STATE OF CALIFORNIA
CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
CENTRAL COAST REGION

STAFF REPORT FOR REGULAR MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 9, 2005

Prepared on August 18, 2005

ITEM NUMBER: 24

SUBJECT: WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN - TRIENNIAL REVIEW PRIORITY LIST

SUMMARY

The Central Coast Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan) guides activities of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Coast Water Board, also referred to as Regional Board in Basin Plan) and staff by identifying beneficial uses, requiring implementation plans for the protection of beneficial uses, monitoring to ensure protection of beneficial uses, and setting water quality objectives and criteria.

The purpose of the Triennial Review Priority List process is to identify and prioritize proposed basin plan amendments in the Central Coast Region for use in updating the Basin Plan. Staff have developed and prioritized a preliminary list of amendments, considering United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) requests, directives and mandates; State Water Resources Control Board amendments; Central Coast Water Board staff suggestions; Watershed Management Initiative revisions; comments from interested persons and organizations on previously identified issues; and staff resource availability.

The 2005 proposed Triennial Review Priority List is presented to the Board for review and consideration.

Through approval of the list, staff will be able to evaluate and develop proposed Basin Plan amendments that will best facilitate water quality protection and improvement. For example, our proposed approach for evaluation of the nutrient water quality objectives should improve our ability to measure water quality and riparian habitat together and demonstrate that our waterbodies are operating as functional ecosystems. Similarly, adding a riparian corridor protection policy to the Basin Plan will enhance our ability to protect and restore riparian habitats. More riparian habitat will improve water quality conditions for multiple beneficial uses.

These triennial review priorities are based on our desire to strengthen legal standards and policies towards achievement of tangible water quality results. We will modify the priorities as needed to make sure we are achieving measurable results.

DISCUSSION

The Federal Clean Water Act (Section 303 (c)) and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act require the Basin Plan to be reviewed and updated periodically (at a minimum every three years). The Central Coast Water Board review process includes identification of proposed amendments that may enhance water quality protection, and presentation of a priority list of amendments at a public hearing. The priority list of proposed amendments, referred to as the Triennial Review Priority List, includes:

- A (generalized) ranking of proposed water quality amendments;
- A brief description of each proposed water quality amendment;
- Identification of proposed water quality amendments that can be completed with existing resource allocations over a three-year period and
- Identification of proposed water quality amendments requiring additional resources to complete.

Following public hearing and adoption of the Triennial Review Priority List, Central Coast Water Board staff investigate, develop and prioritize a detailed work plan for each proposed amendment, and then determine the need for a Basin Plan amendment[1]. Investigation of a potential amendment on the Triennial Review Priority List does not necessarily mean a revision of the Basin Plan will be recommended to the Board. Additionally, priority amendments that result in the development of a proposed Basin Plan amendment do not become effective until approved by the Central Coast Water Board, the State Board, and the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) [Administrative Procedures Act, Government Code ss11340 et seq.]. Surface water standards also require the approval of the USEPA to become effective.

The draft 2005 Triennial Review Priority List of proposed amendments to be presented for Board review and consideration is shown in Attachment A. As noted above, amendments on the list were developed in consideration of State Water Resources Control Board amendments, Central Coast Water Board staff suggestions, Watershed Management Initiative revisions, USEPA requests/directives/mandates, input from other interested persons/organizations, and staff resource availability. Additionally, on August 23rd 2004 Central Coast Water Board staff held an internal meeting to discuss how existing staff efforts and expertise could support evaluation and implementation of the proposed Triennial Review Priority List. The draft 2005 Triennial Review Priority List was revised to address Board staff concerns.

Staff requested public input in a September 28, 2004 letter (Attachment D) to individuals and organizations on the Basin Plan mailing list. A Notice of Public Hearing was also published in several newspapers throughout the Central Coast Region at approximately the same time. Staff circulated the proposed Triennial Review Priority List for public comment on April 13, 2005.

