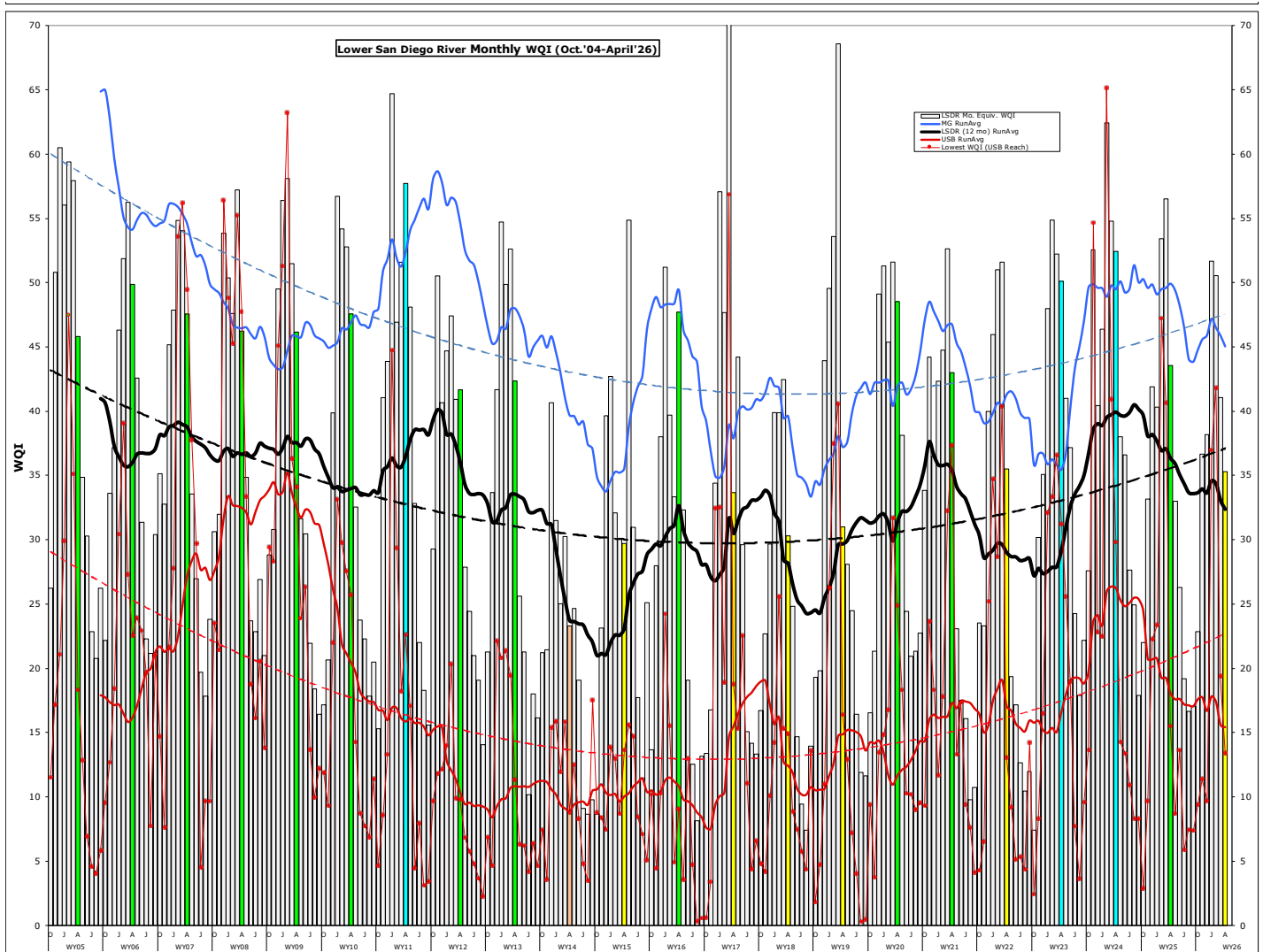


Monthly WQM Report

Lower San Diego River - April 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 (March/April). The overall index for this month of D (Marginal) is six points (-17%) below last month, nine points (-19%) under a year ago and eight points less than the 22-yr April norm of 43 (C Fair).

