



## EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

June 2003

### NORTH BASIN

**1. Meeting with Sierra Pacific Industries Regarding Timber Waiver Policy - Jason Churchill**

Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI), a timber company and maker of wood products, is the largest private landowner in the State of California. The company has extensive timber land holdings throughout the North Lahontan Region. In January 2003 the Regional Board adopted Resolution No. R6T-2003-0001 (Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges Related to Timber Harvest Activities in the Lahontan Region). The Resolution sets forth eligibility criteria and waiver conditions for five categories of timber activities, and also for timber harvest projects that were already approved at the time the Waiver Policy was adopted ("existing projects"). On May 1, 2003 I joined staff in a meeting with SPI administrators and foresters to discuss Waiver Policy implementation for SPI projects in 2003. SPI submitted a waiver application form and information regarding its existing projects prior to the meeting, and intends to submit application materials for new projects to meet Waiver Policy requirements. At the meeting, we discussed and resolved many of SPI's concerns and questions about the process for obtaining waiver coverage, identified ways to enhance coordination and information sharing between our staffs, and discussed SPI's herbicide monitoring program. The meeting was very productive, and I believe it will assist SPI in meeting Waiver Policy requirements, and aid staff in obtaining information and evaluating compliance for SPI timber harvest projects.

**2. Timber Waiver Petitioned, SWRCB Hearing Planned for August 11-13, 2003 - Alan Miller**

On February 7, 2003, the California Forestry Association (CFA) filed with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), a Petition for Review and Request for Public Hearing on Resolution No. R6T-2003-0001, *Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges Related To Timber Harvesting in the Lahontan Region*. The Petition asserts the Regional Board's action to adopt the waiver "was arbitrary, capricious, and a violation of law and policy" and requests that the SWRCB amend the Regional Board's waiver policy.

On April 18, 2003, the SWRCB sent me a memorandum requesting the Regional Board's public record in this matter, and a response to the petition, by May 7, 2003. The memorandum indicated that a SWRCB hearing on this matter is scheduled for August 11-13, 2003. An extension to prepare the public record and the response was requested by staff, and a revised due date of May 29, 2003 was granted by the SWRCB. As of this writing, staff is working on preparing these items to meet the due date. Our response, based on the public record in this matter, will refute the CFA assertions in the Petition.

On May 12, 2003, I received a Notice of Pre-Hearing Conference to be held by the SWRCB on May 30, 2003. This conference is to establish the procedures for the August Hearing, which will involve not only the Lahontan Regional Board, but also the Central Valley Regional Board and the North Coast Regional Board, and a number of environmental organizations. The SWRCB has also received similar Petitions from

CFA, and also from various environmental organizations, challenging recently-adopted timber waste discharge requirement waiver policies of these Regional Boards. No substantive issues regarding the Petitions are planned to be discussed at the Pre-Hearing Conference, but a potential outcome is that the August hearing will combine hearings on all the Petitions received with regard to timber-related waste discharge requirement waivers.

### 3. *Bioassessment Seminar - Jill Wilson*

On May 7, 2003 the Truckee River Watershed Council (TRWC) hosted a seminar called "Bioassessment in our Local Watershed, out of the Textbooks and into the Creeks". This presentation was organized by Regional Board staff and geared to stakeholders of the Truckee River, Squaw Creek, Bear Creek, Bronco Creek, and Gray Creek TMDLs. Interested parties from around Lake Tahoe and the downstream Nevada portion of the Truckee River attended as well.

California Department of Fish and Game's Jim Harrington introduced the audience to the many benefits of using macroinvertebrate bioassessment as water quality indicators. Jim provided local examples of bioassessment that included monitoring the recovery the East Fork Carson River and Donner Lake drainages from past fuel spills, providing scientific data in successful court cases, and evaluating monetary penalties associated with natural resource damage claims.

Tom Suk presented the Lahontan Region's bioassessment program with examples of how bioassessment is being used in TMDL development. Tom Suk also described work on establishing an index of biotic integrity for the Eastern Sierra and biocriteria for the Basin Plan. Representatives of the TRWC monitoring committee and the Truckee River Aquatic Monitors (TRAM), two very active citizen groups in the Truckee area, presented an overview of their programs. The presentations were well received and a very active and informative question and answer session followed the presentations.

### 4. *Park Avenue Redevelopment Continues - Kara Thiel*

The Park Avenue Redevelopment Project in South Lake Tahoe will move forward in the 2003 construction season with the Crescent V Town Center Project, undertaken by the Tahoe Crescent Partnership, LTD. The Crescent V Town Center Project is a part of Phase 2 of the Park Avenue Redevelopment Project and is located at the southwest corner of Park Avenue and Highway 50 in South Lake Tahoe. The project area comprises approximately 14 acres.