[1] Basin Plan amendments can also occur for issues not identified during the Triennial Review. For example, amendments can occur for urgent issues resulting from new legislation or other sources.

2001-2004 Basin Planning Activities

A status report of high priority Basin Plan tasks previously identified by the Central Coast Water Board during the 2001 Triennial Review process (2001 Triennial Review Priority List - Attachment B) is presented below. Basin Planning activities performed over the last three years are also discussed below:

1. Develop Region-Wide Nonpoint Source Management Measures (Priority One, 2001 Triennial Review Priority List)

The Central Coast Water Board approved a Region-Wide Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program on December 13, 2002. The Administrative Record was shipped to Sacramento on April 7, 2003. During May 2003, State Board staff indicated that the State nonpoint source program had not yet completed the implementation policy document as required by the approved Non-Point Source (NPS) plan. State Board staff were concerned that approval of our amendment (incorporating the approved State program) would become "de facto" regulation in the absence of the State implementation policy.

On June 16, 2003 State Board Management requested that we voluntarily withdraw our item pending development and approval of the State policy. We complied with this request in a letter dated July 7, 2003.

The State Board subsequently approved the "Policy for Implementation and Enforcement of the Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program" on May 20, 2004. Office of Administrative Law approved the policy on August 27, 2004. In addition to revisions reflecting the "Policy for Implementation and Enforcement of the Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program", the Basin Plan will also be revised to include changes in the storm water program (Phase II) and the new agriculture waiver program.

2. Develop Riparian Corridor Protection Policy

The Central Coast Water Board approved the Riparian Corridor Protection Policy on December 13, 2002 as part of the Region-Wide Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program. This item will

be revised concurrent with revisions to the Region-Wide Nonpoint Source Management Measures.

3. Develop a regional onsite wastewater management policy consistent with AB 885.

From April through August 2001, State Board staff developed the approach to address AB 885 by developing draft statewide minimum standards for onsite sewage treatment systems. In September 2001, State Board staff procured contract facilitation services to help implement State Board actions to address AB 885. From November 2001 through October 23, 2002, State and Central Coast Water Board staff held bi-weekly technical advisory committee (TAC) meetings to solicit public input and address the tasks of AB 885. State Board staff, with input from Central Coast Water Board staff, prepared and distributed draft regulations to meeting participants for additional review and comment.

Subsequent to the October 23, 2002 TAC meeting, a minority report was prepared March 2003 by various AB 885 participants that did not support the State's draft regulations. State Board staff elected to revise the draft regulations to address the concerns identified in the minority report prior to release of the draft regulations for public review.

The draft regulations were prepared, reviewed by State Board Office of Administrative Law, revised by State Board staff, and released on May 19, 2004. State Board and Central Coast Water Board staff had two additional meetings (June 8 and June 21, 2004) to review and comment on the draft regulations. The State Water Resources Control Board released the draft regulations for public review April 22, 2005. In addition to public review, the State must comply with the California Environmental Quality Act and present the proposed regulations to the State Board for review and potential adoption.

Central Coast Water Board staff has not pursued amendment of the Basin Plan for onsite wastewater management pending the outcome of the AB 885 process.

4. Develop region-wide nutrient criteria consistent with Federal strategy and State efforts to develop criteria.

Since 2001 Central Coast Water Board staff have been working with other State staff to clearly define what is considered a nutrient-caused impairment in surface water and provide a scientifically defensible rationale for Clean Water Act §303(d) listing/delisting decisions. Working with Tetra Tech (consultants), modeling techniques have been developed that provide Central Coast Water Board staff with a first step toward delineating important factors to control eutrophication in surface waters.

Tetratech, on contract to USEPA, authored the *2003 Progress Report – Ecoregion 6, Pilot study for the Development of Nutrient Criteria* evaluating the approach for developing nutrient objectives laid out in the U. S. EPA Region IX Nutrient Criteria Development Work Plan. Central Coast Region Water Board staff received the report on November 3, 2003. The report provided preliminary results regarding the feasibility of developing nutrient criteria for varied landscapes and the basic framework for continued nutrient criteria development.

