

4 January 2013

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***REMOVAL OF PEASLEE CREEK AT LAKE ROAD AND UPDATE OF THE EAST SAN JOAQUIN WATER QUALITY COALITION MONITORING SCHEDULE***

Thank you for submitting the 5 December 2012 request to modify the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition (Coalition) Monitoring and Reporting Program Plan (MRP Plan). The request proposes to remove the monitoring site Peaslee Creek at Lake Road from the Coalition's monitoring program, and rotate assessment monitoring in 2013 to the next scheduled site - Mustang Creek at East Avenue.

The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board staff has reviewed the proposed monitoring site removal. Based on the information provided in your letter and staff's attached memorandum, I approve the Coalition's request effective immediately. To effectively complete this transition, please submit the following documents by **25 January 2013** to revise the MRP Plan:

- Updated amendment table, Table A, which summarizes all changes to the Coalition's MRP Plan
- Revisions to Tables 4, 5, 7, and 10 of the MRP Plan.

If you have questions regarding this letter, please contact Jelena Hartman at (916) 464-4628, or by e-mail at [jhartman@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:jhartman@waterboards.ca.gov).

*Original signed by*

Pamela C. Creedon  
Executive Officer

Enclosure: Staff Review of East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition Request to Remove Peaslee Creek at Lake Road from Monitoring Schedule

TO: Susan Fregien  
Senior Environmental Scientist  
Monitoring and Implementation Unit  
Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program

FROM: Jelena Hartman  
Environmental Scientist  
**MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION UNIT**  
**IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM**

DATE: 27 December 2012

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO REMOVE PEASLEE CREEK AT LAKE RD FROM MONITORING  
SCHEDULE – EAST SAN JOAQUIN WATER QUALITY COALITION

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region (Central Valley Water Board) received a request from the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition (Coalition) on 5 December 2012 to modify its Monitoring and Reporting Program (MRP) Plan. The Coalition proposes to remove the current assessment monitoring site Peaslee Creek at Lake Road from its MRP Plan.

The Coalition's letter provides the following rationale for the request:

- 1) The access to the creek is on a private property which is fenced off.
- 2) The bridge over the creek is high, limiting options for grab bucket sample collection.
- 3) A scouting visit during the winter storm season found low water level. The creek water appears to be diverted, and irrigation drainage to the creek is minimal resulting in little to no flow at the monitoring site.
- 4) The property adjacent to the creek appears to be used for grazing. Creek banks downstream from the Lake Road are not steep and show livestock tracks suggesting that the creek is used for livestock watering.

The Coalition Zone in which Peaslee Creek is located (Zone 3) is characterized by one core site and by two other rotating Assessment Monitoring locations identified in the Coalition's MRP Plan. Peaslee Creek at Lake Road site is scheduled for Assessment Monitoring in 2013 and 2014. Based on the information in the MRP Plan, the Peaslee Creek at Lake Road subwatershed represents 809 irrigated acres; the land use includes vineyards and deciduous fruits/nuts. There is also one section of land allocated as feedlot/dairy/farmstead. The creek is a tributary to the Tuolumne River, and the Peaslee Creek at Lake Road is located just south east of the confluence. If Peaslee Creek is removed from the monitoring schedule, Mustang Creek at East Avenue will rotate into assessment monitoring in 2013. Mustang Creek flows into Highline Canal, which flows into the Merced River. The monitoring site represents 12,113 irrigated acres; citrus and deciduous nut crops are the main agriculture with smaller amounts of field crops and grains and hay.

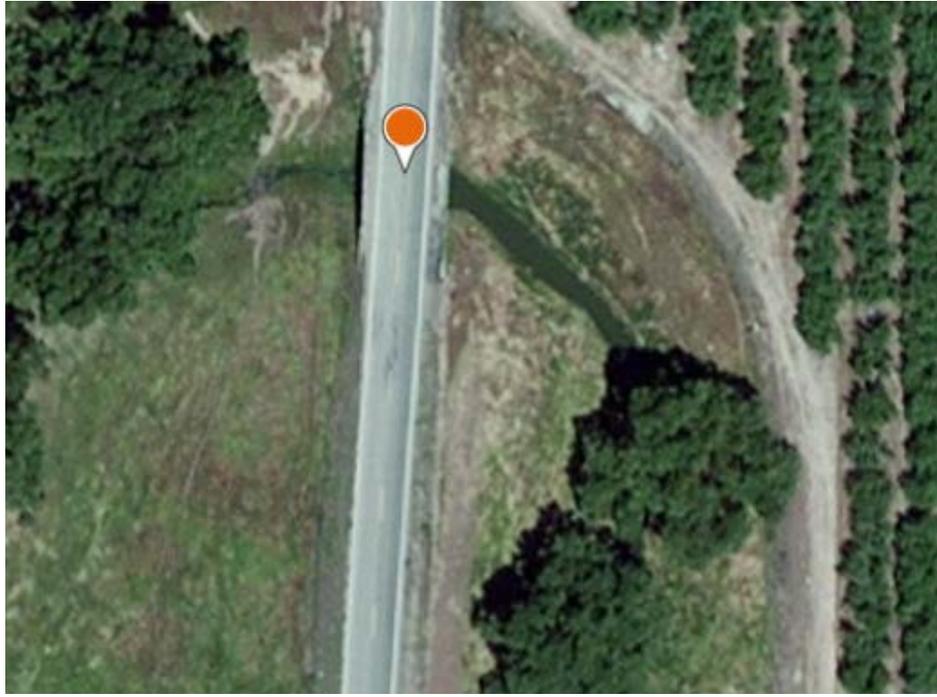
In addition to the Coalition's letter, staff received information in a 6 December 2012 Coalition e-mail. While there is no access to the creek banks due to a fence, water samples could be collected from the bridge if enough water is present in the creek. The equipment used for sampling allows for collecting samples from a bridge if water depth is at least 16 inches. Flow records for the creek are not available. When the site was scouted in February 2012, the water level in the creek was low. One areal image of the area shows that the creek can be dry in the summer (Figure 1).

