

Item 18. Water Quality Accomplishments
Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
July 14, 2011

Executive Officer's Note

I recently asked staff members to take five to ten minutes to jot down something they are proud of in their work at the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. If they were talking to a person who doesn't know what they do, what example would they provide? The results provide some quick snapshots of work and accomplishments that, in most cases, the Board does not see in our Board meeting agendas. These short stories provide a broader understanding for the Board and public of the range of our work and accomplishments. Such stories also serve to remind each of us that are part of this Regional Water Board team (staff and Board members) of some of the types of positive changes, big and small, we effectuate through our work.

Job Classification Acronyms:

ES = Environmental Scientist

EG = Engineering Geologist

WRCE = Water Resources Control Engineer

SEA = Sanitary Engineering Associate

Sr = Senior

Chris Adair, Sr WRCE

I am especially proud to say that I have played an integral part in the upgrade of the state-wide Geotracker database. For the past 2 1/2 years, I have worked on a regular basis (weekly for the first year then bi-weekly for a year and now quarterly) with underground tank staff and management throughout the state along with computer and database professionals to make Geotracker a

versatile and reliable tool for both public information and Water Board staff case handling. As a result, I estimate our tank staff members have cut down on the paper they receive and send out by 50-75%. Although we still receive some paper files, they have diminished drastically. We rarely find it necessary to send paper out of the office.

I am also proud to say that I have played and continue to play a role in the crafting of meaningful state-wide performance measures that reflect the real-world accomplishments of a performance-based organization.

Cecile DeMartini, WRCE

Western Farm Service in Salinas discharged all their vehicle wash water, surface cleaning wash water, and stormwater into the stormwater conveyance system, prior to 2009. The stormwater conveyance system discharges directly into the Salinas Reclamation Canal, and the facility wastewater is contaminated with pesticide and fertilizer residues to a point that created toxicity for aquatic life in the Canal. After several of my inspections and sampling events in conjunction with City of Salinas staff, the facility eliminated all surface wash water and stormwater from entering the stormwater drains and now completely captures, treats, and reuses its wastewater. I had many tough conversations along the way with the Western Farm Service staff, but we worked through our different perspectives, and it's a great feeling to know that the Salinas Reclamation Canal is one step closer to being a healthy system. This successful story empowers me to tackle the next water quality challenge.

Katie DiSimone, WRCE

I am proud of the ongoing restoration work at the Chevron San Luis Obispo Tank Farm Road property... protecting sensitive plant and animal species, mitigating the environmental impact of historic oil spills, and restoring a healthy, functioning wetlands habitat. Accomplishing all those tasks within a complex regulatory system is quite a challenge.

Donette Dunaway, EG

One of my most memorable and tangible success stories during my career with the Water Board occurred early in my tenure in the Stormwater section. During my construction site inspections, I found a Paso Robles construction project which was allowing large amounts of eroded sediment to leave the site. The site is situated at the head of one of the many unnamed tributaries to the Salinas River. I walked the length of the tributary from the construction site down, and found that a moderate sized pond had been filled with sediment, straw bales, and construction debris from the construction site. The pond was situated within native oak habitat, and showed remnants of now-buried wetland and riparian plants along the edges of the pond. I pressed for the construction site owner to improve his on-site construction erosion/sedimentation practices, and to remove debris and sediment from the pond. The pond recovered from the inundation, and I have the pleasure of glimpsing the water-filled aquatic habitat nestled in the oak forest whenever I travel Highway 46E. I have satisfaction knowing that I took the time to follow the tributary from the construction site origin, document the full impact the sediment had on the aquatic and riparian zone, and pressed for full mitigation on- and off-site. This resulted in gaining back and protecting a gem of native habitat.



October 2002 – Pond in natural drainage was filling in from erosion caused by drainage overflow and sediment from construction site upstream. Pond and riparian area (not shown) contained construction debris, which demonstrated the source of the sediment and fill material.



December 2002 – Uncontrolled runoff from construction site causes large scale erosion, continuing to fill in pond and riparian area.

Julia Dyer, ES

I'm extremely proud of my work during my years in the Timber Harvest Program. One timber plan in particular stands out in my mind, a 150-acre Boy Scout Camp named Camp Lindblad in the San Lorenzo River Watershed. During my preharvest inspection I found that the roads were in very poor condition. Most of the roads were either improperly constructed, unmaintained, poorly drained, or all three. I found evidence of erosion at almost every creek crossing. I required the timber harvest managers to improve their eroding unmaintained road network and adopt a long-term road management program. This action led to a dramatic decrease in sedimentation from the timber harvest area. The next time I inspected the site, the road system looked sensational. I could not find any evidence of erosion at their creek crossings. It feels terrific to be in a career that allows me to collaborate with the public to promote wise use of our natural resources and protect water quality.

Don Eley, EG

I'm most proud of providing a "fresh set of eyes" that identified some significant flaws in long-held Site Conceptual Model uses, and assisted the Air Force with fixing these flaws. I believe that making these Conceptual Site Model improvements/corrections sooner rather than later "pays off" by improving water quality sooner (avoid avoidable false starts) and by increasing efficiency (saves the Air Force money in the long-run).

Secondly, I'm proud of maintaining a high rate of document review, comment and approval; I usually beat the expected/scheduled regulatory review time-lines. I believe this has rubbed off on my peers here at our office, and at the Department of Toxic Substances

Control. Similarly, coordination with our DTSC counterpart has at times expedited their review cycles, and has lessened our collective workload, again making us more effective and saving the Air Force, and ultimately the taxpayers, money.

Jennifer Epp, WRCE

As a result of my regulatory work over the last three years requiring the implementing of post-construction stormwater controls in various areas of northern Monterey County, many projects have been constructed with stormwater treatment Best Management Practices (BMPs). As a result of these installed BMPs, less contaminated stormwater leaves these sites. The most common examples I have seen implemented in northern Monterey County are parking lots that drain to biofiltration areas instead of directly to the municipality's storm drain system. These biofiltration areas reduce the contaminants that are commonly found in stormwater runoff from parking lots.

Martin Fletcher, WRCE

During 2010, I worked closely with the Monterey County Health Department and the California Department of Resources Recycling to evaluate and ultimately approve the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority's innovative final cover design for the Crazy Horse Landfill. Evaluation included numerous multi-agency meetings and conference calls, test pad construction, and multiple Closure Plan and Design Report reviews. The innovative design replaces the prescriptive one-foot vegetative soil layer with a geosynthetic product that will serve as the protective layer, reducing construction environmental impacts and costs associated with importing more than 225,000 yards of soil from approximately 30 miles away. I have also been supportive of

proposed solar and landfill gas power generation for the site. The Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority began construction of the final cover during 2011, and expects to complete construction during 2012.