Two follow up meetings (February 25 and May 25, 2004) were held to discuss the *2003 Progress Report – Ecoregion 6, Pilot study for the Development of Nutrient Criteria,* and to determine a continuing course of action for developing nutrient objectives.

The Pilot Study and our discussions resulted in a preliminary model that uses both data and estimated values to classify waters into three categories: Tier I (nutrient impairment unlikely), Tier II (nutrient impairment possible) and Tier III (nutrient impairment very likely). No numeric nutrient criteria resulted from this effort.

In conjunction with Federal and State efforts, Central Coast Water Board staff developed a "Multi-Metric Biostimulatory Risk Exposure Index" to evaluate surface water sites based on various water quality parameters (nutrients, pH, dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll a, flora, and turbidity). We will also evaluate the inclusion of other physical habitat parameters, such as shade, buffer zones, pebble count, depth, flow, temperature, etc. The intent of the Index is to provide a screening tool that considers simultaneous stressor, responder, and indicator variables. This is a new approach based on the

understanding that we cannot separate water quality from habitat quality. This may be a useful tool in developing nutrient criteria to improve identification of water quality and habitat impairments and measure improvements.

5. Incorporate an Enterococcus objective for water contact recreation in ocean waters, an *E. coli* objective for water contact recreation in surface waters, and a fecal coliform objective for shellfish harvesting.

Staff prepared a draft staff report in Spring 0f 2004 and held a scoping meeting with the general public in October 2004. Board staff is reviewing data and other relevant information to determine if waters designated for shellfish harvesting support the shellfish beneficial use. The bacteria objectives and a review of the shellfish beneficial uses should be presented to the Board in 2005.

6. Create a Basin Plan Index and Glossary.

Staff completed a Basin Plan Index in April 2002. The Index is available on the Central Coast Water Board webpage at:
http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb3/BasinPlan
Staff proposes to include the Index (revised as necessary) with the next printing of the Basin Plan.

Staff also completed a Glossary in April 2002. For consistency, staff decided to link to the State Board Glossary "Water Words" rather than publish an independent glossary for the Central Coast Region.

7. Revise Chapter 6 of Basin Plan to add a Central Coast Ambient Monitoring Program description, a groundwater monitoring and assessment component, and a monitoring schedule.

The Central Coast Water Board approved the Chapter 6 revision that addressed both surface and ground water monitoring on December 6, 2002. The State Office of Administrative Law approved the Chapter 6 revision on December 13, 2003. The United States Environmental Protection Agency has not yet responded to the State regarding this amendment even though they regularly comment on Basin Plan amendments

8. Update Groundwater Basin objectives and configurations.

Staff is drafting a report describing revised basin configurations consistent with Department of Water Resources Bulletin 118. Staff held a scoping meeting in October 2004 and intends to move forward with this project in 2005. Staff will propose new groundwater objectives based on the revised groundwater basin boundary definitions and current constituent health, ecological and nuisance information.

9. Develop Draft Oil Field Soil Disposal/Storage and Beneficial Use Policy

Using Spills, Leaks, Investigations and Cleanups (SLIC) general funding, staff drafted an "oil field impacted soils beneficial use draft policy" and an "oil field waste soil disposal/storage draft policy." This satisfies the previous Triennial Priority List Groundwater Objective to develop an oil field waste policy and is a step toward a regional soil cleanup and disposal policy and is scheduled to go before the Central Coast Water Board September 9, 2005.

All other groundwater tasks identified on the 2001 Triennial Review List were not addressed due to limited staff resources.

