

# Protecting Our Most Valuable Resource: Water

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## Introduction

During rainstorms, water flowing from households, farms, and businesses flushes pesticides, fertilizers, animal waste, litter, automobile fluids, oil and other pollutants into storm drains. Not only is urban and agricultural runoff detrimental to the environment, but also to the quality of our drinking water. As a result, the degradation of our surface water makes our city more dependent on imported water such as that treated by the SouthWest Water Company. That is why San Diego Coastkeeper (SDCK) and SouthWest Water Company have dedicated their professions to conserving our local water resources and optimizing the lifespan of our most precious resource: water.

## Methods & Results

San Diego Coastkeeper protects the region's bays, beaches, watersheds and ocean for the people and wildlife that depend on them. By balancing community outreach, education, and advocacy, SDCK promotes stewardship of clean water and a healthy coastal ecosystem. Despite the importance of clean water, water pollution in its many forms continues to plague the region's eleven watersheds. Citizen involvement in pollution abatement and source tracking is an essential component of the Watershed Monitoring Program. San Diego Coastkeeper's Watershed Monitoring Program works with a wide variety of regulatory agencies, academic institutions, businesses and non-profit organizations along with dedicated volunteers to supplement the limited data resources available, protect sensitive ecosystems, identify and abate pollution sources, track the effectiveness of pollution prevention plans, and prevent further degradation of our precious water resources.

SouthWest Water Company is an American-owned company with nationwide resources. On any given day, more than a million people depend on the SouthWest's state-certified water and wastewater technicians pump and treat millions of gallons of water in hundreds of communities and homes across nine states. They take pride in their stewardship; monitoring every aspect of the water they provide, from its point of origin, transporting, treating, distributing and reclaiming water to serve a multitude of other purposes like irrigation.

Conducting nutrient tests.  
San Diego Watersheds



Intern Beto Vasquez diluting samples for coliform & enterococcus testing.  
Tracking results in coliform positive water samples (right)



## Duties at SDCK:

- Obtained water samples at multiple sites along US border
- Conducted nutrient & bacteria testing
- Analyzed data for interpretation
- Calibrated equipment and instrumentation
- Prepared field manuals for volunteers
- Compiled instructions and maps to water monitoring sites

## Duties at SouthWest Water Company:

- Filed newly hired Engineers
- Verified active and termed employees
- Analyzed water data
- Organized many reviews on Engineers
- Catalogue multiple documents for company history
- Viewed potential future Engineer contracts

## Conclusion

**Beto Vasquez (email: [avasquez@sdccd.edu](mailto:avasquez@sdccd.edu))**  
Being afforded the opportunity of joining the team at San Diego Coastkeeper was a great experience. The staff was extremely knowledgeable and allowed me multiple opportunities to engage in water monitoring lab protocols & data calculations. I am extremely thankful for the experience.

**Mario Deleon (email: [mariojrdeleon@yahoo.com](mailto:mariojrdeleon@yahoo.com))**  
Getting a chance to go behind the scenes of a huge water treatment company was an exciting experience. I got to see how an engineering firm works and was given hands on experience by an expert staff.

## Acknowledgments

SDCK WQM Lab & SDCK Watershed Wiki Page  
Travis Pritchard, Clay Clifton,  
San Diego City College MESA/NSF Grant# DUE0653291