Sue Gerdsen, Admin

I am grateful that I work with all the folks who protect the waters of the State of California, especially our precious central coast. Some of the ways I feel that I have contributed are:

1. By handling every public record act request/file review that comes into our office.
2. As a receptionist, greeting every person that walks through the door or calls on the phones, by being friendly, enthusiastic, helpful and sending them through to the correct staff person or supervisor.
3. During and prior to board meetings, making sure our board members are supplied with nutrition and drinks to help them stay energized for our sometimes lengthy board meetings.
4. Handling every letter that is given to me as soon as possible.
5. Following through with every agenda item for which I am responsible.

When I am not at work, I often discuss how beneficial our agency is for our local water issues. I am very proud of where I work and whom I work with. Thanks for allowing me to be a contributor to this very important agency.

John Goni, WRCE

One project I worked on which gave me a great deal of satisfaction was the redevelopment of an unusable property (Brownfield) adjacent to Monterey Bay. A large construction company had a corporation/storage yard where years of placing contaminated soil had resulted in a property unusable for any type of redevelopment. I worked very hard with

the local Health Department on a very short timetable to establish specific cleanup levels and define the areas that needed cleanup. The construction company and the local redevelopment agency were able to act on the certainty provided by our timely determinations to turn an unusable parcel into a shopping center which provided a renewable revenue source for the local economy severely impacted by the closure of Fort Ord. This site is now a major shopping center with nine major tenants and provides 450 full time equivalent jobs. The cleanup activities also removed a significant mass of hydrocarbons potentially affecting Monterey Bay. The cleanup project itself was a major accomplishment with over 140,000 cubic yards of material moved and cleaned onsite in a thermal treatment unit and reused on the site as clean fill.

Mary Hamilton, ES, and Karen Worcester, Staff ES

Our Central Coast Ambient Monitoring Program has been able to show in a number of locations in our Region that real on-the-ground water quality improvement is taking place. These improvements are in response to different types of actions: changes in permit requirements, enforcement actions, regulatory requirements, land management and land use. For our monitoring program, this means we have collected enough high quality data over enough years of effort that we can show statistically significant change. Our field staff has also observed and reported illicit discharges or permit violations to Water Board staff. Most of these discharges have been completely eliminated and one resulted in a successful enforcement action.

Phil Hammer, Sr ES

As a supervisor, I have elevated the importance of the Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification Program within my unit, and have

increased resources spent on this program. As an example, staff members in my unit are more closely regulating impacts to watershed health caused by development and creek maintenance activities. This increased regulation has reduced impacts to aquatic and riparian habitat, and has increased mitigation to offset aquatic and riparian habitat impacts in various waterbodies throughout the region.

Larry Harlan, ES

I found this exercise a bit challenging. I think this is due to the fact that most of the work in my program is on the "front end" (e.g., planning) rather than the "backend" (e.g., implementation action and observed improvement in water quality). Nonetheless, here's a short description of my work.

My job in the Total Maximum Daily Load program is to develop watershed cleanup plans which specify the cleanup levels necessary to protect beneficial uses. My most recent project requires one of the largest industries in our region, irrigated agriculture, to prevent pesticides from entering into waterbodies so that these waters are no longer toxic to aquatic life. While these projects are often contentious, a representative from this industry publicly commented that the cleanup levels and actions prescribed in the cleanup plan are indeed appropriate. I consider this an accomplishment because we will most likely see the positive change that is necessary to rectify problems when one maintains ownership of and responsibility for the problem.

Hector Hernandez, WRCE

Santa Maria Landfill and Former Guadalupe Oil Field Cleanup Project: I regulated the City of Santa Maria Landfill project for several years throughout the late 1990's and early 2005. Through hard work and negotiations with City staff, our Board

approved my draft Waste Discharge Requirements which required rolling closure of the landfill facility and helped expedite cleanup of hydrocarbon impacted soils at the former Unocal Guadalupe oil field. Rolling closure is important for the landfill facility because the majority of the landfill is not equipped with a liner system and is consistently leaching volatile organic compounds to underlying groundwater and the adjacent Santa Maria River. This landfill site, at its present location, presents a significant risk to water quality and must be capped with a relatively thick final cover system.

The capping or placement of large quantities of soil on top of the landfill has helped (and will continue to help) minimize infiltration of rain water into the landfill waste and thus significantly reduced the creation of leachate and degradation of underlying groundwater and the adjacent river. Expedited closure will help the City move into a much better designed and sited state-of-the-art landfill facility.

The order and subsequent clarification approval letters authorize the City to use non-hazardous impacted soils (NHIS) as cover material for the landfill. The NHIS material is brought to the landfill from various sources, but primarily from the Guadalupe cleanup project.

These two projects (in combination), are significant accomplishments because they have helped expedite the cleanup of thousands of tons of NHIS soils from the former Guadalupe oil field, while helping to expedite the closure of the Santa Maria Landfill. The successful implementation of these two projects is important for water quality because they continue to help improve environmental conditions both at the landfill site and the extensive dune complex in which the former oil field resides.

Olin Cleanup Project: I worked on the Olin Cleanup Project for several years from late 2005 to early 2010. I'm particularly proud of my accomplishments at the Olin Project because while I was involved in the project we accomplished several significant water quality improvements, including the final closure of soil cleanup activities within the 13-acre facility. This action is significant because it means that the primary source of perchlorate has been removed.

A side benefit of our monitoring requirements for Olin was that we obtained many test results for nitrate. I was instrumental in formally notifying numerous owners of domestic drinking water wells that their water supply contained elevated levels of nitrate. This action is significant because, up until this time, these families had been drinking water from their wells without knowing that their health may be at risk. I am particularly proud of this action because people's health was involved and the well owners appreciated the notification. This action helped the stakeholders involved with the Olin cleanup to begin working towards a solution that not only involved the cleanup of perchlorate, but also addressed the high levels of nitrates being detected in domestic supply wells throughout the Llagas Subbasin.

Mike Higgins, WRCE

In 2008, the Board approved my recommended revisions to monitoring programs for four large municipal wastewater discharges into the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary; these were the Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency, Carmel Area Wastewater District, and the cities of Watsonville and Santa Cruz (Dischargers) to answer emerging questions about endocrine disrupting compounds. For the first time, the programs required the

Dischargers to monitor their effluents via High Volume Water Samplers (HVWS) and to evaluate if the discharges disrupted the endocrine systems of marine fish in laboratory bioassays. (HVWS detect pollutants limited to very low concentrations by the Ocean Plan at levels more stringent than water quality standards.) Now, the results are coming in, and samples contain no endocrine disrupting compounds above the standards. The bioassays found no endocrine disruption of the test species.

Grant Himebaugh, EG

In 2005, a groundwater plume of trichloroethylene was found to have migrated off the former Ft. Ord site into a City of Marina neighborhood. The announcement of this discovery caused much angst in the community, prompting several individuals to consider selling their homes. Not wanting to see people unnecessarily uproot their lives (something I'd seen before), I intentionally added my informed opinion to scientific facts presented at a community meeting. Because I knew that even a worse-case scenario would not expose residents to any environmental contaminants from this project, I told the community that the situation was not something to lose sleep over. The local paper quoted me, and as a result, I caught some criticism from a senior project member; but I felt strongly that I work for the community and they deserved my informed opinion. Five years later, groundwater cleanup beneath the City was completed in all but name; there's no indication that anyone moved out of fear, and there wasn't the slightest indication of an increased health risk to residents.

