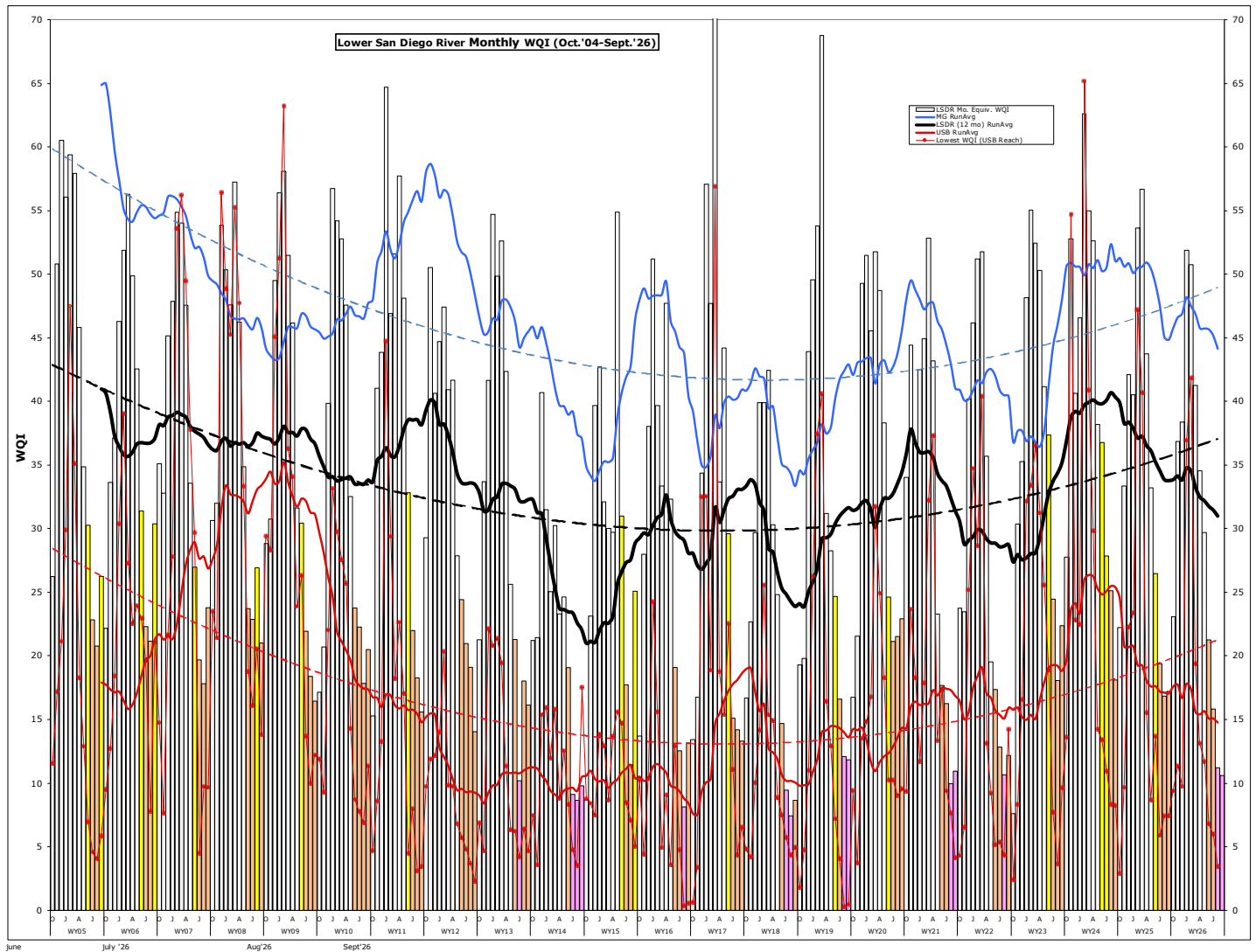


# Monthly WQM Report

## Lower San Diego River - September 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 (Sept./Aug). The overall index for this month of 10.6 (F-Very Poor) is a half point (-5%) below last month as well as over six points (-38%) less than a year ago and the 22-yr monthly average of 17 (E-Poor).

