

The Value of Partnership

One noticeable aspect of this year's annual report is the large number of articles co-authored by individuals from other institutions. This reflects our conscious commitment over the last several years to increase the number of projects we conduct in partnership with other organizations. It is a trend we hope to continue in the future. The most notable of the partnership projects we have undertaken is the Southern California Bight 1998 Regional Monitoring Survey (Bight'98), in which 62 organizations participated. The first article from that effort, with authors from four different institutions, appears in this year's report (*Comparison of bacterial indicator measurements among southern California marine monitoring laboratories*).

There are many reasons why we place emphasis on partnership. First, it extends our technical skills. A good example of that is a partnership we have undertaken with the US Geological Survey (and one of our member organizations: the City of Los Angeles) to examine sediment contamination patterns in Santa Monica Bay. SCCWRP and the city's skill areas are primarily in biology and chemistry, while USGS specializes in geology and physical oceanography. Alone, we can define existing chemical and biological conditions, but together we hope to be able to also describe the sediment history and sediment transport processes that led to the current conditions.

Partnership also brings more resources. The best example of that is Bight'98. Sixty-two organizations pooled their effort to conduct the regional assessment. Everyone shared the information, yet no one organization had to shoulder even 5% of the total project cost. Coordinating and deriving consensus among many organizations can be challenging, but the reward is clearly worth the effort.

Finally, partnership leads to better communication. The science we conduct is only valuable if people are aware of it. The more organizations that are involved in a project and know about the work directly, the more opportunities there are for reaching a larger audience. Other organizations find it attractive to partner with SCCWRP because the results of our cooperative projects are presented to the local environmental decision-makers that constitute our Commission. Many of our partnering organizations provide us similar opportunities to reach different audiences.

Any, or all, of these factors allow partnering organizations to accomplish more together than they could alone, and to do it more cost-effectively. At SCCWRP, we value the partnerships we have developed over the past several years, appreciate the tremendous opportunities they create, and look forward to furthering them in the future.

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