Table 1 - March/April '26 WQM Data Summary							
	West - MV	Mid - MG	East - SB	LSDR	Variance From		
[Site #s]	[1-7] Mar/Aprl	[8-10] Mar/Aprl	[11-15] Mar/Aprl	[1-15] Mar/Aprl	Last Mo. (3/'26)	Last Yr. (4/'25)	Norm (April)
Temperature, oC	20.7/20.8	17.7/16.9	18.8/18.2	19.3/19.0	-2%	7%	6%
Sp.Cond., mS/cm	2.22/2.56	1.30/1.52	1.54/1.63	1.82/2.03	12%	7%	10%
DO, mg/L	5.25/4.48	8.39/8.22	4.90/4.10	5.52/5.04	-10%	-12%	-12%
DO, % of Sat.	59/51	89/85	54/44	60/55			
pH	7.58/7.62	7.98/7.96	7.66/7.59	7.62/7.60	-0.3%	0.4%	-2%
3-day ADF, cfs	13/6.8	7.7/4.7	6.8/4.3	9.3/5.4	-42%	-48%	-66%
WQ Index	42/35	61/52	30/26	41/35	-14%	-19%	-17%
Letter Grade	C/D	B/B	D/D-	C/D			
March/April	Fair/ Marginal	Good/ Good	Marginal/ Marginal	Fair/ Marginal	Index down 6 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** were down 0.3oC (-2%) from last month to 7% above last year and 6% higher than the monthly norm of 17.9oC. The overall **specific conductance** of 2.03 mS/cm increased 12% over last month to 7% above a year ago and 10% more than the 22-yr norm of 1.85mS/cm. The overall **dissolved oxygen** level of 5.04 mg/L (55%Sat.) dropped 10% below last month to 12% less than both last year and the 22-yr norm of 5.82 mg/L (61%Sat). **Streamflow** over the antecedent 3-days of 5.4 cfs is 42% less less than last month, 48% under a year ago and 66% below the 22-yr April norm of 16 cfs. This month's overall LSDR **water quality index** (WQI) of 35 (D Marginal) is 14% below last month, 19% less than a year ago and 17% under the 22-yr norm of 43 (C Fair) for April.

WQI values computed over the past 25 months 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 (March '24 - April '26)							
	Mission Valley	Mission Gorge	Santee Basin	LSDR		ADF,cfs	TMR,F,in
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.	34 (D)	49 (C+)	23 (E+)	33 (D)	T	2.2	0.08
Dec.'24	45 (C)	53(B-)	33 (D)	42 (C)	T	3.7	0.05
Jan.'25	44 (C)	49 (C+)	32 (D)	40 (C)	T	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.	34(D)	61(B)	28(D)	37(D+)	WW	18	2.90
Dec.'25	41(C)	56(B)	27(D-)	38(C-)	WW	15	0.15
Jan. '26	53 (B-)	64 (B)	44 (C)	52 (B-)	WW	81	4.19
Feb '26	46 (C)	60 (B)	50 (B-)	51 (B-)	WW	36	1.50
March	42 (C)	61 (B)	30 (D)	41 (C)	T	19	0.00
April	35 (D)	52 (B)	26 (D-)	35 (D)	DW	6.1	0.14

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 trends for the highest, lowest and average of all sites. This month's overall value of 35 is only the 5th time over the past 22 years that the April index has fallen to D Marginal.

WQI values extending from Sept.'05 thru April '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 32.4 is 2.5% below of the long-range norm of 33.2. The running average low for April of 23 (30% below norm) occurred in 2015. The previous highest running average WQI for the month of 39 (17% above norm) occurred in 2007. 13 of the 16 sites monitored exhibited declines in water quality this month; 3 sites showed slight gains. The greatest decline, dropping 21 points from B Good to C Marginal, was Site 14 (RCP/Magnolia Ave).

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. Index values experienced over the previous wet weather months have declined significantly due to the recent dry spell. WY 26 index values are expected to be well below highs reached during the previous two water years.

