as ammonia and pyrethroid pesticides

³ Sullivan, K., D.J. Martin, R.D. Cardwell, T.E. Toll, & S. Duke. (2000). An analysis of the effects of temperature on salmonids of the Pacific Northwest with implications for selecting temperature criteria. Portland, OR: Sustainable Ecosystems Institute.

Photos of Site



Above: February 2006



Right: July 2006

QAQC

The data in this water quality monitoring fact sheets meet the quality assurance and quality control requirements of the Water Board's Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP). Additional surface water monitoring data are available at the Water Board's Central Coast Ambient Monitoring Program website <http://www.ccamp.org>. Any questions regarding the data or analysis should be directed to either **Peter Meertens** at pmeertens@waterboards.ca.gov (805) 549-3869 or **Amanda Bern** at abern@waterboards.ca.gov (805) 594-6197.

Attachment: Monitoring Data