There is insufficient evidence to ascertain the water level in the creek during the year based on a single visit to the site in 2012, and one areal image from August 2007 (Figure 1). Other satellite images indicate that there is water in the creek in spring and early summer (Figures 2 and 3). Observations of staff who visited the area several times confirm that the creek flow is ephemeral, and present mostly in winter, spring, and early summer.

Although the intermittent flow in itself does not merit exclusion of a site from monitoring, the Central Valley Water Board supports efficient use of resources and staff recommends removal of Peaslee Creek at Lake Road from the Coalition's MRP Plan. Potential monitoring sites were selected in 2008 based on knowledge of waterways in the area and review of maps, without ground truthing the selection. The Coalition's reconnaissance efforts ahead of the scheduled monitoring to verify the suitability of sites for monitoring are commendable, and allow redirection of resources if problems with access are identified. In the future, Peaslee Creek will be a non-monitored site, *"represented by the Core sites in that Zone. Any applicable surface water quality plan actions associated with the Core site must take place in [...] represented drainages without monitoring sites"* (Waste Discharge Requirements, Order R5-2012-0116).

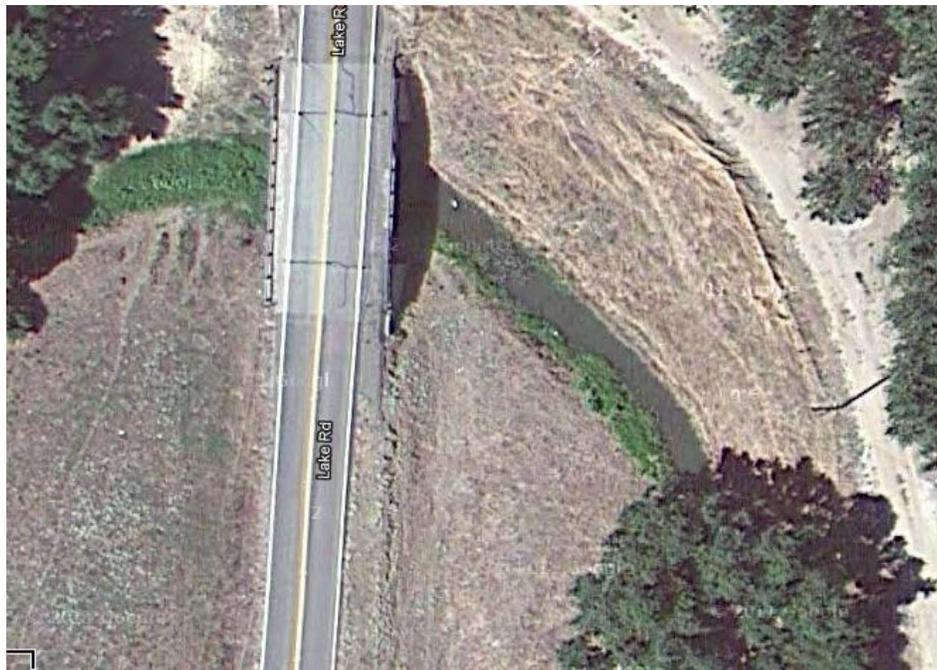


**Figure 1.** Peaslee Creek downstream view (facing east).  
© 2012 Google, Image Date: August 2007



**Figure 2.** Areal view of Peaslee Creek. Green landscape suggests photo was likely taken during spring.

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**Figure 3.** Areal view of Peaslee Creek. Drying landscape suggests photo was likely taken during late spring/early summer.

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