Dave Innis, ES

One project I've worked on over the five years I've been here is the annual Construction Stormwater Workshops. Each year I organized three workshops held in the north, central, and south

portions of our region. The 15 workshops have helped over 600 of our local members of the construction community and municipal staff to understand the regulations to comply with the General Construction Permit. My roles included securing the facilities, contributing and revising the script and presentations for our instructors, introducing the Water Board's role in complying with and enforcing the General Permit, answering questions during and after the workshops, letting the attendees know there is a person at the end of the phone or email who will listen and respond, and reviewing the surveys to improve the next presentations. These events are sponsored by CalTrans and are funded as a Supplemental Environmental Project as a result of a Water Board enforcement action. These events go a long way to benefitting water quality by reducing the tons of sediment and other pollutants that can leave construction sites in stormwater runoff and silt up our creeks.

Alison Jones, Staff ES

The Farm Bureau representative looked up from the pages she was reading and gave me a steely gaze. "You are listening too much to the environmentalists," she stated. I mentally sighed—I had heard the same comment almost verbatim from an environmental advocate the day before. Back at the office, I consigned the first draft of the "Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges from Irrigated Lands" to the recycle bin. We had to get the two sides together...

The work I am most proud of during my career at the Water Board is using the training I received from classes such as Concur's "Negotiating and Facilitating in Collaborative Processes" to bring those agricultural and environmental representatives together to work on new

regulations for farmers in 2003. Initially distrustful of both the Water Board and each other, the representatives were ultimately able to agree on substantial new requirements for agriculture, including education, farm plans, management practice implementation and monitoring. The requirements, reached by consensus and unanimously adopted by the Board in 2004, resulted in changes in both attitudes and practices among farmers. Within three years, more than 2000 agriculturalists had completed mandatory water quality education and at least 1400 farming operations had both developed farm water quality plans and were putting practices on the ground.

I was also privileged to be able to lead a team of resourceful and creative staff, who built the Water Board's first ag program from the ground up, with very limited resources. Ag team members performed at a very high level, building and then rebuilding a data management structure without any State Board technical support, educating farmers by speaking at every farm water quality short course that was offered (approximately 50), inspecting farms across the region, tracking management practice implementation and assisting the ag industry in implementing the state's largest agricultural water quality monitoring program.

Seeing in-stream water quality improvements as a result of implementation of nonpoint source practices is enormously difficult and can take years or even decades; however, by 2009, we were beginning to see some improvements, such as reductions in the quantity of summer irrigation flows in some areas. In addition, we laid the groundwork for future improvements, with a regionwide network of partners working with us to improve the Central Coast's water quality.

Matthew Keeling, WRCE

I am particularly proud of the Vision/Measurable Goals and agriculture order related work I have done over the last couple of years. It has given me a renewed sense of focus and pride in my work given we are pursuing meaningful priorities in an effort to produce tangible water quality improvements over time. More specifically, I am proud to be working on the highest priority large scale issue we have in the region, nitrate contaminated groundwater. My work with a few others in our office has allowed us to obtain more groundwater data for more of our region, and to evaluate potential sources of nitrate. These work products have informed us of our need to 1) notify those at risk of drinking contaminated water (many of whom are not aware of the risk) and 2) increase our source control efforts for the most significant potential sources.

Shanta Keeling, WRCE

I helped complete the Morro Bay Pathogen TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) Project Report which identified numeric targets for the creeks and Bay and also identified parties that would implement actions to reduce bacterial loading to the Morro Bay Watershed. I also assisted with the Morro Bay DNA Study (*Identifying the Sources of Escherichia coli Contamination to the Shellfish Growing Areas of the Morro Bay Estuary*) which identified the animal sources of bacterial loading to Morro Bay. The TMDL Project Report and DNA Study helped stakeholders start moving on implementation measures to reduce bacterial loading to the Bay with a focus on what sources to target. While the waterbodies are still not achieving the numeric targets, many implementation measures have been put into place that reduce bacterial

loading to the watershed such as riparian fencing, conservation easements, the Chorro Flats restoration project, and public education regarding proper boat waste disposal.

Carol Kolb, SEA

I have worked for the Water Board for over twenty years and I am very proud of my involvement removing and cleaning up underground tanks sites at Vandenberg Air Force Base. Since 1992, I have been involved in over 800 tank investigations and cleanup/closures. Many of the leaking tanks were left in the ground for over fifty years and date back to the 1940's when the area was Camp Cooke Army Base. The underground tank cleanup work has directly and indirectly helped protect water quality in our region by removing/remediating thousands of tons of petroleum-contaminated soil and hundreds of thousands of gallons of petroleum-contaminated groundwater in a part of our region that is heavily dependent on groundwater.

Howard Kolb, WRCE

In the early 1990's I helped secure one million dollars in funding to conduct a paired watershed study in Chumash Creek and Walters Creek. One unintended result of the paired watershed study, the property owner (Cal Poly) converted their entire operation (6000 acres) from conventional grazing to high intensity short duration grazing. They also implemented a variety of riparian improvement projects that were partially funded through state grant dollars. The best part is that all the students that now study rangeland management at Cal Poly are learning grazing management practices that are more protective of water quality and associated beneficial

uses. See before and after photographs:

Before – Chumash Creek



After:



Diane Kukol and Rich Chandler, EGs
The former Unocal Guadalupe Oil Field occupies approximately 2,700 acres within the larger, ecologically diverse Nipomo Dunes complex. The former oil field extends inland from the Pacific Ocean, and is adjacent to the Santa Maria River and estuary, thereby occupying the tail end of the Santa Maria River watershed. By enforcement of our 1998 Cleanup and Abatement

Order (CAO), we have overseen Unocal's (and later, Chevron's) excavation of all but the last few sites identified for cleanup in the CAO, and we anticipate Chevron will address the remaining CAO sites by 2012. In addition, we were instrumental in getting Unocal/Chevron to finalize and implement a disposal strategy for petroleum-contaminated soil excavated from numerous areas at the former oil field. Of the approximately 900,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil Unocal predicted would be excavated from areas identified for cleanup, approximately 770,000 cubic yards have already been hauled to the petroleum-specific portion of the Santa Maria Landfill. Chevron has also removed approximately 1.2 million gallons of free-phase petroleum-based diluent from the subsurface based on our oversight work. This physical removal of the diluent and petroleum-impacted soil has significantly reduced surface water and groundwater contamination by minimizing contact with this material around, on, and beneath the former oil field.

A somewhat indirect benefit to the Water Board-directed cleanup is that Chevron is restoring the property to its pre-oil field state by conducting the following ongoing restoration activities throughout much of the property: sand dune stabilization, native species revegetation, weed abatement, erosion control, and wetland construction - - all of which have been more successful than expected.

