



San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board

NOTICE OF STAFF WORKSHOP TO DISCUSS

WATER QUALITY AND BIOLOGICAL INTEGRITY IN THE SHELTER ISLAND YACHT BASIN OF SAN DIEGO BAY

The public is invited to share your expectations and priorities for healthy aquatic habitats and ecosystems in the Shelter Island Yacht Basin. The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, San Diego Region, (San Diego Water Board) is working to update a plan for ensuring the Yacht Basin's water quality can support healthy habitats and ecosystems. Staff will use the information to improve the focus of regulatory efforts on restoring and preserving the biological integrity of the Shelter Island Yacht Basin.

Meeting Information:

May 7, 2026

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Port of San Diego Administration Building Training Room
3165 Pacific Highway; San Diego, CA 92101

Specifically, the San Diego Water Board is planning to update water quality and /or habitat assessments used to guide actions that may improve and maintain water quality in the basin. This is a step toward updating a 2004 Total Maximum Daily Load plan (TMDL) for dissolved copper in the Shelter Island Yacht Basin. The public can suggest goals and ways to measure the health of vegetation, fish, shellfish, invertebrates, or other wildlife in the Shelter Island Yacht Basin. These ideas will help guide decisions about how to manage and protect the area.

Some Background

Shelter Island Yacht Basin is a popular recreational marina located in north San Diego Bay. The San Diego Water Board recognizes San Diego Bay as a key area where protection and restoration of the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of waters is most important for protecting human and environmental health.

The San Diego Water Board adopted a [Dissolved Copper TMDL](#) in 2004 because copper from anti-fouling boat coatings created conditions that exceeded water quality objectives for aquatic life uses in the Shelter Island Yacht Basin. The TMDL established a target date to achieve the dissolved copper water quality objective at the end of 2022, but it has not been achieved.

GARY STRAWN, CHAIR | DAVID GIBSON, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

2375 Northside Drive, Suite 100, San Diego, 92108 | www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego

Therefore, the Water Board is evaluating whether the TMDL implementation plan requires revisions. Instead of, or in addition to, relying on measurements of dissolved copper of the 2014 TMDL, the San Diego Water Board is exploring the use of more direct assessments of biological integrity for the Shelter Island Yacht Basin to inform actions. Measures of biological integrity are expected to be more informative and useful than measures of water chemistry alone.

This workshop is part of an effort to identify biological integrity assessments that may be used to inform water quality restoration management decisions in the Shelter Island Yacht Basin. The effort will follow adopted San Diego Water Board guidance:

- Habitat and ecosystem assessments would be consistent with the "[Strategic Water Quality Assessment Approach for San Diego Bay \(2022\)](#)."
- Public collaboration would generally follow "[A Framework for Monitoring and Assessment in the San Diego Region \(2012\)](#)."

The Steering Committee and Public Participation

The San Diego Water Board, the Port of San Diego, and the San Diego Working Waterfront formed a steering committee in 2025 to help guide the process. The basic activities of the steering group and opportunities for public participation will include:

- Hold a public meeting to discuss "Goals for a Healthy Aquatic Habitat in Shelter Island" (this meeting).
- Develop a discussion draft of goals for the condition of the Shelter Island Yacht Basin.
 - Public feedback will then be solicited on the draft goals.
- Develop an assessment plan for the goals and then conduct an assessment.
 - Results of the assessment will be posted on-line and shared at a meeting of the San Diego Water Board where the public may provide comments.
- Use the assessment results to update the water quality restoration plan goals, implementation actions, and an evaluation plan.

If necessary, the San Diego Water Board may then begin a formal process to amend the TMDL for dissolved copper in the Shelter Island Yacht Basin.

How to Participate in the Staff Workshop

1. Attend the May 7, 2026 workshop at the location and time above; and/or
2. Send comments **by June 1, 2026**, regarding your expectations for a healthy aquatic ecosystem in the Shelter Island Yacht Basin to sandiego@waterboards.ca.gov with the subject line: "**CW-879375 Shelter Island Ecosystem; attn: jhaas**"

For More Information

For more information about the Shelter Island Yacht Basin TMDL for dissolved copper, please visit https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/water_issues/programs/tmdls/. For more information about the public workshop, please contact Jeremy Haas, Environmental Program Manager at Jeremy.Haas@waterboards.ca.gov.