

CENTRAL  
COAST  
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# *Citizen Monitoring Guide*

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# INTRODUCTION

The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Citizen Watershed Monitoring Network (“Network”) was initiated in 1998 by the Coastal Watershed Council, the Center for Marine Conservation and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary with funding provided by the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board and the State Water Resources Control Board.

The overall goal of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Citizen Watershed Monitoring Network is to help create integrated, long-term, volunteer-based water quality and watershed monitoring within the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and its watersheds and to make these citizen monitoring programs an integral component of watershed stewardship and Sanctuary education and management.

The Network was developed in conjunction with the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary’s Water Quality Protection Program (WQPP). The WQPP is an interagency effort to improve and protect the Sanctuary’s physical, chemical and biological resources. The WQPP is working to integrate over 150 different federal, state, and local management projects to develop a comprehensive, ecosystem based program to protect and enhance the Sanctuary’s waters. One of the specific tasks the WQPP has undertaken is to establish comprehensive monitoring of the health of the waters that make up the Sanctuary’s watersheds.

There is a recognized need to develop comprehensive, coordinated databases that can provide readily accessible, understandable information to the public on the health of the Sanctuary and its watersheds. A number of federal, state, and local government monitoring programs exist within the region. However, most of these programs have a limited focus and generally work independently, making it difficult to obtain a comprehensive picture of the health of the Sanctuary’s waters. Non-governmental (generally citizen-based) monitoring programs, which may help fill in gaps in government programs, also tend to work independently. A formal system

## NETWORK MISSION:

**To promote stewardship and education within the Sanctuary and its watersheds through community-based monitoring programs.**



for integrating the government and non-government data is an essential first step in developing a comprehensive Sanctuary-wide monitoring effort.

The Network has been designed to accomplish the objective of coordinating the data collected by non-governmental entities and community groups. Properly organized citizen monitoring programs offer a valuable, cost-effective way to: expand the monitoring of Sanctuary waters and watersheds; evaluate the success of restoration, cleanup and pollution prevention measures; and build citizen stewardship of local waters and watersheds. Citizen data can also be used for water quality classification, watershed planning, nonpoint assessment, and education. The Network will help coordinate and enhance the efforts of non-government groups who share in the campaign to monitor the waters from the 11 major watersheds that empty into the Sanctuary.

## **KEY PRODUCTS OF THE NETWORK**

The Network provides a forum for citizen-based water quality and watershed monitoring groups to meet regularly, exchange information and work together to progress citizen monitoring effectiveness. The Network provides training, guidance and assistance to existing monitoring groups and to groups who are just beginning their programs.

Products of the Network include:

- Training workshops on monitoring protocols, program design and data management
- Planning workshops with resource managers to identify uses of volunteer data
- Technical assistance for equipment and quality assurance/quality control
- The Central Coast Regional Citizen Monitoring Guide
- A Regional Citizen Monitoring website with data retrieval and analysis tools
- Public awareness activities about water quality and citizen monitoring, including an annual Sanctuary-wide water quality Snapshot Day.

## **PARTNERS IN THE NETWORK**

The Network is a cooperative program of the Coastal Watershed Council, the Center for Marine Conservation, and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. For more information please contact the following representatives:

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