| Table 1 - Sept./Aug. '26 WQM Data Summary |                   |                      |                       |                      |                                              |                     |                 |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
|                                           | West - MV         | Mid - MG             | East - SB             | LSDR                 | Variance From                                |                     |                 |
| [Site #s]                                 | [1-7]<br>Sept/Aug | [8-10]<br>Sept/Aug   | [11-15]<br>Sept/Aug   | [1-15]<br>Sept/Aug   | Last Mo.<br>(8/'26)                          | Last Yr.<br>(9/'25) | Norm<br>(Sept.) |
| Temperature, oC                           | 23.6/25.6         | 22.5/23.1            | 22.8/25.1             | 23.0/24.8            | -7%                                          | -1%                 | 7%              |
| Sp.Cond., mS/cm                           | 3.82/3.85         | 2.31/2.19            | 2.43/2.39             | 3.02/2.93            | 3%                                           | 28%                 | 6%              |
| DO, mg/L                                  | 2.09/3.10         | 2.59/2.12            | 2.83/2.08             | 2.39/2.42            | -2%                                          | -15%                | -28%            |
| DO, % of Sat.                             | 25/38             | 30/25                | 33/25                 | 28/29                |                                              |                     |                 |
| pH                                        | 7.37/7.61         | 7.58/7.49            | 7.49/7.61             | 7.44/7.60            | -2%                                          | -2%                 | -3%             |
| 3-day ADF, cfs                            | 2.0/2.3           | 0.7/0.6              | 0.5/0.3               | 1.2/1.2              | -5%                                          | -86%                | -40%            |
| WQ Index                                  | 14.2/20.3         | 5.1/3.3              | 10.8/6.8              | 10.6/11.2            | -5%                                          | -38%                | -39%            |
| Letter Grade                              | E/E               | F/F                  | F+/F                  | F+/F+                |                                              |                     |                 |
| Sept./Aug.                                | Poor/<br>Poor     | VeryPoor<br>VeryPoor | Very Poor<br>VeryPoor | VeryPoor<br>VeryPoor | Index down one-half<br>point 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** declined 1.8oC (-7%) from last month to within 0.2oC of last year and 7% higher than the monthly norm of 21.6oC for Sept. The overall **specific conductance** of 2.39mS/cm is up 3% from last month, well above (28%) a year ago and 6% greater than the 22-yr norm of 2.84 mS/cm. The overall **dissolved oxygen** level of 2.42 mg/L (28%Sat.) is 2% less than last month, 15% below a year ago and down 28% from the 22-yr norm of 3.41 mg/L (38%Sat). **Streamflow** over the antecedent 3-days of 1.15 cfs is 5% below last month, 86% less than a year ago and 40% under the 22-yr Sept. norm of 1.9 cfs. This month's overall LSDR **water quality index** (WQI) of 10.6 (F VeryPoor) is 5% below last month, 38% less than as a year ago and 39% below the 22-yr norm of 17 (E Poor) for the month of September.

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 September of this year is more than six points below both last year and the 22-yr montly norm of 17.

