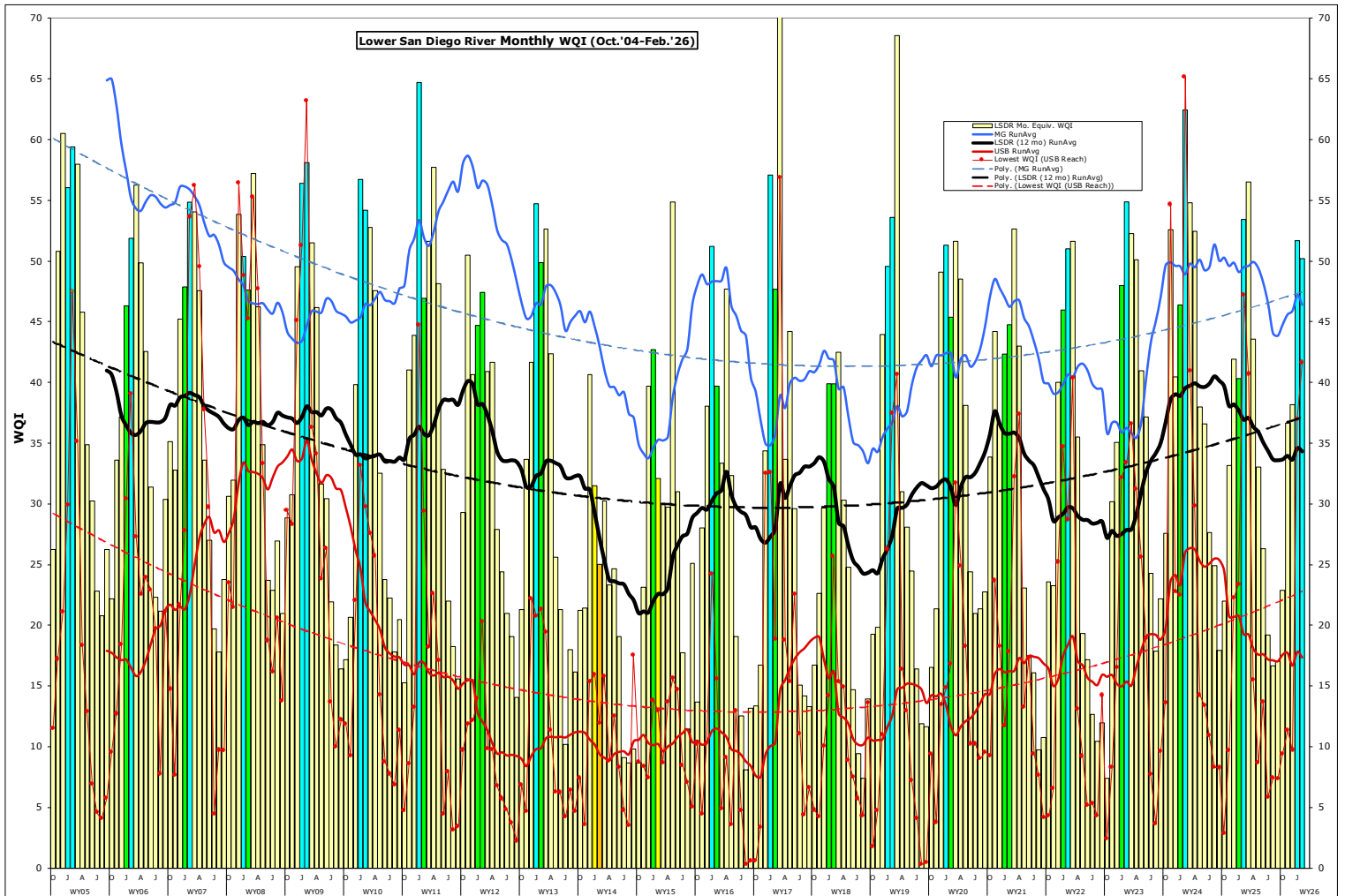


Monthly WQM Report

Lower San Diego River - February 2026



Lower SDR Water Quality Monitoring Data Summary

Table 1 presents a summary of water quality data monitored by the SDRPF RiverWatch Team within the Lower San Diego River (LSDR) watershed over the past two months (Jan. & Feb.). The overall index for February of B- (Good) is two points (-3%) less than last month, three points (-6%) below a year ago and one point (3%) greater the 21-yr Feb. norm of 49 (C+Fair).