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 lower than last month (middle bar) at 13 of 16 sites. This month; only one site is Good B, while six are Fair C, six more Marginal D, two Poor E and one Very Poor F. Last month four sites were Good B, six Fair C, five Marginal D and one Very Poor F. During the previous month (Feb) six sites were Good B and nine were Fair C. Index values are expected to continue in decline over the next six months. It is very likely that this year's overall water quality values compared to the last several water years will show declines due to below normal annual rainfall, less runoff/lower streamflow, elevated water temperatures and specific conductivities combined with depressed dissolved oxygen levels manifested throughout the lower river system. 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 a continued state of flux due to predominately natural causes.

jck (4/18/26)

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

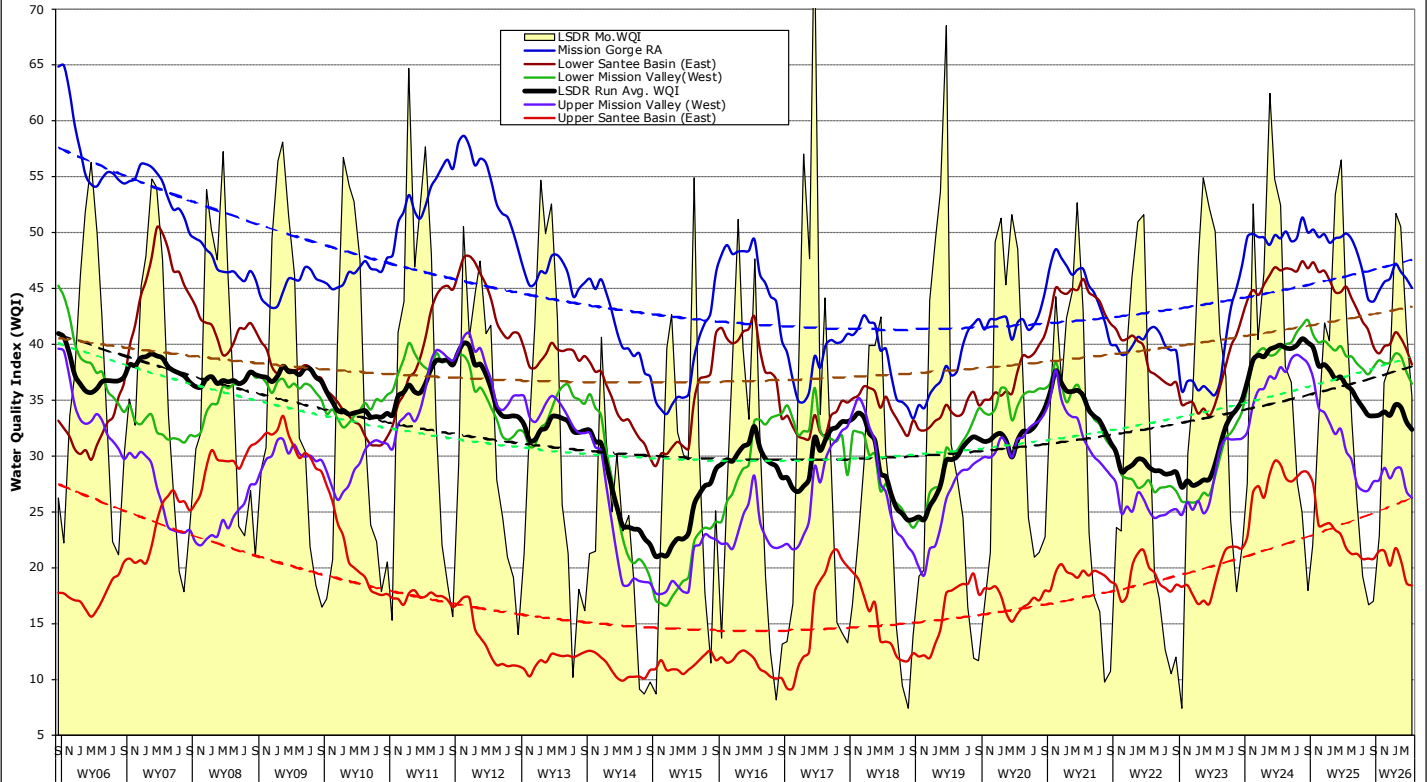


Chart 2 - Mast Park East (Site 13E) and Mission Gorge (Sites 8-10) Monthly WQI, 12-mo Running Averages and 21-yr Trendlines

