

## Appendix B

### GLOSSARY

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#### **Aquifer**

An underground layer of soil, gravel, or porous rock that contains water; particularly referring to a source of well or spring water. The water contained in an aquifer is known as groundwater.

#### **Aquatic**

Animals or plants that live in or frequent water.

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#### **Bioaccumulation**

The process of accumulation of an element or compound in an organism as the organism eats other organisms which have been contaminated.

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#### **Canal**

A man-made channel used for transporting water. Local canals carry irrigation water, and also carry stream flows and storm water runoff.

#### **Carnivores**

Animals that eat other animals.

#### **Channelize**

To artificially make a stream wider, straighter, or smoother.

#### **Contaminant**

An element, compound, pathogen (i.e., disease-carrying organism), or physical characteristic (e.g., pH, heat, etc.) introduced via processes such as ingestion, inhalation, and contact, which may directly or indirectly harm organisms.

#### **Creek**

A natural stream of water that is smaller than a river.

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#### **Decomposer**

Organisms, including bacteria and fungi, that cause the chemical disintegration of organic matter.

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#### **Ecosystem**

A self-sustaining and self-regulated community composed of interdependent organisms, along with their energy sources, physical and chemical surroundings.

#### **Ephemeral stream**

A stream which flows seasonally, during periods of rainfall, and is otherwise dry. Many local streams are naturally seasonal, or ephemeral, streams; some now carry irrigation water during the dry season.

#### **Erosion**

The process of wearing rock or soil away by wind, water or ice.

#### **Eutrophication**

The process by which a waterbody becomes rich in nutrients, providing for the growth of organic matter, and subsequent decomposition which uses up oxygen otherwise available to other aquatic creatures.

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#### **Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District**

A local government agency providing flood control, storm drainage, water conservation, and recreation services in Fresno, Clovis, and rural lands lying east of the community into the Sierra Nevada foothills.

#### **Food chain**

The sequence of transfers of energy in the form of food from one organism to another.

#### **Food pyramid**

A representation of food relationships within an ecosystem, such that the producers are on the bottom and each level is eaten by the next higher level. The food pyramid illustrates the concept that, as energy is transferred up the food chain, much of it is lost as heat; a much larger amount of potential food energy must be generated by the producers at the bottom of the pyramid, than will eventually be available to be consumed by the secondary consumers, or predators, at the top of the pyramid.

## GLOSSARY (CONTINUED)

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#### Food web

All of the interlinked food chains in an ecological community.

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#### Groundwater

Water occurring in and saturating the spaces between sand, silt and clay particles beneath the ground surface.

#### Gutter

Shallow channels created in paved areas, including along curbs, to direct urban runoff into storm drain inlets and pipelines.

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#### Herbivores

Plant-eating animals.

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#### Impervious

A surface through which liquids cannot pass.

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#### Omnivores

Animals which eat both animals and plants.

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#### Percolate

The process of water soaking or seeping through the soil.

#### Photosynthesis

The process by which plants use light energy trapped by chlorophyll to change carbon dioxide and water into food energy.

#### Pipeline

An underground structure which carries urban storm water runoff from storm drain inlets to ponding basins, canals, creeks and the river.

#### Pollutant

An element, compound, pathogen (i.e., disease-carrying organism), or physical characteristic (e.g., pH, heat, etc.) introduced via processes such as ingestion, inhalation, and contact, which indirectly or directly harms organisms.

#### Pollution Prevention

Behaviors, activities, and devices which stop a pollutant from being generated or from being released into the environment.

#### Ponding Basin

An area excavated by the District to collect and hold storm water runoff and to replenish the aquifer.

#### Primary Consumers

Consist of herbivores, plant-eating animals.

#### Producers

Organisms at the base of the food chain which photosynthesize - creating the food energy for all other organisms.

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#### Reservoirs

Lakes created by dams to store water and prevent floods.

#### Riparian

Plants and animals that live on the bank of a watercourse.

#### River

A natural stream of water of considerable volume.

#### Runoff

Excess water from storms or irrigation that flows over the land surface.

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#### San Joaquin River

A large natural stream which flows westerly from the crest of the Sierra, through a series of reservoirs, along the northern boundary of Fresno County, to the center of the Valley. From there it flows northward to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The upper San Joaquin is fed by rainfall runoff and snowmelt.

## GLOSSARY (CONTINUED)

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#### **Secondary Consumers**

Consist of omnivores (plant- and meat-eating animals) and carnivores (meat-eaters).

#### **Sediments**

Soil and other particles that settle to the bottom of a waterbody, such as a river, canal, creek or ponding basin.

#### **Storm Drain Inlet**

An opening usually covered with a metal grate that passes water from the surface into a below-ground storm drain pipeline.

#### **Storm Drain System**

The interconnected streets, gutters, inlets, pipelines, ponding basins, and surface waterbodies which drain urban runoff away from homes and businesses.

#### **Storm Water**

Water from rainfall or other precipitation.

#### **Stream**

A body of flowing water.

#### **Surface Water**

Fresh water which flows or is stored on the earth's surface, such as canals, creeks, rivers, and lakes.

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#### **Terrestrial**

Animals or plants that live on or frequent land.

#### **Toxicity**

A contaminant's relative ability to cause an adverse effect on, or death to, an organism.

#### **Trophic Levels**

Represent the transfer of food energy from one organism to another; producers, primary consumers, and secondary consumers make up trophic levels.

#### **Turbidity**

In water science, any condition which reduces water's transparency to light.

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#### **Urban**

Relating to, characteristic of, or constituting a city.

#### **Urban Runoff**

All surface water, including storm water and excess irrigation water, originating in urban areas.

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#### **Wastewater**

The combined liquid wastes, solids, and used water generated by residential, commercial, and industrial activities; also called "sewage."

#### **Water Cycle**

The biological, geological, chemical, and climatic processes that move and recycle water in various forms through the ecosphere.

#### **Watershed**

An area that drains to a particular watercourse or body of water.

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#### **Zooplankton**

Small to microscopic aquatic animals. Phytoplankton are small to microscopic aquatic plants.