Table 1 - Jan.'26/Feb.'26 WQM Data Summary							
	West - MV	Mid - MG	East - SB	LSDR	Variance From		
[Site #s]	[1-7] Jan/Feb	[8-10] Jan/Feb	[11-15] Jan/Feb	[1-15] Jan/Feb	Last Mo. (1/'26)	Last Yr. (2/'25)	21-yr Avg. (Feb)
Temperature, oC	12.9/13.6	11.2/12.7	12.4/13.7	12.3/13.5	9%	-8%	-2%
Sp.Cond., mS/cm	1.68/0.58	1.13/0.67	1.56/0.86	1.64/0.74	-55%	-55%	-56%
DO, mg/L	7.23/8.08	9.93/9.75	7.35/6.79	7.57/7.85	5%	5%	8%
DO, % of Sat.	69/78	91/93	70/65	71/76			
pH	7.51/7.60	8.14/8.00	7.59/7.63	7.55/7.62	0.9%	-1.5%	-2.2%
3-day ADF, cfs	23/281	13/182	12/164	17/216	1200%	743%	285%
WQ Index	53/46	64/59	44/50	52/50	-3%	-6%	3%
Letter Grade	B-/C	B/B	C/B-	B-/B-			
Jan.'26/Feb.'26	Good/ Fair	Good/ Good	Fair/ Good	Good/ Good	Index down 2 pts from last month		

Negative variance (declines from norms) and DO deficits (DO < 5.0 mg/L or 52% Sat) expressed in red.

LSDR **water temperatures** increased 1.2oC (9%) from last month to 8% less than last Feb. and 2% below the monthly norm of 13.8oC. The overall **specific conductance** of 0.74 mS/cm is down 55% from last month and one year ago to 56% below the 21-yr norm of 1.68 mS/cm. The overall **dissolved oxygen** level of 7.85 mg/L (76%Sat.) rose 5% above last month as well as last Feb. to 8% above the 21-yr norm of 7.25 mg/L (69%Sat). **Streamflow** over the antecedent 3-days of 216 cfs is 12 times greater than last month, over seven times more than a year ago and 285% above the 21-yr Feb. norm of 56 cfs. This month's overall LSDR **water quality index** (WQI) of 50 (B-Good) is 3% less than last month, 6% below a year ago but remaining 3% above the 21-yr norm of 49 (C+ Fair) for February.

Monthly WQI values occurring over the past two years of RiverWatch record for the three main sections of the lower river system, the overall LSDR average, plus 30-day antecedent average daily streamflow (ADF) and total monthly rainfall (MRF) values, are expressed in **Table 2** on the next page.

Table 2 - WQI Values, Average Daily Flow and Monthly Rainfall (Jan. '24 - Feb. '26)							
	Mission Valley	Mission Gorge	Santee Basin	LSDR		ADF,cfs	TMR,F,in
Jan.'24	50(B-)	58 (B)	36 (D)	46 (C)	WW	13	2.07
Feb.'24	58(B)	64(B)	65(B)	62(B)	WW	202	6.12
March	55(B)	67(B)	48(C+)	55(B)	WW	46	1.62
April	60(B)	61(B)	40(C)	52(B)	WW	62	1.92
May	40 (C)	54 (B-)	31 (D)	38 (C-)	T	16	0.03
June	40 (C)	51 (B-)	30 (D)	38 (C-)	DW	7.6	0.01
July	27 (D)	43 (C)	25 (D)	28 (D)	DW	3.8	0.00
Aug.	22 (E)	44 (C)	22 (E)	25 (E+)	DW	2.9	0.00
Sept	18 (E)	19 (E)	20 (E)	18 (E)	DW	1.6	0.01
Oct.	17 (E)	42 (C)	24 (E+)	25 (D-)	DW	1.2	0.01
Nov.'24	34 (D)	49 (C+)	23 (E+)	33 (D)	T	2.2	0.08
Dec.'24	45 (C)	53(B-)	33 (D)	42 (C)	DW	3.7	0.05
Jan.'25	44 (C)	49 (C+)	32 (D)	40 (C)	DW	3.8	0.00
Feb.'25	49 (C+)	68 (B)	50 (B-)	53 (B-)	WW	27	1.00
March	59 (B)	68 (B)	48 (C+)	57 (B)	WW	55	2.40
April	45 (C)	65 (B)	33 (D)	44 (C)	T	16	0.08
May	38 (C-)	48 (C+)	23 (E+)	33 (D)	DW	6.7	0.2
June	27 (D)	35 (D)	24 (E+)	26 (D-)	DW	2.7	0.00
July	22 (E)	22 (E)	17 (E)	19 (E)	DW	1.4	0.00
Aug.	19 (E)	15 (E)	18 (E)	17 (E)	DW	1.3	0.01
Sept	26 (D-)	16 (E)	10 (F)	17 (E)	DW	2.2	0.05
Oct.	18 (E)	48 (C)	19 (E)	23 (E+)	T	4.2	0.10
Nov. '25	33(D)	61(B)	28(D)	37(D+)	WW	18	2.90
Dec'25	41(C)	56(B)	27(D-)	38(C-)	T	15.0	0.15
Jan '26	52 (B-)	63 (B)	41 (C)	50 (B-)	WW	81	4.19
Feb '26	46 (C)	59 (B)	50 (B-)	50 (B-)	WW	36	1.50

