

## **Rocky Intertidal Ecosystem Monitoring Webportal 2010 Progress Report for the Water Quality Monitoring Council**

We are in the early stages of portal development and have initiated the process of building maps of ongoing monitoring locations into a Google Maps interface. We have agreed on and established a series of questions that we feel the public will find relevant and will help lead them through the portal.

These questions include:

- What is a tidepool (or rocky intertidal habitat)?
- Where are the tidepools?
- Why are tidepools important?
- What lives there?
- What threatens tidepool health?
- How healthy are they?
- What is being done to improve tidepools? What laws and regulations protect them?
- Who monitors tidepools?
- What does the monitoring tell us?

The answers to these questions are near complete and will be communicated with other members of the workgroup shortly thereafter. After the answers are agreed upon, they will be placed into a portal template that is being developed.

Much of the communication among workgroup members has revolved around the best strategy to break down an overwhelming and complex data set from a long-term monitoring program of numerous California rocky shores into easily interpretable and obtainable data for the public. The process of assessing and coordinating monitoring data and agreeing on a data presentation strategy that is continuous and interfaced with data updates from the monitoring program on a biyearly basis will be the focus of interagency communication. We have been concentrating on individual site reports that discuss key physical parameters of the site, impacting agents, and key biological patterns. We expect this piece will be completed for southern California sites by spring of 2011, with others following over the next year. These site reports will spark discussion within the workgroup to determine how to scale this information up to a more regional description of patterns. In addition, this process will lead to workgroup discussions regarding a means to assess the health of this ecosystem, a tool that has not been developed for rocky intertidal habitats despite being present in other ecosystems (e.g. the Index of Biotic Integrity and other health indices).