We continue to work cooperatively with several federal, state and local agencies to evaluate net environmental benefits that apply to water and other natural resources, as well as archaeological and native American tribal concerns.

Tom Kukol, WRCE

I drafted a permit that allowed Paso Robles to design a new wastewater treatment plant and regulate residential water softeners. The new permit will lead to much better control of toxicity, salt, and nutrients. The permit does not represent a physical change, but it should lead to one...if Paso can get its citizens to approve a sewer fee increase.

David LaCaro, ES

For many years, the community of Los Osos has been subject to groundwater pollution as a result of dense septic system use. Central Coast Water Board staff diligently worked with various agencies to develop science-based discharge requirements, facilitate project funding, and encourage sustainable wastewater treatment and recycled water reuse. The Board recently adopted my proposed waste discharge requirements for the Los Osos Wastewater Project. This approval allows the design and construction of a wastewater project that will improve local groundwater quality and allow future recycled water reuse opportunities for local agriculture and urban irrigation.

Wei Liu, EG

Two years ago due to budget reductions, my work load was dramatically increased by adding 24 Site Cleanup Program (SCP) cases whereas only two of the Underground Storage Tank (UST) cases I had handled were transferred to other case workers. Now looking back, I am particularly proud of myself for being able to take this significant increase of work load and successfully managing all of my old UST cases and new SCP cases. In addition, during the past two years, I have had not only several UST case closures, but also helped to move a few SCP cases closer to case closure, or to actually recommending case closure, including

the Ashworth Brother and Mission Linen Supply cases (with deed restrictions) in Salinas. I am especially proud of being able to move the Ashworth Brother case to recommended case closure. This case was opened in 1986, and the responsible party has repeatedly requested the case closure since 1999, when the site remediation was completed. Since low contaminant concentrations remained in the shallow aquifers, those case closure requests had been denied. Last year after requiring additional investigation/confirmation sampling to ensure the contaminant plume is limited and stable and the major deep aquifers are not and will not be impacted by the site contaminants, I worked with the responsible parties to move this case to recommended case closure conditioned upon an acceptable deed restriction being recorded. This recommended case closure, together with another two recommended case closures, are on the July 2011 Board meeting agenda for Board approval.

Sorrel Marks, SEA

All of us improve our personal effort when we understand the issues, value the resources, and recognize our respected role. I have always found complete customer service to be my most valuable contribution to water quality protection. Whether celebrating an achievement, responding to a problem, inspecting a regulated facility, participating in a workshop, or simply explaining requirements to a caller or walk-in visitor; these are opportunities to recruit one more to the service of our mission by dedicating a bit of time, effort, passion and patience.

This sounds silly, but one of my favorite projects was a small supplemental environmental project from an enforcement case, awarded to a Morro

Bay couple who implement a mutt mitt program. Though a small project, it was the best bang for the buck I've seen.

The direct water quality improvements can't be measured (preventative actions are nearly impossible to measure), but the long-term preventative actions prompted by the updated onsite implementation program (waiver) represent a satisfying achievement.

Lisa McCann, Section Manager

1. Assisting with empowering our regional monitoring program, which led to Board approval of the original CCAMP endowment of \$1 million from the Guadalupe Settlement Fund...without it, we would not have made many other water quality improvements that followed from CCAMP data, and we would not be working on the important projects we are now working on.

2. Significantly contributing to establishment of our vision and measurable goals (via contributing to process and content as a member of the leadership team and as facilitator of the staff and Board member sessions), which changed our culture and refocused staff and assignments to secure more water quality improvements and measure the improvements.

3. Contributing watershed protection requirements to Central Coast Municipal Stormwater Management Plans and better water quality improvement requirements to the Draft Agriculture Order.

Katie McNeill, ES

I've been the grant coordinator for about a year and a half and it has involved taking on projects other staff began, designing new projects in a way that will ensure tangible outcomes, as well as leading teams of staff on monitoring or planning efforts. Above all, my efforts at managing the program have involved

further aligning program efforts with our organization's goals and priorities.

1) I initiated and completed a monitoring project throughout the Santa Maria and Oso Flaco watersheds that identified the magnitude of target pesticide sources. Staff is currently using the results to develop the Santa Maria TMDLs.

2) I initiated and completed a project that established new biological and physical numeric targets for Sediment TMDLs in the San Lorenzo River. Our staff will use this information to determine when anadromous fisheries habitat is protected and to identify additional waterbodies impaired by sediment.

3) I negotiated grant agreements, such as the Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District Irrigation and Nutrient Management grant that includes implementation of irrigated agricultural BMPs on ten to twenty irrigation management sites and three to five nutrient management sites. Performance measures include tangible targets to reduce pollutant loads by 25% to impaired waterbodies within the Pajaro River. I am negotiating additional INM grants throughout the region as well.

4) I executed grant agreements, such as the Livestock and Land Manure Management Prop 50 grant that requires implementation on a minimum of 14 sites. These projects will lead to 30-80% reduction in various nonpoint source pollutant loads to impaired waterbodies.

5) I solicited and secured funding for high priority projects, such as the Morro Bay 319(h) grant, that will reduce leaching of fertilizers and pesticides in irrigation and stormwater runoff, reduce erosion and sedimentation, reduce fecal

coliform and reduce water use on at least 1,200 acres.

6) I completed a Supplemental Environmental Project on the Salinas River that removed and disposed of an old swimming pool - eliminating toxins from potentially entering waterways and negatively impacting wildlife and aquatic habitat and removing a public safety hazard. The revegetation effort is preventing an estimated annual soil loss of 15 tons/acre/year.

7) I trained Grant Managers at our office to manage their projects in a manner that addresses our highest regional priorities in the most severely impaired areas, and developed required grant agreement components and language that defines specific tangible outcomes with clear timelines.