| <b>Table 2 - WQI Values, Average Daily Flow and Monthly Rainfall (Aug. '24 - Sept. '26)</b> |                |               |                |                |           |            |             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
|                                                                                             | Mission Valley | Mission Gorge | Santee Basin   | LSDR           |           | ADF,cfs    | TMR,F,in    |
| Aug.                                                                                        | 22 (E)         | 44 (C)        | 22 (E)         | 25 (E+)        | DW        | 2.9        | 0.00        |
| <b>Sept.'24</b>                                                                             | <b>18 (E)</b>  | <b>19 (E)</b> | <b>20 (E)</b>  | <b>18 (E)</b>  | <b>DW</b> | <b>1.6</b> | <b>0.01</b> |
| 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                                                                                        | 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        |
| <b>Sept.'25</b>                                                                             | <b>26 (D-)</b> | <b>16 (E)</b> | <b>10 (F)</b>  | <b>17 (E)</b>  | <b>DW</b> | <b>2.2</b> | <b>0.05</b> |
| 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-)        | 49 (C+)       | 21 (E)         | 30 (D)         | T         | 5.2        | 0.31        |
| June                                                                                        | 17 (E)         | 35 (D)        | 20 (E)         | 21 (E)         | DW        | 2.0        | 0.01        |
| July                                                                                        | 22 (E)         | 17 (E)        | 11 (F+)        | 16 (E)         | DW        | 1.1        | 0.00        |
| Aug.                                                                                        | 20 (E)         | 3 (F)         | 7 (F)          | 11 (F+)        | DW        | 1.0        | 0.00        |
| <b>Sept.'26</b>                                                                             | <b>14 (E)</b>  | <b>5 (F)</b>  | <b>11 (F+)</b> | <b>11 (F+)</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 11 (F Very Poor) is typically 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, however demonstrate the greatest change in index values over the last month. Index values experienced over both wet weather and transitional months of this year have in general declined due to hot and dry weather. Overall WY26 index values are below seasonal highs experienced during the previous two water years.

WQI values extending from Sept.'05 thru Sept.'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) the entire lower river watershed. The current running average WQI of 30.4 is 8.4% below of the long-range norm of 33.2. The running average low for Sept. of 22.1 (34% below avg.) occurred in 2014. The previous highest running average WQI for the month of 41 (23% above norm) occurred in 2005. Index values declined throughout the watershed primarily due to protracted minimal streamflows.

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 for this water year are expected to be well below those experienced during the previous two annual water cycles.

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 seven out of 15 sites, primarily located in the western portion of the watershed. This month; only two sites were found Marginal (D), six Poor (E) and the remaining eight Very Poor (F). Last month two sites were Marginal, four Poor and ten Very Poor F. During the previous month (July) three sites were Marginal, eight Poor and five Very Poor (F). Index values are expected to improve slightly over the next month as temperatures decline. This year's overall water quality values, compared to the last several water years, are lower due to below normal rainfall, less runoff/lower streamflow, elevated temperatures and higher specific conductivities combined with depressed dissolved oxygen levels that have occurred throughout the lower portions of the river system.

jck (9/19/26)