The **cover page** of this report presents monthly WQI values and range (high/low) for the Lower San Diego River watershed over the past 21+ years. Each year's values are expressed as color-shaded bars; **blue (50 or >) A-B/Good**, **green (38-49) C/Fair**, yellow (25-37) D/Marginal, **brown (13-24) E/Poor**, and **pink (12 or <) F/Very Poor**. Running average index values for the LSDR (distance weighted averages of all sites) are shown as a heavy black line. Running averages for the consistently highest (best) quality section of the river (Mission Gorge) are shown as a 'blue' line, while the consistently lowest (poorest) reach (Upper Santee Basin) is shown in 'red'. The dashed lines represent overall (21-yr) trends. This month's overall value of 50(B-) is the 11th time over the past two decades that the Feb. index has reached the grade level of Good .

WQI values extending from Sept.'05 thru Feb. '26 are presented in **Chart 1** (next page) together with 12-mo. running averages for each of the five reaches and overall (i.e., LSDR) for the entire lower river watershed. The current running average WQI of 34.3 is 1.1 points (3.4%) above of the long-range norm of 33.2. The running average low for Feb. of 23 (32% below norm) occurred in 2015. The previous highest running average WQI for the month of 39 (18% above norm) occurred in 2007. Only the Santee Basin section of the lower river exhibited improvement in water quality this month compared to last. The greatest decrease, dropping from B- (low-Good) to C (medium Fair) was in the Mission Valley section.

Monthly and 12-mo. running average WQI values for the commonly 'lowest' (Upper Santee Basin) and typically "highest" (Mission Gorge) reaches of the lower watershed are presented in **Chart 2**. The greatest downward trends (**red-dashed line**) over time have been associated with the lowest quality reach (Upper Santee Basin) encompassing sites 13E and 14. The Mission Gorge (**blue line**) section, extending from Old Mission Dam through Mission Trails, continues to demonstrate the least change in index values. The declines in water quality values throughout the past water year have again been on the rise over the past four wet weather months primarily due to storm events. Whether index values reach the WY23/24 peaks over the next month or two of wet weather remains problematic, but does not look very likely. However, the general trend upward from lows experienced during the last mid-decadal drought is expected to continue.

Spatial WQI values determined over the last three months, expressed in order of location upstream, are shown in **Charts 3, 4 and 5** on page 6. This month's results (color bars w/values in bold black shown on Chart 5) are slightly lower than last month (middle bar) at 12 of 16 sites. This month; six sites were Good (B), nine Fair (C), and one Very Good (A). The greatest improvement in index values this month were associated with the tributary sites 9, 12 and 15. Last month eleven sites were Good (B), two Fair, two more Marginal and one Poor (E). During the previous month (Dec.) only four sites were ranked Good, five Fair, three Marginal, three Poor and one Very Poor (F). Index values can be expected to decline over the next month based on forecasted rainfall, less streamflow, lower DO levels and increased conductivity values. Although it is too soon to predict this year's overall water quality results compared to the last several water years, recent projections indicate it could be one resulting in below normal runoff and total annual streamflow for the watershed. The cyclic patterns in monthly, seasonal and annual water quality values, as expressed in the charts presented in this report clearly demonstrate that the lower San Diego River remains in flux based variances in predominately natural causes. jck (2/22)