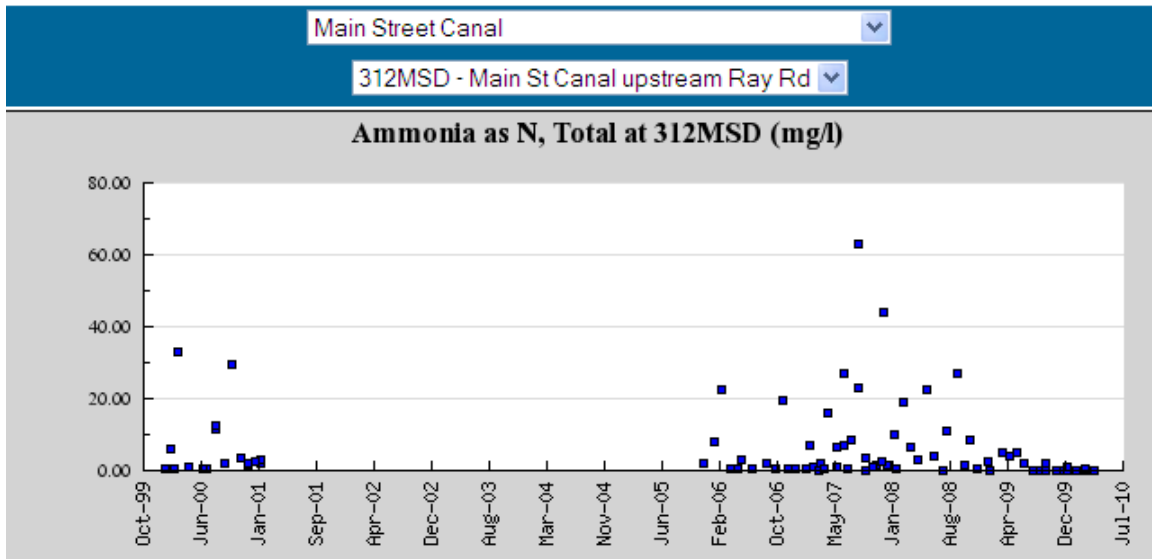
8) I developed a screening tool for the Department of Water Resources that all the Regions used in selecting state-wide Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) proposals to ensure projects (e.g., flood control, water supply) are protective of water quality, will yield improved groundwater recharge and ecosystem benefits, and will reduce pollutant loads.

9) I mobilized a team of staff liaisons for IRWM throughout the region. While this effort is in its initial stages, I am confident that our cross-program regional efforts will maximize surface water and groundwater quality as well as aquatic habitat benefits of IRWM.

Peter Meertens, ES

I am very proud that my work helped address a water quality problem with high levels of unionized ammonia (which is toxic) in Santa Maria's Main Street Canal. I am also very proud of my coworkers Mary Hamilton, Dominic Roques and Katie McNeill because it took a team of us along with the City of Santa Maria and the Ag Cooperative Monitoring Program to solve the problem. Mary identified the problem and identified possible sources. I was working in the Ag Program at the time of the problem and was able to inspect

adjacent farms, evaluate their nutrient management programs and sample their discharge. I determined that the farms were not the source of the ammonia. Katie and Dominic then worked with the city and they found that a fertilizer trucking company in the city was washing out empty trailer tanks into the city stormwater system that connected to Main Street Canal. I was able to use a landownership GIS database to identify the property owner, which Katie used to address an enforcement letter that was sent in December 2008. I recently reviewed the current monitoring data for Main Street with Mary and the ammonia levels significantly dropped (see following graph and note the decline since late '08).



John Mijares, WRCE:

One of the underground storage tank cleanup projects that I oversaw which resulted in improvement in groundwater quality is the Toro Petroleum site in Hollister, San Benito County. Soil and groundwater at the site were contaminated with petroleum hydrocarbons that leaked out from a corroded underground storage tank which was removed in 2000. The depth from ground surface to contaminated groundwater was approximately 100 feet and the site had the potential for degrading municipal wells in the area. I worked closely with the environmental consultant to delineate the extent of soil and groundwater contamination, cleanup the soil and groundwater, and successfully closed the case in 2011. Soil vapor extraction removed approximately 30,000 pounds of petroleum hydrocarbons from the subsurface and combined with natural attenuation processes resulted in meeting the Central Coast Water Board low-risk closure criteria for groundwater. Toro Petroleum Corporation currently operates the site as a bulk storage and distribution facility with

aboveground storage tanks, and a retail fueling facility.

Dan Niles, EG

I and other Land Disposal Unit staff worked with staff of the stormwater unit and NPDES permitting unit coordinating efforts to move toward a more uniform approach to protecting surface waters adjacent to our landfills. Part of this effort achieved better controls for pollutant removal from landfill stormwater discharges through increased inspections and enforcement. Our Land Disposal Unit staff also developed minimum performance standards acceptable for proposed engineered alternatives for design and construction of bottom liner systems for new landfill waste management units. The performance standards we developed are equivalent to or more protective than the typical prescriptive standards for the protection of groundwater resources.

Jill North, ES

I have been working on one of our high priority issues regarding the enforcement of proper permitting of wetland fill activities on agricultural

lands. Our region has seen an increase in riparian and wetland removal on farms since the 2006 outbreak of E. coli 0157:H7 in spinach. I have three enforcement cases on agricultural land within our region involving over 40 acres of wetlands filled and converted to farmland without permits and in violation of Clean Water Act Sections 404 and 401 and our Regional Board's Basin Plan.



Many farmers incorrectly believe that agriculture has a blanket exemption from the Clean Water Act. This is not the case in regards to converting previously unconverted wetlands into farmland. In addition to working with enforcement tools I have been networking with agricultural entities to get the word out about the Clean Water Act section 404 as it applies to wetlands and agriculture. As federal definitions of wetlands become more restrictive, it is important to note that state wetlands are usually greater in area than federal wetlands and that our Porter-Cologne authority gives us the authority to protect these sites. By taking action on state wetlands, I am exerting our Porter-Cologne authorities and letting dischargers know that removal of riparian vegetation may be in violation of our Basin Plan. Through the use of enforcement tools, two of the three wetlands mentioned above are restored or in the process of being restored and the third wetland is in the process of completing restoration plans for 20 acres of federal and state wetlands.



Through action on the three ongoing enforcement cases mentioned I am happy to have achieved or be in process of achieving the following accomplishments:

1. Informing the farming community that converting wetlands to farmland or another new use is not an exempt activity under the Clean Water Act.
2. Informing dischargers that riparian vegetation may qualify as a water of the state (state wetlands) even though they may not qualify as a federal wetland and are thus regulated by our Porter-Cologne authorities.
3. Restoring wetland functions and values to the land.

Pete Osmolovsky, EG

I work on the development of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). TMDLs are strategies to restore clean water. TMDLs are required by the federal Clean Water Act and are used to

identify all sources of point source and non-point sources of pollution at the watershed-scale. Typically, development of TMDLs allows for a holistic approach to assessing water quality problems in a watershed, and provides for faster and more focused implementation of water quality controls, particularly for non-point sources of pollution. My contributions have included developing more technically robust methods of pollutant source identification and analysis (e.g., load duration analysis, spatial analysis, remote sensing) providing for improved source characterization, and developing more efficient procedural methods to allow quicker development of TMDLs and faster implementation of water quality controls (e.g., single administrative action TMDLs). We are forwarding our first single action TMDL to the USEPA for consideration of approval. This single action addresses bacterial impairments in five different watersheds with impaired waters. and implementation will improve the bacterial quality of these creeks.

Harvey Packard, Section Manager and Enforcement Coordinator

My work involves requiring people and companies to comply with environmental rules. For example, after we found out that Morro Bay's drinking water was contaminated with nitrate, we found the people responsible and required improvements to their farming practices to reduce nitrate loading to groundwater. We expect to see improving water quality in the area as a result.