The Crescent V Project involves demolishing the existing pawn shop building, Sizzler Restaurant, storage building, and parking lot pavement, reconfiguring the parking area, and remodeling the facades of the remaining existing buildings. The Project also involves the construction of three new buildings within the project area for retail shops and a restaurant. Other site improvements include storm drains, storm water pretreatment facilities, sewer laterals, water lines, and electrical, gas, phone, and cable services.

Three storm water pretreatment vaults are proposed to pretreat storm water runoff generated within the project area. The public storm drain system will carry runoff from the pretreatment vaults to the Manzanita/Pine Basins (scheduled for construction in 2003 as a part of the Park Avenue Redevelopment Project) or the Fern Basin (scheduled for construction in 2003/2004 as a part of the Rocky Point Erosion Control Project) for treatment. The outfall from these basins will ultimately discharge to Lake Tahoe via the North Ditch in the Tahoe Meadows.

### 5. *Perchlorate in Groundwater - James Brathovde*

Since testing began in 1997, perchlorate has been detected in 320 municipal wells in California, mostly in the Los Angeles, Central Valley, and Santa Anna Regions. The perchlorate ion is a highly soluble and stable inorganic chemical used in solid rocket fuel, fireworks, highway flares and occurs naturally in some organic fertilizers. Perchlorate is a threat to human health because, when consumed, it substitutes for iodine impairing the thyroid gland. Perchlorate's toxicity and laboratory

testing methods are being evaluated by USEPA and Cal/EPA. The Department of Health Services will adopt a maximum contaminant level (mcl) for perchlorate by January 2004. For drinking water, the current action level and detection level is 4 parts per billion (ppb).

Federal, State and local regulatory agencies, in addition to water supply companies, are asking the Regional Boards for assistance with identifying perchlorate contaminant source areas, since most are unknown. Perchlorate has even shown up at low levels (5-9 ppb) in Colorado River water, an important source of drinking water and water for agriculture. The Colorado River's perchlorate is associated with contamination from ammonium perchlorate manufacturing facilities in Nevada. The economic impact of perchlorate contamination is significant because conventional water treatment systems are unable to remove the chemical without significant re-design.

Within the Lahontan Region, no municipal supply wells have been contaminated to date. Perchlorate has been detected at three Department of Defense facilities: Edwards Air Force Base, China Lake Naval Weapons Station and Sierra Army Depot. The State Water Resources Control Board and the Department of Toxic Substances Control will be sending a letter to the Department of Defense requesting a policy change that includes stepped-up perchlorate source evaluation, testing and remediation for sites in California.

#### **6. *Earth Day Events 2003 – Cindy Wise***

With an Earth Day 2003 theme of "Water for Life", Regional Board staff participated in the planning and implementation of three Earth Day Festivals in the Lake Tahoe and Truckee River communities. Using a tabletop watershed model and other activities, staff demonstrated the effects of nonpoint source pollution and the importance of water quality protection to over 4,000 people estimated in attendance at these three events. The three events were held at a North Lake Tahoe ski resort, a South Lake Tahoe community college and at a South Lake Tahoe elementary school.

#### **7. *Snapshot Day –Lake Tahoe and Truckee River Watersheds - Cindy Wise***

The Third Annual Snapshot Day, a one-day volunteer stream-monitoring event, was held May 10. The Tahoe-Truckee Clean Water Team and the Lake Tahoe Environmental Education Coalition are sponsors of this event. Regional Board staff is a partner in both organizations. A snapshot event is designed to involve volunteers from the community in collecting watershed information during one moment in time, and to promote environmental education and watershed stewardship. Volunteer leaders are trained, and these leaders accompany teams of volunteers to pre-determined sites to collect information on watershed health. The focus for this year's Third Annual Snapshot Day was to collect samples from the mouths of all 63 tributaries of the Lake Tahoe watershed and from 35 creeks in the Truckee River watershed. Samples collected by the 235 Snapshot Day volunteers will be analyzed and will help provide data needed for TMDLs being developed in both watersheds. The results can also be used as baseline data to guide future restoration efforts or to monitor existing projects.

#### **8. *Jiminy Cricket Environmental Challenge - Cindy Wise***

For its water quality monitoring and watershed education project, a class of 34 fifth graders from Meyers Elementary School in South Lake Tahoe won first place in Disney's Jiminy Cricket Environmental Challenge for 2002-03. Regional Board staff, along with staff from the Tahoe Resource Conservation District and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, parents and volunteers from the community, worked closely with the fifth graders to explain about Lake Tahoe water quality issues, demonstrate water quality sampling, establish sampling sites on the Upper Truckee River, complete a visual assessment of the riparian condition, conduct a streamside biosurvey of aquatic macroinvertebrates, and sample for several water quality parameters. The students' project included an analysis of all sampling data, creation of an educational website on Lake Tahoe environmental issues, journals, art, a hike up to the top of the watershed (Mt. Tallac at an elevation of 9,735 feet), an overview of

