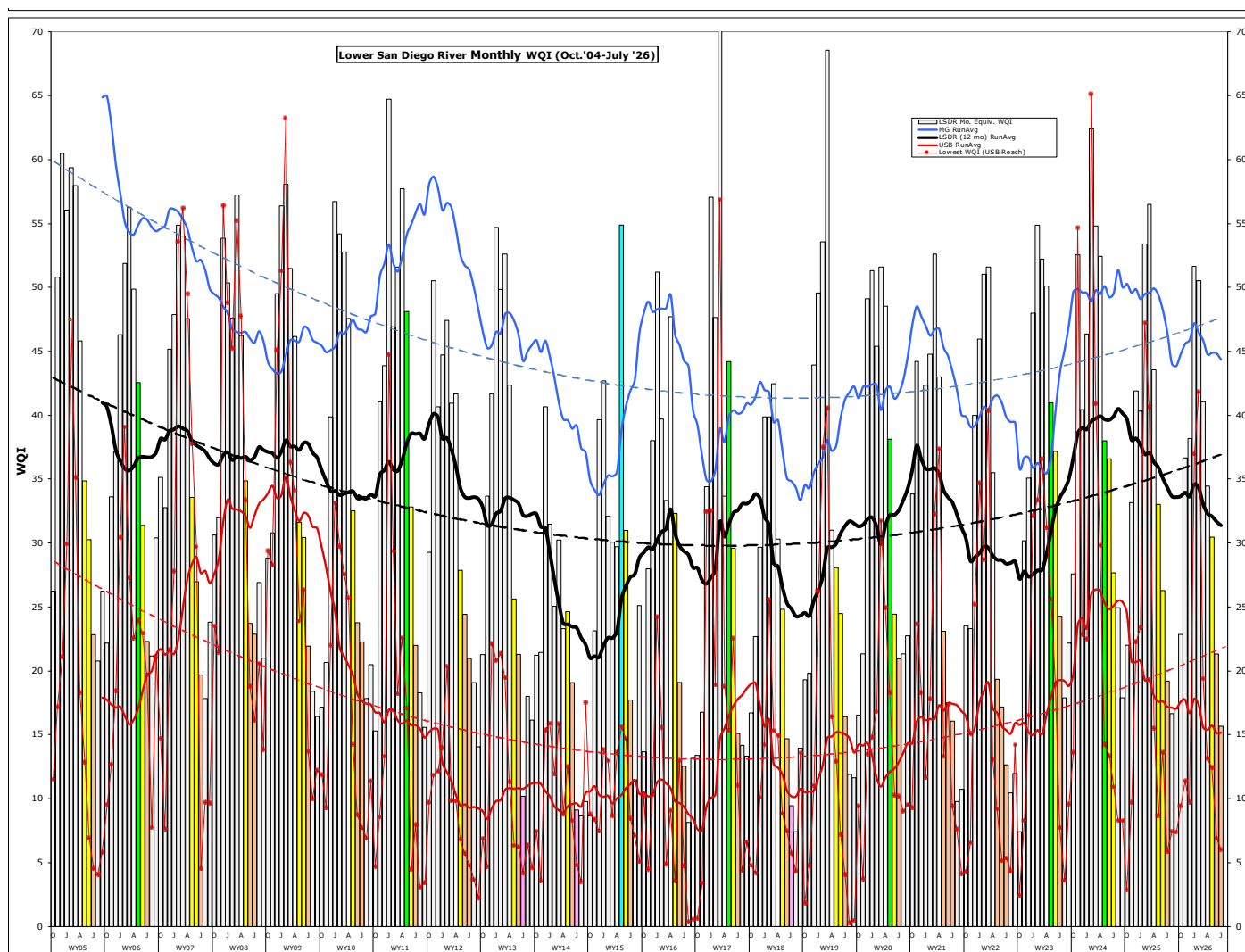


# Monthly WQM Report

## Lower San Diego River - July 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 (July/June). The overall index for this month of 16 (E-Poor) is five points (-27%) below last month, three points (-18%) less than a year ago and two points (-13%) below the 22-yr July norm of 18 (E-Poor).

| Table 1 - July/June '26 WQM Data Summary |                    |                     |                      |                     |                                     |                     |                |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
|                                          | West - MV          | Mid - MG            | East - SB            | LSDR                | Variance From                       |                     |                |
| [Site #s]                                | [1-7]<br>July/June | [8-10]<br>July/June | [11-15]<br>July/June | [1-15]<br>July/June | Last Mo.<br>(6/'26)                 | Last Yr.<br>(7/'25) | Norm<br>(July) |
| Temperature, oC                          | 25.1/23.7          | 24.1/21.9           | 23.5/22.4            | 24.2/22.7           | 6%                                  | 8%                  | 5%             |
| Sp.Cond., mS/cm                          | 3.56/3.29          | 2.15/1.77           | 2.32/2.06            | 2.74/2.51           | 9%                                  | 3%                  | 2%             |
| DO, mg/L                                 | 3.56/2.60          | 4.13/6.31           | 2.87/3.79            | 3.26/3.70           | -11%                                | -5%                 | -6%            |
| DO, % of Sat.                            | 44/31              | 49/73               | 33/44                | 39/43               |                                     |                     |                |
| pH                                       | 7.53/7.43          | 7.64/7.81           | 7.49/7.56            | 7.50/7.51           | -0.1%                               | -1%                 | -2%            |
| 3-day ADF, cfs                           | 1.7/1.8            | 1.0/1.9             | 0.9/1.9              | 1.2/1.9             | -35%                                | -17%                | -59%           |
| WQ Index                                 | 22/17              | 16/34               | 11/20                | 16/21               | -30%                                | -19%                | -18%           |
| Letter Grade                             | E/E                | E/D                 | F/E                  | E/E                 |                                     |                     |                |
| July/June                                | Poor/<br>Poor      | Poor/<br>Marginal   | Very Poor/<br>Poor   | Poor/<br>Poor       | Index down 5 pts from<br>last month |                     |                |