Tamara Presser, WRCE

In February 2010, I prepared a 401 Water Quality Certification for Prefumo Creek Commons, including a Target store, located at the southern boundary of the City of San Luis Obispo. The original project proposal was deficient in some important areas (e.g., incomplete

assessment of cumulative effects of full build-out along Prefumo Creek, inadequate assessment of hydromodification effects to Prefumo Creek, no proposed detention or retention of stormwater runoff, limited implementation of Low Impact Development features) with potential impacts to watershed health. We requested modifications to the proposed project prior to 401 Water Quality Certification issuance. The applicant modified the design to include vegetated features to provide treatment and some retention for runoff from most impervious surfaces and enhancement of two offsite City-owned swales to provide treatment and volume control for site run-on. The center is nearing completion and incorporates these improvements we triggered.



John Robertson, Section Manager Working with the Groundwater Section seniors, I am proud of having developed and implemented a paperless document review and distribution protocol for all staff in the Groundwater Section. In so doing, we eliminated the use of paper in nearly all documents we generate, and we have been virtually paperless in our document development and distribution for approximately 2.5 years now. This change provides a substantial paper cost savings for the office (and thereby the taxpayers) and reduces the tree, water, and hydrocarbon impacts associated with the corresponding paper and printer cartridge manufacturing, mail

delivery, and waste disposal. We are now rolling this protocol out to the whole office, which will result in greater savings and environmental benefit, *and* through this change there is the ancillary benefit of honoring the value of protecting the environment, as we *are* a part of CalEPA.

I am proud, working as a part of the Olin project team, that we are moving the cleanup along at a very rapid pace relative to other cleanup projects of this large scale and complexity. Characterization of this immense plume (more than nine miles long) is complete and design of the extraction system very close to complete. We anticipate breaking ground on the offsite groundwater treatment pipelines early this summer and seeing the system operational in early 2012. This will start the cleanup of the most impacted portions of the perchlorate plume which will ultimately restore the drinking water supply for residents affected by this discharge who are presently on bottled water.

I am REALLY proud of the collective efforts we are putting towards nitrate in drinking water (i.e., notification, dealing with sources, replacement water, etc.). As we evaluate our priorities in combination with the stakeholders sometimes view that we should do everything, safe drinking water seems like a no-brainer for one of our absolute highest priorities. I am proud that we are working towards notifying folks that might be drinking water with unsafe concentrations of nitrate, or any other constituent. I am proud that we are looking at and putting effort towards controlling sources of nitrate loading (i.e., revising individual waste discharge requirements and the agricultural order, manure management grants, etc.). I am proud that for those we know have unsafe levels of nitrate in their drinking water, we are attempting to find real

solutions to change that for the better (e.g., helping San Jerardo find funding for water supply and wastewater system upgrades).

Jon Rohrbough, WRCE

When Santa Barbara Flood Control District wanted to regrade and widen Mission Creek at Ortega Bridge in Santa Barbara to increase the Creek's capacity, District staff were concerned that replanted vegetation would not have time to reestablish itself before the winter rains washed it away. Therefore the District proposed to let the creek bed revegetate itself through natural processes. We negotiated a plan in which the District was required to revegetate the creek, but could do so the following spring, giving the replanted vegetation a full growing season to establish itself. The negotiated plan included constructing the creek bed in a way that provided some protection for plantings, and a five-year monitoring period to ensure that lost habitat functions are fully restored.

Dominic Roques, EG

In their initial application for Section 401 Water Quality Certification, the Army Corps of Engineers proposed no compensatory mitigation for impacts associated with the Santa Maria Levee Improvement Project. I informed the Corps of Water Board expectations and negotiated under their high-pressure deadline to qualify for federal funding. The Corps is now restoring 85.21 acres of disturbed areas to native plants, including approximately 12.14 acres of created habitat within the Santa Maria River Corridor that would not otherwise be created.

Chris Rose, Sr ES

In 2006, I developed and the Regional Board approved the Chorro Creek nutrient and dissolved oxygen Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). Chorro Creek was listed as impaired on the

Clean Water Act 303(d) list due to nutrients and dissolved oxygen. Nutrient loading, lack of streamside canopy, and other factors were causing excessive aquatic algae, which was contributing to low dissolved oxygen in Chorro Creek. The implementation measures described in the TMDL utilized both existing and new efforts. I demonstrated in the TMDL document that existing efforts would play a key role in resolving the dissolved oxygen impairment, if we just gave them a little time to work. The existing efforts included increasing streamside vegetation along Chorro Creek and its tributaries, which were in place to address sediment and bacteria impairments in the watershed. The increase in streamside vegetation would serve not only to reduce sediment and bacteria loading in Chorro Creek, but also decrease stream temperature and increase dissolved oxygen. Therefore, these existing implementation efforts provided efficiency insofar as several water quality problems were simultaneously being addressed. New implementation efforts included a wastewater treatment plant upgrade to their treatment process, resulting in a reduction of nitrogen loading into Chorro Creek. These combined efforts resulted in Chorro Creek being delisted as impaired for dissolved oxygen on the 2010 303(d) list. We are also making progress on the sediment and bacteria impairments and will continue to monitor their progress. I believe the progress we've made in addressing these water quality problems accentuates the vital role that streamside vegetation plays in protecting water quality and aquatic habitat.

Elaine Sahl, ES,

In late September 2010, we initiated efforts with the State Water Resources Control Board Groundwater Ambient Monitoring and Assessment (GAMA) Program and a State Contractor, to

create an electronic enrollment system that would meet the needs of the Agricultural Regulatory Program. In less than two months, by mid November 2010, we developed a complete database and user friendly front end and it was up and running. This electronic enrollment system allows growers to complete and submit the required enrollment form electronically, through an internet site located within Geotracker.

Three months after going live with the electronic enrollment system and notifying growers of the requirement to update their information electronically, the Water Board:

- Received updated enrollment information for approximately 330,000 irrigated acres (76% of all irrigated acreage).
- Received updated enrollment information for approximately 1,200 farming operations (71% of all currently enrolled farming operations).
- Provided assistance to growers that amounted to over 1,100 phone calls, 150 emails, 200 grower appointments, and multiple presentations at grower meetings.
- Analyzed and delivered updated enrollment information to Central Coast Preservation, Inc. for the Cooperative Monitoring Program (CMP) billing - this data was delivered just two business days after the enrollment submittal deadline.

Overall, the updates made to the Agricultural Regulatory Program's enrollment data management system are incredible. It has become an easy, efficient, and convenient tool for growers to provide their enrollment information, allows Water Board staff the ability to

After reading all the above and then trying to delve deeper to a particular project, permit, or outcome - I found that no one outcome, in particular, stands out to me as more important than the others. Collectively, they are all meaningful. So, focused on this assignment, I tried to "answer a question from a person who doesn't know what you do, and you want to give your best example of what you've accomplished."

Here is what I would say to that person: In my job at the Central Coast Water Board, I get to do what I love to do. I get to use my knowledge and technical expertise to protect water quality on the Central Coast for present and future generations. I get to work with a great team of people to identify priorities, align efforts, advance change, and empower each other to use our best skills and continuously improve, so that we can maximize our ability to protect water quality in the best way possible.