Chart 1 - LSDR Monthly WQI, Running Averages and Trendlines by River Reach (Sept. 2005 thru Feb. 2026)

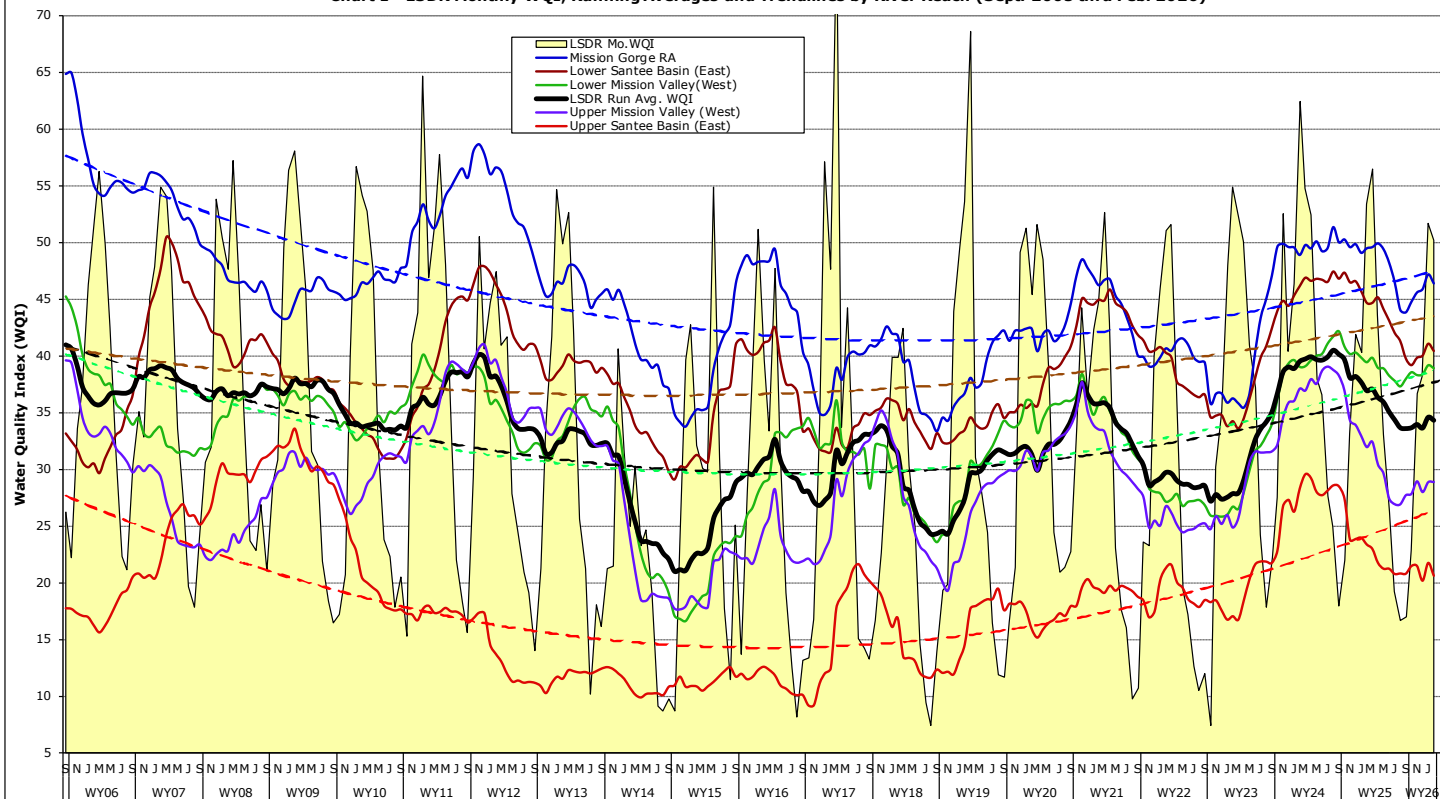


Chart 2 - Mast Park East (Site 13E) and Mission Gorge (Sites 8-10) Monthly WQI, 12-mo Running Averages and 21-yr Trendlines

