

California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Colorado River Basin



February 2019  
Executive Officer Report

## Table of Contents

LAND DISPOSAL – WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS (WDR) PROGRAM.....	2
UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK (UST) AND SITE CLEANUP SCP) PROGRAMS.....	2
SALT AND NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLAN (SNMP) DEVELOPMENT.....	2
OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES (OES) NOTIFICATIONS.....	2
NPDES PROGRAM.....	2
WATER QUALITY STANDARDS/NONPOINT SOURCE PROGRAM.....	3
SURFACE WATER AMBIENT MONITORING PROGRAM.....	3

## **LAND DISPOSAL AND WDR PROGRAM UNIT**

**Cannabis Operations:** In the month of February 2019, the Executive Officer issued seven Notices of Applicability of coverage under the State Water Resources Control General Order for cannabis cultivation to cannabis indoor cultivation operations in Region 7. [Reggie Tan, WRCE]

**Storm Related Events:** On February 13-14, 2019, record rainfall around Banning and Palm Springs caused several storm related problems. The City of Banning Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) was affected by an unavoidable bypass due to the intense rainfall. The Palm Spring Aerial Tramway was shut down due to storm damage to roadways, electrical systems and a landslide that damaged the Valley Station wastewater treatment plant. Reggie Tan inspected the Banning WWTP on February 14 and the Aerial Tramway Valley Station on February 19 with its staff. [Reggie Tan, WRCE]

## **UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK (UST) AND SITE CLEANUP PROGRAM (SCP)**

### **Former Chevron Service Station No. 9-2693, 400 Imperial Avenue, Calexico:**

On February 15, 2019, staff participated in a meeting with the State Board UST Cleanup Fund staff to discuss the on-going occurrence of free product in groundwater. [Kola Olatunbosun, WRCE; Scot Stormo, EG; Joan Stormo, Senior EG; and Phan Le, WRCE]

## **SALT AND NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLAN (SNMP) DEVELOPMENT**

**Salt and Nutrient Management Planning:** Staff is developing a webpage hyperlink for SNMP information on the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Board Home Webpage. The information provides updates on the region's existing SNMPS, activities for generating SNMPS for "medium" priority groundwater basins (e.g., Imperial valley), and information on available resources for regionwide management of salts and nutrients. [Cathy Sanford, EG]

## **OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES (OES) NOTIFICATIONS AND SPILLS**

Twenty OES notifications were received in February 2018, and include:

- an incident involving a fatality (natural death) on railroad property,
- four sewage spills resulting from the February 14<sup>th</sup> storm event (conducted two site inspections to assist Land Disposal Unit),
- a release of three gallons of transmission fluid to an Imperial Irrigation District (IID) canal,
- a release of 1,500 gallons of non-PCB mineral oil at Southern California Edison substation that required follow-up actions, and
- thirteen minor spills (diesel, paint, vanilla extract, etc.). All spills were contained, or if released to the ground surface, soils were removed and properly disposed of. [Jose Cortez, WRCE]

## **NPDES PROGRAM**

### **Site Tour for Hell's Kitchen Geothermal (HKG) Application for 401 WQC Amendment:**

On February 12, 2019, staff attended a site tour with other agencies to see the site of the HKG proposed well pads, S-berm extension, and mitigation. Representatives from HKG, Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service attended the tour with staff. The trip was a meeting of the regulatory agencies to discuss necessary steps for the permit renewal process. The original 401

WQC was issued for the exploration of the geothermal resources near the Salton Sea. HKG staff led the tour to show expected changes to their current operations, which include a permanent road to access a well pad and mineral extraction from geothermal brine. Staff educated HKG staff on relevant issues related to the proposed WQC amendment application and conferred with regulators on project requirements. [*Kai Dunn, Senior WRCE, Ph.D., P.E., Emma McCorkle, Environmental Scientist*]

## **WATER QUALITY STANDARDS/NONPOINT SOURCE PROGRAM**

**Statewide Nonpoint Source (NPS) Roundtable (February 5-6, 2019):** Regional Board staff hosted this NPS roundtable. On February 5, participants of the Roundtable went on a field trip to Alamo River wetlands in Imperial Valley. Steve Charlton, IID, discussed how the wetlands work, their construction, mechanics, funding, and management. The constructed wetlands comprise a complex of sedimentation ponds/wetlands fed by Alamo River water. The main function of the wetlands is to improve the water quality of the Alamo River before it drains into the Salton Sea. The wetlands also provide a valuable resource for research into nutrient reduction and selenium behavior. Other benefits include new habitat, recreation areas, and helping achieve TMDL goals. Leon Lesicka, from Desert Wildlife Unlimited and a former Regional Board member, also shared his knowledge. Next, the roundtable staff visited agricultural fields near Westmorland and met with Al Kalin, a local farmer, and Rachel Zajdel, representative for the Imperial County Farm Bureau. They discussed some of the farm management practices utilized to control the discharges from agricultural fields. [Francisco Costa, ES, Logan Raub, ES, and Jennie Snyder, WRCE]

**Statewide Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Roundtable (February 27-28, 2019):** Regional Board staff hosted this TMDL roundtable. On February 27, participants went on a field trip to the New River at International Boundary (NRIB). There Adriana Godinez, Regional Board staff, discussed planned work in the United States to improve the water quality through the New River Improvement Project (NRIP). Proposed parts of the NRIP include, trash screens, and treatment wetlands. The roundtable staff traveled to the Alamo River wetlands and met with Steve Charlton, IID (see Alamo River wetlands discussion above under the NPS Roundtable). On February 28, participants of the roundtable gave announcements and updates regarding their TMDL programs and discussed the FY 2019-2020 TMDL workplans and the TMDL and Basin Plan Amendments tracking spreadsheet. Nadim presented and discussed a case study regarding the draft Palo Verde Agricultural General Order. [Nadim Shukry-Zeywar, Senior ES, and Emma McCorkle, ES]

## **SURFACE WATER AMBIENT MONITORING PROGRAM (SWMP)**

**Spring SWAMP Monitoring Kickoff Meeting:** SWAMP staff held a kickoff meeting for Delta Labs, Moss Landing Marine Labs, UC Davis Granite Canyon toxicity lab and members of the State Water Board Office of Information Management to coordinate the logistics for this spring's sampling event which will commence April 8. Staff has targeted 24 individual agriculture drains that discharge directly into the Salton Sea, as well as the New and Alamo River outlets, and the Coachella Valley Storm Water Channel outlet. Water and sediment samples will be collected for multiple chemical analyses, including aquatic toxicity. [*Jeff Geraci, ES*]

**SWAMP Face to Face Roundtable in Rancho Cordova:** SWAMP staff attended the face to face roundtable meeting in February. Staff was provided a tour of the Oroville Dam spillway which was recently repaired after a major catastrophic failure two years ago. Staff also toured abandoned neighborhoods that were completely destroyed by the Paradise fires that occurred earlier in the year. Speakers from the county and State discussed the efforts they employed in their coordinated response to the fires, including their efforts to minimize runoff contamination of the local waters. [*Jeff Geraci, ES*]

**Salton Sea Authority (SSA) Board Meeting:** SWAMP staff attended the February 21<sup>st</sup> Salton Sea Authority Board Meeting held in the City of El Centro. The Desert Air Pollution Control District presented their efforts to control playa dust using surface roughening techniques. [*Jeff Geraci, ES*]