management practices used to control erosion at ski resorts as part of a classroom ski week trip and a demonstration of ways to prevent nonpoint source pollution which was filmed by the television crew of the ABC news affiliate in Reno and later televised. The Environmental Challenge is a statewide competition open to all fifth grade classes. To compete, a class must identify a "real world" environmental challenge, then develop, implement and evaluate a project that targets that challenge while incorporating California state curriculum standards for mathematics, science, language arts, and history/social sciences. Over 500 classes enrolled in the competition and 50 classes completed their project and project portfolio. As part of the first place award, the fifth graders from Meyers Elementary received hats, shirts, certificates and a cash award of \$500 for the classroom. The teacher is eager to compete again during the next school year for a chance to win the grand prize of a classroom trip to Disneyland.

and macroinvertebrates. Bird and bat boxes, osprey platforms, bird and butterfly gardens and other wildlife habitat improvements and interpretive displays were built.

**9. *Lake Tahoe Golf Course Audubon Certification***  
*- Cindy Wise*

To receive certification as an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary, a golf course must demonstrate comprehensive watershed stewardship education and implementation in the six key areas of environmental planning, wildlife habitat management, chemical use reduction/safety, water conservation, water quality management, and outreach/education. The Lake Tahoe Golf Course, adjacent to the Upper Truckee River and Angora Creek, owned by the California Department of Parks and Recreation and operated by American Golf, is the 20<sup>th</sup> course in the state to receive this certification. Working closely with scientific staff from Lake Tahoe Community College and other resource management agencies, the course eliminated use of insecticides and rodenticides, greatly reduced use of other pesticides, converted to organic, slow-release fertilizers, installed a bioremediation washwater treatment system, established large buffer zones adjacent to waterways on the property, and implemented a water quality monitoring program for surface and ground waters. The course switched to more efficient irrigation equipment, completed site maps and resource inventories of birds, plants

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## SOUTH BASIN

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### **10. Victor Valley Wastewater Reclamation Authority (VWVRA) - Curt Shifrer**

Four sewage treatment plants (Facilities) are proposed to be constructed in Apple Valley, Hesperia, and the Upper Narrows and Green Tree areas of Victorville for recycled water use within the cities of Hesperia, Victorville and Town of Apple Valley. Board staff has reviewed and provided written comments on a Notice of Preparation (NOP) for an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Project.

The total capacity of VWVRA's existing Regional Facility is 11.0 million gallons per day (mgd). The four proposed Facilities would increase the total capacity to 18 mgd, which is the estimated capacity needed by 2020. The Facilities would produce recycled water for irrigation of golf courses, parks, and freeway landscaping. The current plan is to dispose of recycled water to percolation ponds when there is no irrigation demand. Percolation ponds would be located at each Facility. The EIR however, will also evaluate disposal by discharge to surface waters.

Staff anticipates the Facilities and irrigation sites will be regulated through a combination of WDRs, recycled water requirements and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permits for stormwater discharges.

### **11. Perchlorate Cleanup Technology Demonstrated - Cindi Mitton**

The chemical perchlorate is present in ground water at Edwards Air Force Base (EAFB). Because proven cleanup technologies for perchlorate contaminated ground water are still being developed, EAFB is serving as a test bed for an emerging technology developed by Oak Ridge National Laboratories for removal of perchlorate from ground water. This technology

consists of a resin capable of selectively removing perchlorate from water and a chemical regeneration process that cleanses the resins of the captured perchlorate. The perchlorate washed from the resin can then be precipitated as a solid and either disposed at a permitted facility or possibly destroyed on-site. On May 14, 2003, EAFB provided a public workshop and on-site demonstration of its full-scale ground water treatment system based on this technology, for a large ground water contaminant plume at the Base.

Perchlorate is a salt, most commonly ammonium perchlorate, that is used in solid rocket fuels, matches, fireworks, road flares and some fertilizers. When in contact with water, the salt readily dissolves, making the perchlorate ion very mobile in ground water. Perchlorate has been detected in drinking water wells and surface water in northern and southern California.