10. Adopt Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and Implementation Plans.

With TMDL program funds, staff developed the following TMDLs as Basin Plan amendments:

a. San Lorenzo River sediment TMDL
b. Morro Bay sediment TMDL
c. Morro Bay pathogens TMDL
d. San Luis Obispo Creek pathogen TMDL

Basin planning staff work included the following:

- Program management and supervision
- Collection and preliminary assessment of nitrate data in groundwater.
- Water quality assessment

  Staff conducted data assessment activities through the Central Coast

Water Board Central Coast Ambient Monitoring Program (CCAMP) – Monitoring products include the CCAMP database and website (http://www.ccamp.org/), Pajaro River Watershed Characterization Report 1998, Pajaro River Watershed 1998 Summary of Findings (May 2003), Salinas River Watershed Characterization 1999, and 1998 Coastal Confluences Sediment Chemistry Assessment.

- Basin Plan website development.

- Consideration of an amendment to address discharges of wastewater to the ocean that are not treated to full secondary levels.

  Staff conducted a review of regulations, policies, and the literature to evaluate a potential Basin Plan amendment requiring wastewater treatment works (public and private) to achieve secondary treatment for all ocean discharges.

  There are two existing ocean discharges in the Central Coast Region that do not treat wastewater to secondary levels: Goleta Sanitary District and the City of Morro Bay/ Cayucos Sanitary District.

  On July 12, 2002 the Central Coast Water Board (Resolution N. R3-2002-0077) denied re-issuance of NPDES permit No. CA0048160 that allowed the Goleta Sanitary District to discharge wastewater treated to less than secondary levels. Goleta Sanitary District petitioned the Central Coast Water Board action to the State Water Resources Control Board. The petition was dismissed on January 22, 2004. On November 19, 2004, Goleta Sanitary District agreed to upgrade its treatment facility to secondary within 10 years.

  On June 2004, the Central Coast Water Board sent the City of Morro Bay and Cayucos Sanitary District a letter supporting their commitment to a process to upgrade the Morro Bay/Cayucos Wastewater Treatment Plant to meet secondary treatment standards. On June 14, 2005 the City proposed a 9½-year timeline for the upgrade and negotiations are proceeding with staff to reduce that timeframe prior to re-issuance of their 301(h) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit.

  On May 12, 2004, staff sent a letter to the State Board regarding the California Ocean Plan (Ocean Plan) – Triennial Review. Staff requested that State Board consider amending the suspended solids effluent limitation in Table A of the Ocean Plan to be consistent with the USEPA promulgated minimum level of suspended solids effluent quality attainable by secondary treatment in 40 CFR 133.102.

  Development of an amendment to the Central Coast Basin Plan requiring secondary treatment for all ocean discharges from wastewater treatment works (public and private) has not been pursued because the only two dischargers on the Central Coast have agreed to upgrade their facilities to full secondary level treatment by specific dates.

- Data analysis and support for development of the agriculture waiver program.

Future Staff Resources

The preliminary 2005 Triennial Review Priority List in Attachment A includes a column entitled "Estimated Staff Time (months/year and Board meeting)." For some topics, two different time periods are provided. The first number provides the staff time (months per year) required to perform the task. The second number provides the total time frame to bring the staff recommended amendment to the Central Coast Water Board (see Table 1). For example, lengthy time frames are necessary when there is significant involvement from other individuals or organizations (such as developing Region wide non-point source implementation measures) or when monitoring efforts are needed to complete a task.

With existing staff resources, staff estimates proposed priority surface water tasks 1 through 10 identified on the 2005 Triennial Review Priority List can be completed in the next three years. Similarly, staff estimates proposed priority groundwater tasks 1 and 3 can be completed in the next three years. Proposed priority groundwater task 2.b. is projected to be completed in 2009. Task 2.a. is scheduled for completion by early 2006. Additional Basin Plan tasks (not proposed as high priority tasks) listed on pages 5 and 6 of Attachment A cannot be completed unless additional staff resources become available or the Board rearranges the recommended priorities.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND STAFF RESPONSE

Staff received public comments from the following on the dates indicated:

1. Santa Clara Valley Water District, May 27, 2005.
2. San Benito County Water District, May 27, 2005.
3. Santa Barbara Channel Keeper, May 31, 2005.
4. City of Santa Cruz, May 31, 2005.