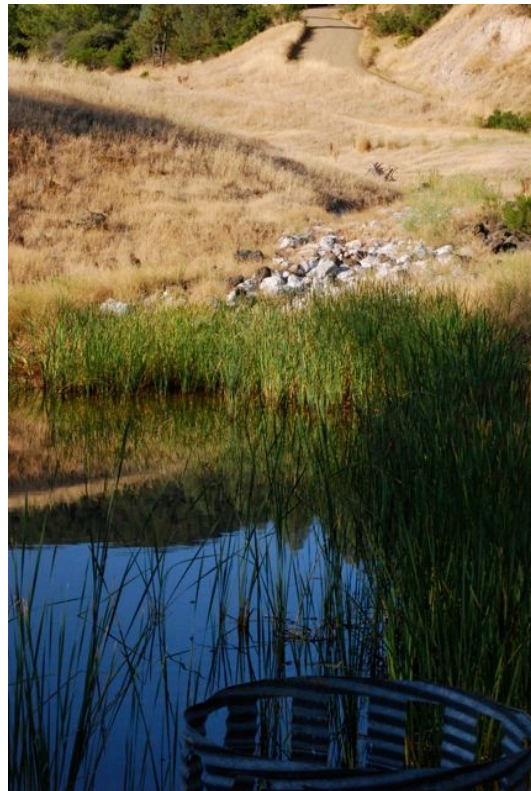
David Schwartzbart, EG
The Buena Vista and Klau Mines contaminated Las Tablas Creek and Lake Nacimiento with mercury and other metals and acids for decades, resulting in degradation and loss of some of those waters' beneficial uses. After a period of stagnation, the case was assigned to me in the early 1990s. I spearheaded efforts by multiple agencies that resulted in culpability of the owner/operator through state and federal civil and criminal courts, and escalation of the case to inclusion on the National Priorities List as a federal Superfund site. USEPA now controls the sites and has drastically reduced or stopped continuing pollution by the mines with interim controls, has almost completed thorough investigation and characterization of cumulative watershed (surface and groundwater)

impacts, and will eventually remediate all environmental impacts.

Buena Vista Mine Acid Mine Drainage:



After remediation:



Also, my project management of multiple cases has stopped ongoing pollution and resulted in removal of hundreds of pounds or more of pollutants (solvents, fuels, metals, and other) from groundwater, and to lesser extent, from surface water, restoring current and future beneficial uses of those waters.

Kristina Seley, WRCE

I'm proud of my contributions to help prepare the "General Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Specific Types of Discharges" permit. Instead of staff writing a permit and monitoring plan for each groundwater cleanup site that proposes to inject chemicals for in-situ cleanup, dischargers can easily enroll in this general waiver. I've enrolled at least five cleanup sites in this general waiver, which resulted in cleanup of groundwater pollution sooner with more efficient use of staff time. Other staff members have enrolled many more in this general waiver. Additionally, the detail included in the conditioned waiver in regards to what is required (analytical sampling, approved corrective action plan, etc.) has helped each staff person be more consistent in what they require from the discharger.

Sheila Soderberg, Sr EG

Unocal (now Chevron), many agencies, and many consultants (even academics) have worked together on the Guadalupe Oilfield project. By using a workgroup approach, the parties developed strategies for how to solve water quality problems. I am proud to have been part of that collaborative effort - whether as the staff person assigned to the project or the supervisor. Unocal/Chevron continues to implement many of these strategies.

During furloughs when our staff time was cut by 15%, all groundwater program staff developed prioritization criteria, which evaluated a site's "risk" to human health and the environment. Site Cleanup Program (SCP) and Department of Defense (DoD) staff ranked all their cases based on three criteria. As the SCP/DoD program manager, I reassigned work to ensure that

we worked on the highest risk or highest priority cases despite the work force reduction. We continue to prioritize our cases annually to evaluate if risk is being reduced. We measure the number of cases we close each year as well as the number of sites moved into remediation. (Not a water quality kudo, but this ranking helped me distribute work fairly among staff and evaluate if staff were meeting office/program performance expectations.)

I'm glad I was able to facilitate funding to remove Ethyl Perry's underground tanks in San Miguel. We successfully asked the board to re-direct penalties (from BP-Mobil) to another project which was to remove the tanks at Ethyl Perry's property. The leaking tanks were removed, which prevented further groundwater degradation.

Todd Stanley, WRCE

I'm proud of my contributions to enforcement actions that have reduced oil spills to our surface waters and the mishandling of associated residual waste materials. I also take pride in my accomplishments to improve from the earliest stages the quality and credibility of our staff's enforcement actions to more effectively engage waste dischargers to correct violations and protect water quality, and to fortify our Board's position in cases where higher level enforcement is required to accomplish our mission.

Dean Thomas, EG

My story comes from the Jolon Road Landfill closure project. I worked with the owner to incorporate an innovative earthen (rather than plastic) landfill cover and phytoremediation cleanup action for solvents detected in groundwater. We required that the cover demonstrate water-tight performance both in the engineered design and subsequent effectiveness

monitoring (using soil-moisture probes). The groundwater cleanup incorporates salt resistant eucalyptus trees that draw shallow solvent-laden groundwater from weathered bedrock at the toe of the landfill. Solvent concentrations have declined in groundwater since the planting of trees and installation of the earthen cover, indicating successful cover/cleanup actions that have the added benefit of a lesser carbon footprint compared to conventional systems.



Photo looking east taken during final cover inspection at Jolon Rd. Landfill in January 2008. Healthy cover growth in foreground, and view of phytoremediation pilot study plot between the sediment retention basin and top deck.



2011 photo: close up of the Jolon Road Landfill phytoremediation pilot study, looking south-southwest, showing healthy eucalyptus trees. These trees were taken off of irrigation two years prior but still survive by tapping into shallow (but high in TDS) groundwater.

Michael Thomas, Assistant Executive Officer

I am proud of the work we have done to improve our organization over the past few years, to become more focused on achieving tangible results on the most important issues we face, like polluted drinking water and loss of aquatic habitat. The challenges are often overwhelming, and people who work here rise to that challenge everyday. Whether those challenges come from special interest groups, political pressure, technical complexity, or the heart wrenching conditions that low income residents are forced to live under, the people who work here deal directly with these challenges, and we are often on the leading edge of our work.

I am helping define our priorities and the actions we will take on those priorities, at all levels of the organization, and I am working to align everything we do with our priorities. For example:

We established our Low Impact Development Initiative, which is on the

forefront of preventing and mitigating the physical and biological impacts from urbanization.

We are defining and addressing the severe water quality impacts from irrigated agriculture, which may be the most challenging work we've ever done.

We are developing Basin Plan Amendments for groundwater and aquatic habitat to proactively prevent degradation in the first place, because it is literally impossible to "fix" degradation faster than it occurs.

We are continuing to improve our Central Coast Monitoring Program to provide user friendly access to data that shows the condition of our water resources. This is one of the leading programs of its kind— anywhere.