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

LSDR **water temperatures** rose 1.5oC (6%) from last month to 8% above last year and 5% higher than the monthly norm of 23.1oC for July. The overall **specific conductance** of 3.26 mS/cm is up 32% above last month, 22% greater than a year ago and 18% more than the 22-yr norm of 2.48 mS/cm. The overall **dissolved oxygen** level of 3.26 mg/L (39% ofSat.) dropped 11% below last month to 5% less than a year ago and 6% under the 22-yr norm of 3.53 mg/L (41%Sat). **Streamflow** over the antecedent 3-days of 1.2 cfs is 35% below last month, 17% less than a year ago and 59% under the 22-yr July norm of 2.5 cfs. This month's overall LSDR **water quality index** (WQI) of 16 (E Poor) is 30% below last month, 19% under as a year ago and 18% below the 22-yr norm of 18 (E Poor) for the month of July.

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. Overall the LSDR WQI value for July of this year is three points lower than last year and two points lower than the 22-yr montly norm.

| <b>Table 2 - WQI Values, Average Daily Flow and Monthly Rainfall (June '24 - July '26)</b> |                |               |               |               |           |            |             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
|                                                                                            | Mission Valley | Mission Gorge | Santee Basin  | LSDR          |           | ADF,cfs    | TMR,F,in    |
| June '24                                                                                   | 40 (C)         | 51 (B-)       | 30 (D)        | 38 (C-)       | DW        | 7.6        | 0.01        |
| <b>July '24</b>                                                                            | <b>27 (D)</b>  | <b>43 (C)</b> | <b>25 (D)</b> | <b>28 (D)</b> | <b>DW</b> | <b>3.8</b> | <b>0.00</b> |
| 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.                                                                                       | 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.                                                                                       | 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)        | T         | 6.7        | 0.23        |
| June '25                                                                                   | 27 (D)         | 35 (D)        | 24 (E+)       | 26 (D-)       | DW        | 2.7        | 0.00        |
| <b>July '25</b>                                                                            | <b>22 (E)</b>  | <b>22 (E)</b> | <b>17 (E)</b> | <b>19 (E)</b> | <b>DW</b> | <b>1.4</b> | <b>0.00</b> |
| 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.                                                                                       | 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                                                                                        | 46 (C)         | 60 (B)        | 50 (B-)       | 51 (B-)       | WW        | 36         | 2.11        |
| March                                                                                      | 42 (C)         | 61 (B)        | 30 (D)        | 41 (C)        | T         | 19         | 0.00        |
| April                                                                                      | 35 (D)         | 52 (B-)       | 26 (D-)       | 35 (D)        | T         | 5.7        | 0.15        |
| May                                                                                        | 30 (D-)        | 50 (B-)       | 22 (E)        | 30 (D)        | T         | 5.2        | 0.31        |
| June '26                                                                                   | 17 (E)         | 34 (D)        | 20 (E)        | 21 (E)        | DW        | 2.3        | 0.01        |
| <b>July '26</b>                                                                            | <b>22 (E)</b>  | <b>16 (E)</b> | <b>11 (F)</b> | <b>16 (E)</b> | <b>DW</b> | <b>1.1</b> | <b>0.00</b> |

The **cover page** of this report presents monthly WQI values and range (high/low) for the Lower San Diego River watershed over the past 22 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 21 (Poor) has 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 over time. Index values experienced over both wet weather and transitional months of this year have declined due to hot and dry weather. Overall WY26 index values are expected to be well below highs experienced during the previous two water years.

WQI values extending from Sept.'05 thru July '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 31.4 is 5.5% below of the long-range norm of 33.2. The running average low for July of 23 (30% below norm) occurred in 2014. The previous highest running average WQI for the month of 40 (20% above norm) occurred in 2024. All of the eastern sites (8-15) monitored this month exhibited declines in water quality from last month, whereas as all the western sites (1-7) have showed slight increases in index values.

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 over time. Overall index values this year are expected to be well below highs experienced 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 significantly lower than last month (middle bar) at monitoring sites 8-17 (east) and slightly greater at site 1-7 in the west. This month; only 3 sites were found Marginal (D), 8 more Poor (E) and the remaining 5 Very Poor (F). Last month 5 sites were Marginal, 5 more Poor and 5 others Very Poor F. During the previous month (May) the majority of sites were in the Marginal category. Index values are expected to continue to decline throughout the next month. It is very likely that this year's overall water quality values, compared to the last several water years, will be lower due to below normal rainfall, less runoff/ lower streamflow, elevated water temperatures and specific conductivities combined with depressed dissolved oxygen levels occurring throughout the lower river system. The cyclic patterns in monthly, seasonal and annual water quality values demonstrate that the Lower San Diego River water quality metrics are continually changing due to natural causes. jck (7/19/26)