Comments and Responses- Santa Clara Valley Water District

Comment 1: *Santa Clara Valley Water District (District) staff have reviewed your Basin Plan Triennial Review Priority List. There are several issues identified on the priority list that may affect the District's management of water resources, particularly the groundwater basin configuration and groundwater water quality objectives. We would like to request the opportunity to work with the Regional Board Staff during the development of the specific proposals for these issues, and possibly others that may impact management of our water resources.*

Staff Response: Staff appreciates the opportunity to work with the Santa Clara Valley Water District during the development of any Basin Plan updates related to groundwater resources. The groundwater basin configuration update and regional groundwater objectives update are scheduled for the December 2005 Regional Water Board meeting. Basin specific groundwater objectives are scheduled for the December 2009 Regional Water Board meeting.

Comments and Responses- San Benito County Water District

Comment 2: *The San Benito County Water District ("Water District") is pleased to provide comments to the Regional Water Quality Control Board concerning the Triennial Review Priority List. The mission of the Water District is to preserve the economic and environmental wealth and well being of San Benito County through the control, management and conservation of waters, and the provision of water services, in a practical, cost-effective and responsible manner. The Water District shares an interest with the Regional Board in ensuring that the water quality objectives adopted for the waters of San Benito County are based on the best available data, and appropriately protect this valuable resource.*

The Water District looks forward to working with the Regional Board in the coming months to provide information concerning water quality conditions in San Benito County. The Water District believes that some of the objectives in the Basin Plan for San Benito County waters do not accurately reflect existing water quality. For example, the current Basin Plan objectives for TDS in groundwater in the Pajaro River sub-basin are higher than the actual TDS levels. Similarly, the Basin Plan objectives for TDS in surface water in the San Benito River appear to overstate existing TDS levels. Accordingly, the Basin Plan numeric objectives for TDS in these waters within San Benito County should be lowered.

In the coming months, the Water District will be working to collect and summarize the relevant information for the benefit of the Regional Board, in support of the Regional Board's effort to update the objectives in the Basin Plan. The Water District may also provide information concerning configuration of local basins. Water District staff and consultants will be contacting you to determine how best to provide useful assistance. In the interim, if you have any questions, please contact me.

Staff Response: Staff appreciates the opportunity to work with the San Benito County Water District to update surface water and groundwater objectives that implement the State's Antidegradation Policy (State Board Resolution number 68-16). We have some of the water quality

data referenced in your comment. We look forward to updating our data with your latest information as we progress toward specific basin objectives development. Please note the proposed timing of the groundwater objectives in the staff response to Comment 1.

Comments and Responses- Santa Barbara Channelkeeper

The following are staff's responses to comments made by Santa Barbara Channelkeeper (Channelkeeper). Each comment from Channelkeeper is addressed below in a slightly revised order to minimize repetitiveness in the staff responses. Channelkeeper's letter states:

Comment 3: (Channelkeeper 1.) *Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board's Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan) Draft 2005 Triennial Review Priority List. The following is a list of issues that Santa Barbara Channelkeeper believes are appropriate for prioritization during the Board's upcoming Triennial Review (in no particular order). Channelkeeper recommends that, to better reflect Federal and State requirements and to ensure the protection of all beneficial uses in our region, the following tasks be included in the 2005 Triennial Review Priority List:*

Translate existing narrative Water Quality Objectives (WQOs), such as for oil and grease, suspended material, toxicity and pesticides, which are vague and subjective, into enforceable, numeric WQOs, consistent with recent Cal EPA policy directives.

Staff Response: Staff is appreciative of Channelkeeper's comments and looks forward to an ongoing dialogue with them to achieve our mutual goals.