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

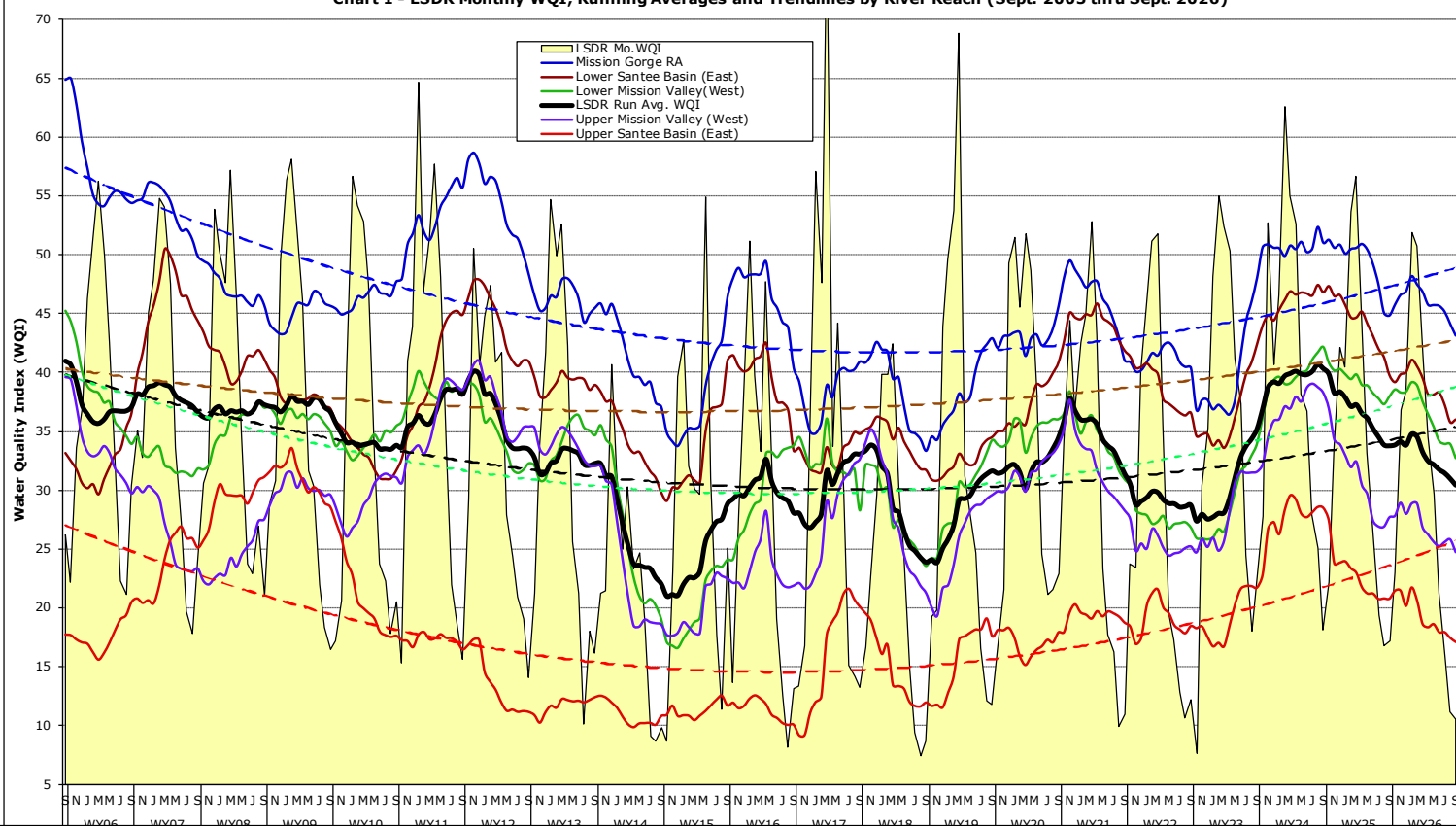
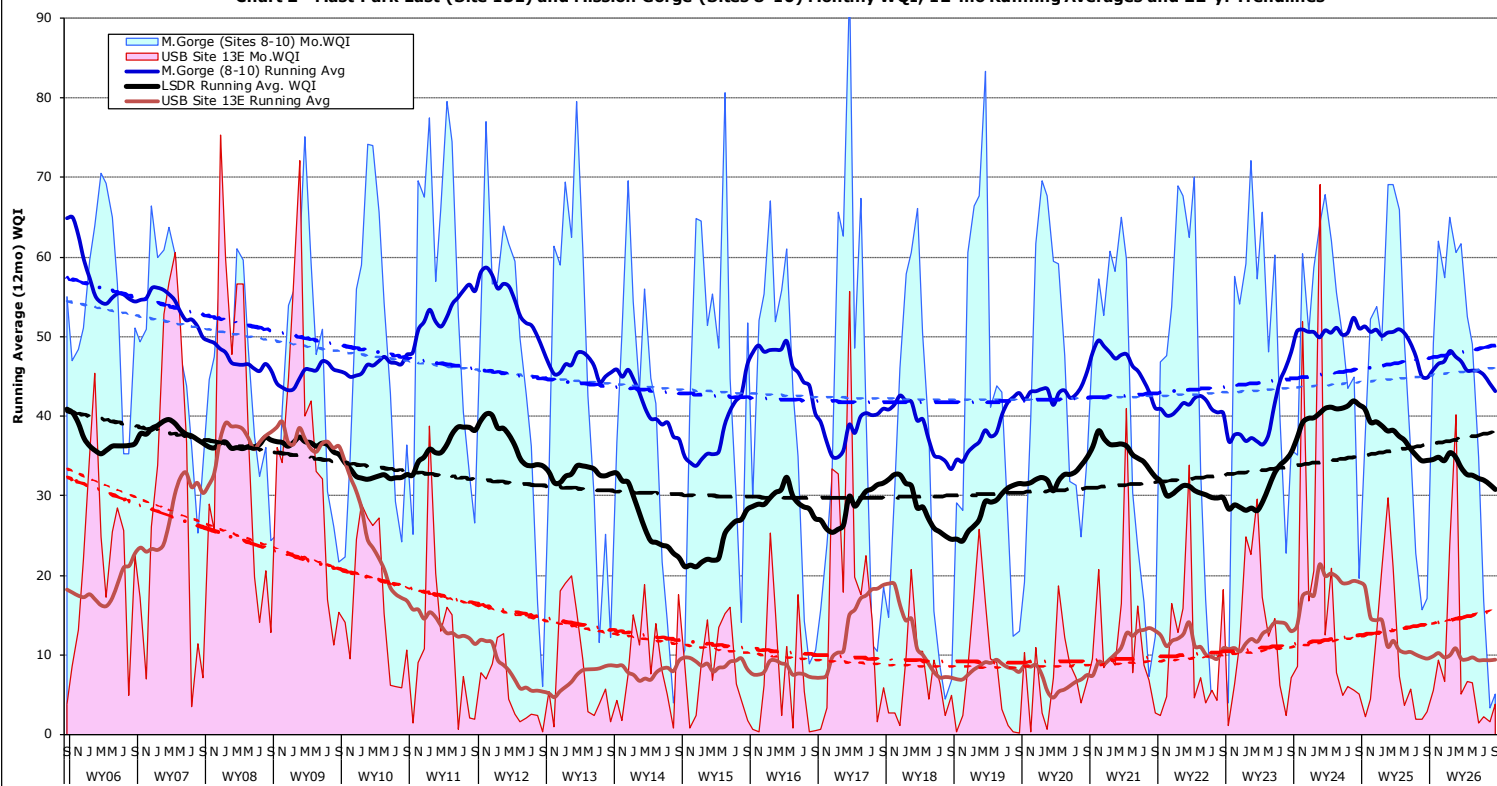


