



History of the Division's Creation

One of Public Works' functions, as the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (Flood Control District) in the early part of the last century, dealt with providing protection from devastating floods and mudflows that occurred during heavy and prolonged rains in the County of Los Angeles basins. Through an extensive system of dams, debris basins, channels, and storm drains that have been built, we have essentially solved that serious problem for the residents of the County.

However, an increase in population and urbanization created a new set of challenges for the County: the loss of open space and pollution problems. Quality of life, as a whole, has become a greater concern.

In 1999, Public Works established a Long Range Initiative Committee (LRI) to develop a long-term strategy for Public Works with respect to watershed management. This committee was comprised primarily of section heads throughout Public Works that had some involvement and responsibility related to different aspects of watershed management.

This group worked together for nearly a year educating themselves and each other, researching watershed manage-

ment practices locally and across the nation, and learning strategic planning methods in an effort to develop a five-year watershed management strategy for Public Works. The outcome of that effort was the creation of WMD and the need for Public Works to undergo a paradigm shift.

In August 2000, the new WMD was officially created to spearhead that paradigm shift for watershed management. The new concept of watershed management brings together services including flood protection; water conservation; preserving and creating open space for recreation and habitat; and reducing pollution of water resources.



The new Division combined various elements of Public Works; the former Plan-

ning Division, Water Quality Section of the Environmental Programs Division, and Planning Section of Water Resources Division. In the first year, WMD assigned many new and transitional responsibilities: building a management team; moving; organizing and training staff; shifting previous mindsets into the new watershed management concept; establishing liaisons with other key divisions; and outreaching to watershed stakeholders.

Mission

The Department of Public Works will lead the planning and implementation of watershed management in the County of Los Angeles. Working with those who have a stake in our watersheds' future, we will integrate flood protection, conscientious management of natural resources, water conservation, and efforts to improve the quality of storm water runoff and groundwater. Our goal is to protect our communities and the environment and provide a higher quality of life for the citizens of our County.

Organization Structure

WMD consists of eight sections: Public Relations and Outreach, Funding, Research & Legislation, Watershed Engineering, Mapping, and FEMA Support, Los Angeles River Watershed, San Gabriel River Watershed, Ballona and Malibu Creel Watersheds, Santa Clara River/Antelope Valley and Dominguez Watersheds, and NPDES. Figure 1 is WMD's organizational chart.



Staff joining WMD from Planning, Environmental Programs, and Water Resources divisions were placed into these eight newly established sections. As a pio-

neer with a new vision for watershed management, the initial estimate on costs and resources requirements to fulfill the Division's Mission were unknown.

Consequently, Administration reviewed and adjusted the table of organization, and approved an ultimate Table of Organization



with 95 positions in June 2002. New positions were to be added over the upcoming budget years, as necessary. In general, the Table of Organization included higher-level engineering positions and introduced a new 'Environmental Specialist' series to be developed by the Department of Human Resources.

Five-Year Strategic Plan

In August 2000, the Director of Public Works, Harry Stone, approved a report from the LRI Committee on watershed management. This report recommended a Five-Year Strategic Plan that enables Public Works to adopt a watershed management philosophy. The plan directs WMD's efforts and provides a blueprint for future activities. The plan is intended to be a "living document" to assist Public Works on its activities, accomplishments, and



priorities. The plan includes a comprehensive Division organization and structure, personnel requirements, activity lists, financial strategies,

and implementation timelines. WMD meets on a regular basis with Administration to evaluate progress, implementation dates, and revise goals and strategies as required.

The plan lays out six strategies:

1. Implement and coordinate watershed management programs to balance competing priorities, optimize resources, and eliminate redundant activities.
2. Generate partnerships and coalitions to facilitate program development and implementation.
3. Provide assistance to secure funding (Public Works and Watershed Team/Partnered projects.)
4. Promote legislation and regulations.
5. Provide technical/engineering expertise and support to watershed teams and internal customers.
6. Become information clearing house for facilities mutual assistance and community outreach.

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