We are more fully realizing the importance of groundwater contamination and threats to human health on the Central Coast, and the importance of prioritizing our efforts to notify residents at risk and to resolve the most severe pollution cases.

We are prioritizing our work all across the organization, in every unit, and we are aligning our work with our priorities. We are continuously asking ourselves tough questions about whether we are doing the most important work in the most effective way, and we continuously make adjustments to achieve greater tangible results.

I am proud to work with such an outstanding team of people who have the courage to take on these challenges and make a real-world difference.

Thea Tryon, Senior EG

Two years ago, I realized that my land disposal program staff members were struggling with their ability to address all

of the issues and program commitments associated with their assigned landfill sites. They are very dedicated staff, and therefore found it very stressful that they could not manage all of their sites effectively. So, understanding the reality that we can't do it all, I lead the landfill group in a prioritizing effort to help focus our work on the issues and sites that pose the greatest threat to water quality. We came up with a prioritization strategy that scored each landfill based on threat to water quality, natural siting factors, waste volume and size, status of site (active versus closed), whether engineered corrective actions are in place, public and organizational interests, and whether there were upcoming Board meeting actions. Based on the final score of each landfill, we can now easily identify the highest and lowest priority work. I directed staff members to focus their time on the high and medium priority sites.

I assigned the remaining low priority sites to myself which allows me the ability to evaluate whether a given issue at one of these low priority sites is a high enough priority to switch out time spent on a medium priority site on which other staff are currently working. In addition to us working on the highest priority work, the prioritization effort has created a sense of focus and direction in our group. We are confident that through the prioritization effort that we are now getting the biggest bang for our buck in terms of our resources being focused on improving water quality. For example, the prioritization effort helped identify a few sites that needed more attention than we were giving them because there was no action on those particular sites. I have also presented our prioritization efforts to other regional program managers and state board staff. Some of the prioritization strategies are now being considered as

a tool for developing performance measures for the State.

Peter von Langen, EG

I helped with the Parsons Slough sill project in Elkhorn Slough, a major undertaking of the Tidal Wetland Project (TWP), designed to slow ebb tide currents that are responsible for eroding slough marshes and the soft mud habitat on the slough bed. The TWP is a collaborative effort between coastal resource managers, representatives from key regulatory and jurisdictional entities, leaders of conservation organizations, scientific experts, and community members to develop and implement strategies to conserve and restore estuarine habitats in the Elkhorn Slough watershed.

<http://www.elkhornslough.org/tidalwetland/parsons.htm>

As the Central Coast Water Board representative on both the TWP's Strategic Planning Team and Science Panel, I participated with more than 100 scientists, managers and conservationists to study, understand, design, and permit a solution for the habitat changes caused by increased erosion in Elkhorn Slough and Parson's Slough. The TWP eventually focused on the Parsons Slough sill as the most cost effective way to reduce the erosive force of the currents. The implementation of the sill required 14 permits from state, federal and local agencies, including the Central Coast Water Board. I helped guide scientists through the regulatory permitting process and streamlined the project's 401 Water Quality Certification to help the applicant construct the project with time critical funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The newly constructed sill is expected to significantly reduce the erosive force of the currents in Parsons Slough and Elkhorn Slough, slowing tidal scour and tidal marsh dieback.

This will conserve these threatened habitats that play such a major role in Elkhorn Slough. Wetlands and wildlife will be monitored to study the impact of the sill and change in tidal flow and this research will provide to assist further regulatory decision making for potential future large scale restoration projects in Elkhorn Slough and elsewhere.

Other Miscellaneous Stories
(Anonymous):

I was assigned the Santa Maria River Watershed (including Nipomo and Oso Flaco) to develop a strategy to implement the Irrigated Agriculture Order in that watershed. This assignment provided a great opportunity to delve into the specific watershed water quality issues and to understand the impairments and learn who the various growers are and their farming operations. I interviewed other Water Board program staff (TMDL, CCAMP, Stormwater) to understand their perspective on watershed issues when developing the strategy. I teamed with the Cooperative Monitoring Program (CMP) technical staff, the City of Santa Maria's stormwater staff, and other Ag Program staff in the field to learn the CMP monitoring locations and water body locations, and observe firsthand some of the local issues relevant to the water problems. On-the-ground knowledge about the watershed will help with the big picture and water quality priorities in the watershed and improvements.

I work on drafting the requirements, targets, and milestones that growers will need to meet, to protect water quality. Growers will need to reduce the excessive use and over-applications of fertilizers and pesticides to comply with the requirements and achieve the targets proposed, and by doing that, we will see lesser amounts of chemicals in surface and groundwater. Also, our

agency, and myself more specifically, are one of the first ones nationwide, who drafted the first steps and meaningful changes required on agricultural land, of a long term program aimed to first restore and ultimately protect the groundwater resources.

The technical services providers in our region have already started to target their presentations and educational events to help growers comply with the proposed requirements. I can say that the work I have done, has changed the level of education and the topics presented to the agricultural community. Now more than ever, the meetings and discussions are focusing on real field/ground practices, and on measures and management changes that not only will improve water quality, but might turn farming into a more sustainable activity on the Central Coast.

Roger Briggs, EO

What am I proud of in my work? As I reflect on this question, I am reminded that many of our water quality problems are very long term in their development and in their solutions. Here is one longer term issue in which I played a hand more directly, although these are projects that involve literally thousands of people, everyone with their unique individual roles:

In college, I learned of the extremely damaging seawater intrusion in the Salinas Valley. It was literally a text book case of an abused groundwater basin, what we would now call unsustainable use of the watershed. A

short time later, as a line staffer in our office, I worked extensively with the Monterey Regional agency and its consultants on first the planning and design (as our grant coordinator) of the Monterey Regional system and later, on the companion recycling project, which now beneficially reuses water that used to be wasted to the ocean, and is the world's largest water recycling facility designed for raw food crop irrigation. This project has the huge water quality and watershed health benefit of being a large portion (nearly half) of the solution to seawater intrusion in the Salinas Valley. With the recycled project now coupled with the more recent Salinas Valley Water Project, the long standing and damaging groundwater basin overdraft is eliminated – recharge should now be sufficient to thwart further advancement of seawater intrusion. Time will tell regarding this delicate balance and increased water use efficiency will be required to sustain and improve this situation.

Now, many years after starting work in our noble field of environmental protection, I take great pride in performing a leadership role with a group of people that are dedicated to improving and protecting the water and resources in our region (and in some cases, the entire state), and that this group has accomplished all the real world results and improvements that are described in these individual stories. Water is our lifeblood. I am so fortunate to be in a place where we are identifying the most important water issues and taking actions to tackle them, even when the problems and solutions are outside the traditional Regional Board roles. I greatly appreciate being able to work in such a meaningful way on one of the most important aspects of everyone's life, water, and that I am able to do so with such a dedicated, talented team of staff people. Of equal importance, we are able to work with

such a dedicated group of Board members who volunteer so much of their time for the good of our region.



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