Chart 2 - Mast Park East (Site 13E) and Mission Gorge (Sites 8-10) Monthly WQI, 12-mo Running Averages and 22-yr Trendlines



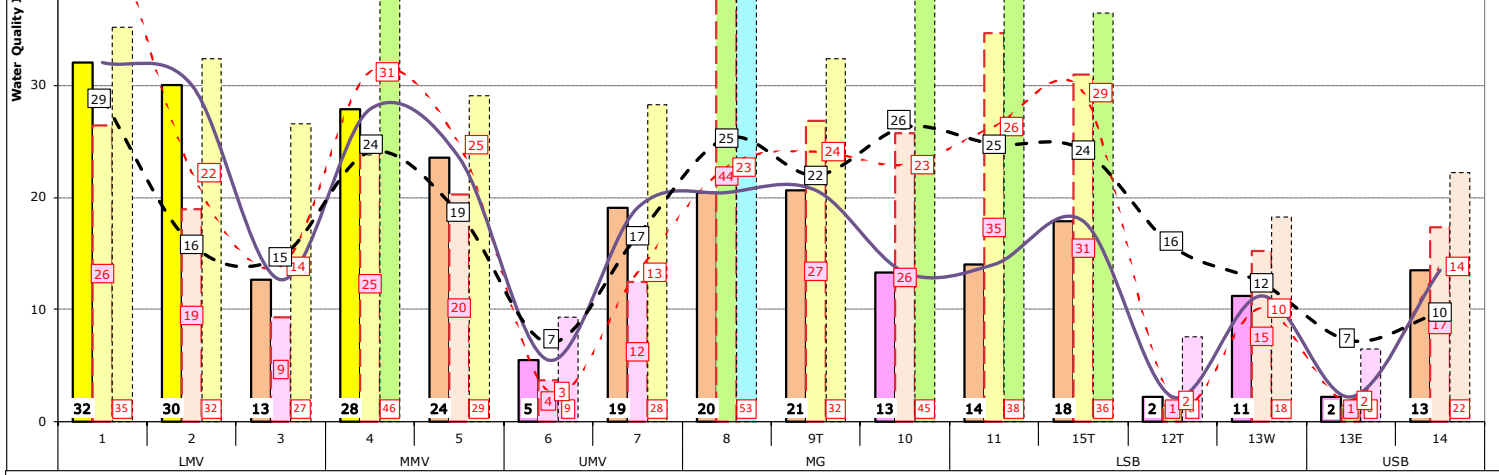


**Chart 4 - LSDR Spatial WQI Profile Aug. 2026**

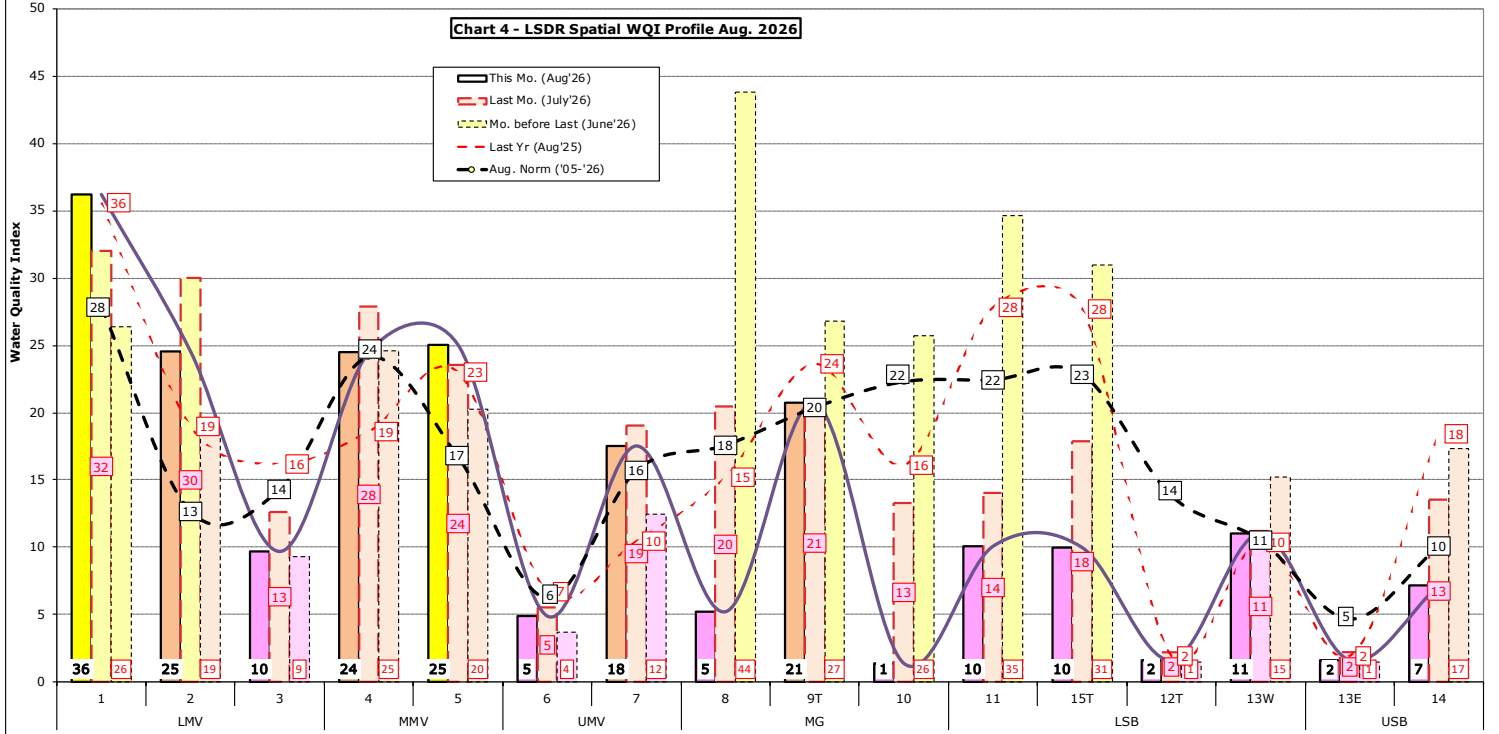


**Chart 5 - LSDR Spatial WQI Profile Sept. 2026**