### **12. IMC Chemicals Inc., (IMCC) - Kai Dunn**

#### **Compliance Status**

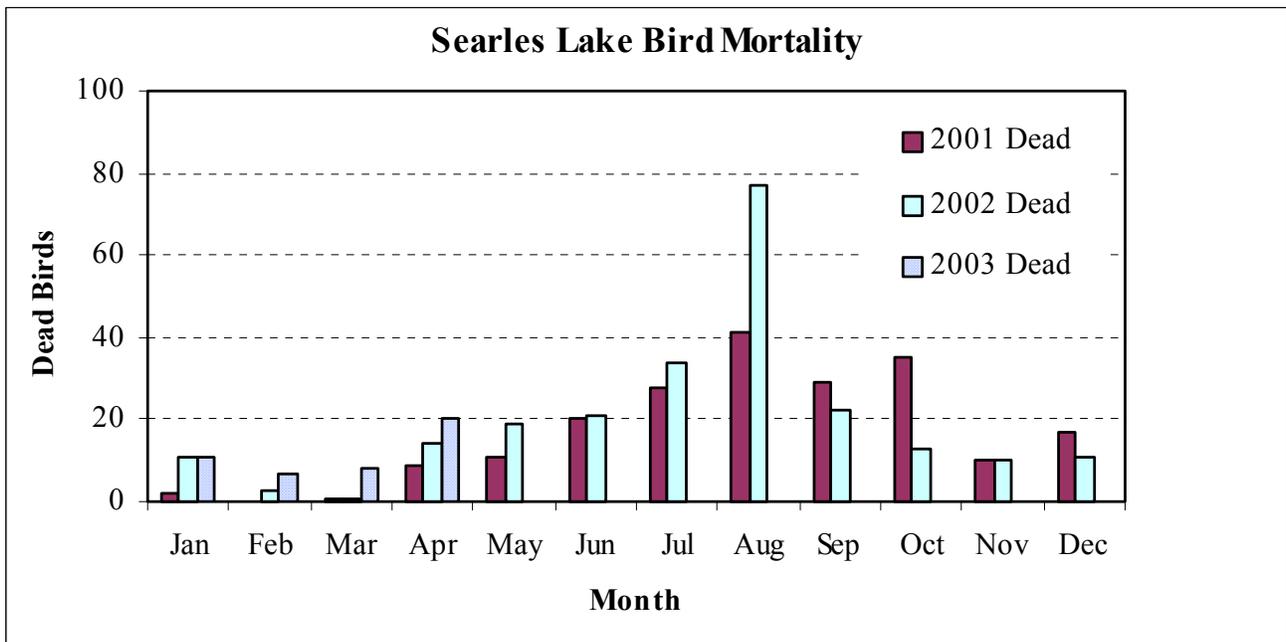
Daily reporting data from IMCC shows that the Argus plant effluent exceeded the interim effluent limit for total recoverable petroleum hydrocarbons (TRPH) twice during the month of April 2003. The violations were due to problems encountered during plant start up after the new Argus skimmer was tied-into the pipeline. At staff's request, IMCC submitted a mitigation plan to implement a number of additional Best Management Practices to further control the Argus effluent TRPH level as well as a preventive action plan for future activities to comply with the interim effluent limit for TRPH. Staff is reviewing these plans and will oversee the implementation.

Twenty-nine birds were recovered during the same period with twenty of them found dead.

Since January 1, 2003, 69 birds (46 dead and 23 alive) have been recovered at Searles Lake. The dead birds reported in the years 2001, 2002, and 2003 are shown in the figure below.

### Improving Technology

The new Argus skimmer project is on schedule. Tie-in to the plant piping was performed in early April. All tank piping and skimmer headers have been installed. Final grading of the skimmer is underway to prepare for liner installation in May 2003. The new skimmer is planned to be



operational by July 2003.

**CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY  
CONTROL BOARD  
LAHONTAN REGION**

**REPORT ON STATUS OF STANDING ITEMS  
June 2003**

The Regional Board has requested that it be kept informed of the status of a number of issues. The following table lists the items, the reporting frequency and where the report can be found.

ISSUE	REPORT FREQUENCY	STATUS/COMMENT
IMC Chemicals - Compliance Status	Monthly	Item No. 12 of June 2003 EO's Report
Meyers Beacon UST Site	Quarterly	Due July 2003 Board Meeting
Mojave River/El Mirage Dairy Issues	Quarterly	Due July 2003 Board Meeting
Progress of Cleanup at Molycorp	Quarterly	Due July 2003 Board Meeting
Town of Mammoth Lakes	Quarterly	Due July 2003 Board Meeting
Caltrans-General Permit	Annually	Due September 2003 Board Meeting
Eagle Lake Spalding	Semi-Annual	Due September 2003 Board Meeting
Los Angeles CSD #14	Semi-Annual	Due September 2003 Board Meeting
Vulnerability of Wells in Squaw Valley to Contamination from USTs	Semi-Annual	Due September 2003 Board Meeting
Caltrans-Tahoe Basin	Annually	Due November 2003 Board Meeting
Tahoe Municipal Permit	Annually	Due November 2003 Board Meeting
Wetland Restoration Progress in Mono County	Annually	Due November 2003 Board Meeting

**Frequency**      **Board Meeting Month**

*Quarterly*      July, October, January & April.  
*Semi-Annual*      September & March  
*Annually*      Varied