Staff agrees numeric objectives are preferred to narrative objectives and is already involved in efforts to implement recent related CalEPA policy directives. Through the TMDL process, staff is coordinating with other Regional Water Boards to develop pesticide TMDLs and numeric target settings for objectives. The Basin Plan already states: "All waters shall be maintained free of toxic substances in concentrations which are toxic to, or which produce detrimental physiological responses in, human, plant, animal, or aquatic life." We agree that specific numeric objectives need to be regularly updated in the Basin Plan. Specific numeric criteria are currently available for reference through the use of the Central Valley Regional Water Board *A Compilation of Water Quality Goals August 2003 Edition and Updates*; *Recommended Numerical Limits to Translate Water Quality Objectives, May 19, 2004* and San Francisco Bay Regional Water Board *Screening for Environmental Concerns at sites with Contaminated Soil and Groundwater July 2003 (Updated February 4, 2004)* for implementing narrative objectives. Staff has added this task (including oil and grease and suspended material) to the proposed Triennial Review List tasks that are currently unfunded.

Comment 4: (Channelkeeper 2.) *Develop numeric nutrient (ammonia, nitrite, nitrate, organic nitrogen, and phosphate) objectives that will effectively prevent nuisance and impacts to aquatic life.*

Staff Response: Staff intends to implement this suggestion in Surface Water Issues TASK #1 on the Draft 2005 Triennial Review Priority List.

Comment 5: (Channelkeeper 3.) *Revise WQOs for bacteria for water contact recreation in inland surface waters and enclosed bays and estuaries and for shellfish harvesting to be consistent with EPA's Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Bacteria – 1986 and the National Shellfish Sanitation Program Model Ordinance.*

Staff Response: Staff intends to implement this suggestion in Surface Water Issues TASK #5 on the Draft 2005 Triennial Review Priority List.

Comment 6: (Channelkeeper 4.) *Develop and implement a policy requiring standard procedures for notifying interested parties of Regional Board actions to ensure that all interested parties receive sufficient and proper notice of upcoming actions and that the affected public is adequately involved in the Board's efforts to protect and restore water quality in our region.*

Staff Response: The Regional Water Board welcomes and encourages public input. Please provide any contact information you can regarding

interested parties and the topics of interest to them and staff will add them to the appropriate interested parties list(s).

Comment 7: (Channelkeeper 5.) *Create and publicize a schedule and prioritization of Regional Board development of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for impaired waterbodies in the region.*

Staff Response: Staff welcomes input on the schedule and prioritization of TMDL development. Current information on our TMDL schedule can be bound on our web site at the following link:

http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb3/TMDL/303dandTMDLprojects.htm

Comment 8: (Channelkeeper 6., 7. & 9.)

- *Revise 401 Water Quality Certification procedures to include evaluation of cumulative impacts of projects (proposed and existing) in a single waterbody or watershed.*
- *Comply with recent EPA guidance by issuing NPDES permits (in addition to Waste Discharge Requirements) to tributary sewage collection systems.*
- *Update Central Coast Ambient Monitoring Program (CCAMP) database and website to incorporate all current citizen monitoring data and programs, including Santa Barbara Channelkeeper's.*

Staff Response: We appreciate these comments and refer them to the appropriate program staff in this office. A contact for the 401 certification program is Chris Adair (805 549-3761. Our NPDES permitting and Waste Discharge Requirements program contact is Gerhardt Hubner (805 542-4647). Our contact for CCAMP (our Regional monitoring program) is Karen Worcester (805-549-3333).

Comment 9: (Channelkeeper 8.) *Revise Region-wide Nonpoint Source Management Measures to be in line with new State Policy for Implementation and Enforcement of the Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program.*

Staff Response: It is Staff's intent to implement this comment in Surface Water Issues TASK #7 on the Draft 2005 Triennial Review Priority List.

Comments and Responses- City of Santa Cruz
The following are staff's responses to comments from the City of Santa Cruz. Staff grouped the City of Santa Cruz comments for clarity.

