

Areas with steep slopes are a concern regarding water quality due to potential erosion. Unlike many areas of California, Riverside County's steep hillsides tend to rise abruptly from flat valley floors and high plateaus, and areas of gently rolling hills are limited. This pattern is the result of geologic structures dominated by a series of northwest-southeast trending fault systems. Figure 3.10.2 identifies areas of steep slopes in the County.

3.10.3.2 Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan) for the Santa Ana River Basin

The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and the nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards are responsible for the protection and, where possible, the enhancement of the quality of California's waters. The SWRCB sets statewide policy, and together with the RWQCBs, implements state and federal laws and regulations. Each of the nine Regional Boards adopts a Water Quality Control Plan, or Basin Plan, that recognizes and reflects regional differences in existing water quality, the beneficial uses of the region's ground and surface waters, and local water quality conditions and problems.

The Santa Ana Region includes the upper and lower Santa Ana River watersheds, the San Jacinto River watershed, and several other small drainage areas. The Santa Ana Region covers parts of southwestern San Bernardino County, western Riverside County, and northwestern Orange County (SARWQCB, 1995).

The Basin Plan for the Santa Ana Region is the basis for the Regional Board's regulatory programs. The Basin Plan establishes water quality standards for all the ground and surface waters of the region. The term "water quality standards," as used in the federal Clean Water Act, includes both the beneficial uses of specific waterbodies and the levels of quality that must be met and maintained to protect those uses.

3.10.4 Regulatory Considerations

Federal and State laws have been enacted that establish the requirements for adequate planning, implementation, management, and enforcement for the control of water quality. The principal federal and State laws pertaining to the regulation of water quality are known respectively as the 1972 Federal Water Pollution Control Act (also known as the Clean Water Act) and Division 7 of the 1969 California Water Code (also known as the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act). The laws are similar in many ways. The fundamental purpose of each law is to protect the beneficial uses of water. An important distinction between the two is that the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act addresses both ground and surface waters, while the Clean Water Act addresses surface water only.