

# Watercourse Tip Sheet

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**United States Army Corps of Engineers**  
Los Angeles District, San Diego Section  
Regulatory Division  
5900 La Place Court, Suite 100  
Carlsbad, CA 92008

**Mission Statement:** Protect the nation's aquatic resources through the issuance of permits for projects that have undergone careful evaluation in light of applicable laws, regulations and policy to ensure that no action authorized by our program will have an adverse impact on the overall public welfare. Provide strong protection of the Nation's aquatic environment, including wetlands; to enhance the efficiency of the Corps administration of its regulatory program; and, to ensure that the Corps provides the regulated public with fair and reasonable decisions.

**Main Contacts:** Kyle Dahl, South Coast Branch Chief, (760) 602-4834  
Main Office (760) 602-4829

**General Guidance for Watercourse Activities:**

**DO** contact our agency if you intend to conduct activities that result in the discharge (placement) of fill material into waters of the United States, including their adjacent wetlands, since these activities require a Department of the Army Permit from the Corps. Examples of activities in waters of the U.S. that require a permit from the Corps include (but are not limited to) mechanized land clearing, bank protection/stabilization, mechanized dredging, construction of road crossings, and levee construction.

**DO** contact our agency if you are not sure whether you will need a permit from the Corps and we will discuss your project with you and schedule a site visit if needed. If you anticipate that you are going to have a flooding problem or experienced one last year because a watercourse is blocked or inhibited please call us now so we can start working on solutions with you.

**Watercourse maintenance activities that typically do not require a permit from the Corps include:**  
Hand removal (i.e. without the use of heavy machinery within the stream channel) of trash, debris, and sediment; and

Hand removal of invasive species, such that the plants are being cut above the root system (e.g., mowing, rotary cutting, and chainsawing) and the cut materials are disposed of outside waters of the U.S.

**California Regional Water Quality Control Board**  
CRWQCB, San Diego Region  
2375 Northside Drive, Suite 100  
San Diego, CA 92108-2700

**Mission Statement:** Develop and enforce water quality objectives and implement plans that will best protect the area's waters while recognizing local differences in climate, topography, geology and hydrology.

**Main Contact:** Alan Monji Engineering Geologist, (619) 521-3967

**General Guidance for Watercourse Activities:**

**DO** remove trash and debris (i.e. leaf litter, wrack, dead vegetation) without mechanized equipment.

**DO** contact our agency for any other activity that may result in a discharge of a pollutant or waste to waters and check to see if you need a permit for activities such as the removal of exotic invasive plants/weeds.

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## United States Fish and Wildlife Service

Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office

2177 Salk Ave #250

Carlsbad, CA 92008

**Mission Statement:** Working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

**Main Contacts:** Susan Wynn, Staff Biologist, (760) 431-9440 ext. 216  
Email: [susan\\_wynn@fws.gov](mailto:susan_wynn@fws.gov)

### General Guidance for Watercourse Activities:

**DO** plan ahead for the rainy season so that there is time for early coordination

**DO** hand remove shopping carts, mattresses, large fallen logs, and trash from streams and areas of ponded water

**DO** hand clear debris and sediment from within existing culverts to allow water to pass

**DO** contact our office if you have questions about the presence of endangered or threatened species on your property. We are available to visit your property and provide technical assistance.

**DO** contact our office if you have questions about the potential for vernal pools on your property. We are available to visit your property and provide technical assistance.

**DO NOT** move soil, alter water flow, create dams, or empty areas of ponded water (except those areas where water has ponded on asphalt roadways, asphalt parking lots, or manicured lawns) without first contacting our office

**DO NOT** use machinery within or adjacent to streams and/or areas of ponded water (except those areas where water has ponded on asphalt roadways, asphalt parking lots, or manicured lawns) without first contacting our office

**DO NOT** place rocks, rip rap, or cement within streams and/or areas of ponded water (except those areas where water has ponded on asphalt roadways, asphalt parking lots, or manicured lawns) without first contacting our office

**DO NOT** remove vegetation from within or around streams or areas of ponded water

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## California Department of Fish and Wildlife

South Coast Region  
3883 Ruffin Road  
San Diego, CA 92123

**Mission Statement:** Conserve, protect and manage California's fish, wildlife and native plant resources.

**Main Contact:** Jennifer Blackhall, Environmental Scientist, (858) 354-3285  
Email: [Jennifer.Blackhall@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Blackhall@wildlife.ca.gov)

### General Guidance for Watercourse Activities:

**DO** notify CDFW of any proposed activity that may substantially modify a river, stream, or lake.

**DO** notify CDFW if the flood control activity will: substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of any river, stream or lake; substantially change or use any material from the bed, channel, or bank of, any river, stream, or lake; or deposit or dispose of debris, waste, or other material containing crumbled, flaked, or ground pavement where it may pass into any river, stream, or lake, involve the use of mechanized equipment that displace the soil, that remove sediment, rocks, or other substrates, that divert or obstruct the stream flow, or that remove native vegetation.

The notification requirement applies to any work undertaken in or near a river, stream, or lake that flows at least intermittently through a bed or channel, including ephemeral streams, desert washes, and watercourses with a subsurface flow. It may also apply to work undertaken within the flood plain of a body of water.

**DO** provide CDFW with a completed notification form and the corresponding fee if your activities will do any of the above. Forms and fee schedule are available at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/habcon/1600/forms.html>

If CDFW determines that the activity may substantially adversely affect fish and wildlife resources, a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement will be prepared. The Agreement includes reasonable conditions necessary to protect those resources and must comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Once the Agreement is signed and finalized, the entity may proceed with the activity in accordance with the final Agreement.

**DO** contact CDFW if you are planning an activity within or near a stream and are unsure whether you need to notify CDFW, please contact us to discuss your individual project with a Streambed Program representative.

### Watercourse maintenance activities that typically do not require a permit from CDFW include:

Hand-removal of human-generated trash and debris;

Hand-removal, above ground, of small amounts of arundo, tamarisk, castor bean, and pampas grass, provided such activities are conducted outside the bird-breeding season, native vegetation is not removed, and no vegetative material is allowed to enter the stream; and

Hand-removal of newly-fallen trees or branches that obstruct the flow of the stream.