Comment 10: (Regarding Tasks 5 and 7)

Task 5: Shellfish Beneficial Use Designation and Bacteria Objectives Revision

The process and product of defining eco-regions listing criteria would assist regulators and resource managers in focusing limited monitoring resources to area of significant impact. The economic and ecological benefits of accelerating the definition of Eco-Region 6 reach beyond the nutrient criteria. It is important to subject the proposed model(s) to scientific rigor to derive a listing process better informed than that used in listing the region's water bodies for the 303(d) impacts. It is also important in the watersheds of the Santa Cruz area that the beneficial uses be revised consistent with available data, since they impact urban development activities, drinking water source protection, as well as permitted discharges of wastewater and urban runoff. A scientifically defensible process would rectify the errors associated with the current listing process. For example, the shellfish beneficial use is designated for several water bodies in the Santa Cruz area where they are not even present –let alone harvested. Finally, City planning activities and selection of indicator species in the monitoring are best done when this rigorous scientific process is accorded a very high priority.

Incorporation of Enterococcus objectives for the region, in addition to withdrawing the Total Coliforms objective are necessary to reconcile several of the conflicting and economically adverse impacts of AB411 and its uneven implementation on beach closures on the Central Coast. The development of a Fecal Coliform objective for shellfish harvesting should be accelerated with the review of the beneficial uses listing for the Central Coast.

Task 7: Revision of Region-Wide Nonpoint Source Management Measures and Development of Riparian Corridor Protection Policy

The development of a riparian corridor policy is well supported by watershed management and

drinking water source protection principles, which have repeatedly shown the water quality and habitat benefits of well functioning riparian systems. As the City of Santa Cruz receives 95% of its drinking water from surface sources, and availability of this drinking source water is dependent not only on source water quality, but also the relative "regulatory burden" of the presence of numerous special status species in its drinking water source watersheds, healthy riparian corridors are invaluable to the City in attainment of its various water resource management concerns.

Staff Response (Regarding City of Santa Cruz comments on Tasks 5 and 7): Staff appreciates the comments regarding implementation and significance of tasks on the list and looks forward to working with the City of Santa Cruz on these issues.

Comment 11: *Additional Proposed 2005 TRL Issues: Surface Water Issues: Water Quality Objectives: Evaluate the need for a bacteria and algal toxin objectives for ocean waters used for desalination supply and a Total Organic Carbon (TOC) objective for surface waters with the Municipal (MUN) beneficial use designation.*

The City of Santa Cruz is considering the use of ocean desalination as a source of municipal water supply and supports the Regional Board's efforts in this area. Given the expanding interest statewide in desalination, and along the Central Coast region in particular, we urge the Regional Board to give these issues every consideration for inclusion in the current Basin Plan update priority list. Also in the context of drinking water source protection, the formation of disinfection byproducts (DBPs), in chlorinated drinking water is an increasingly challenging management concern for water purveyors –including the City of Santa Cruz. Source water with high TOC concentrations requires additional treatment steps, increases the cost of treatment, and may lead to increased health risk from exposure to disinfection byproducts. As the primary precursor of these DBPs – TOC is a newly regulated pollutant that water purveyors are currently required to monitor and treat, this pollutant should be recognized by the RWQCB to be a threat to the MUN beneficial use and an objective for it developed in the Basin Plan update.

Staff Response: Staff finds this an interesting and timely comment for an undefined beneficial use since brackish waters may not be considered as a municipal and domestic source due to their salinity. Staff has added this to the proposed Triennial Review List of currently unfunded tasks.

CONCLUSION

Staff continues to prioritize achievable and relevant goals within the abilities of limited staff resources.

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt the attached Resolution R3-2005-0069 (Attachment C) completing the 2005 Triennial Review process. The Resolution approves the Triennial Review priority list for potential revision of the Basin Plan, affirms the general adequacy of the present Basin Plan in areas not under revision, and states that the entire Basin Plan is effective until subsequent amendments are adopted.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: 2005 Triennial Review Priority List
Attachment B: 2001 Triennial Review Priority List
Attachment C: Resolution R3-2005-0069
Attachment D: April 13, 2005 letter soliciting public comments

S:/WQ Control Planning/Triennial Review /TRL 2004\2004 TRL Staff Report revised 9-17-05.doc
Task: 401-01
File: Basin Plan, Triennial Review List