Water Quality Improvement Strategy

Diuron is a pre-emergent herbicide used by growers in the Central Valley. Four water body segments in the San Joaquin Valley: Del Puerto Creek, Orestimba Creek, Lone Tree Creek, and the San Joaquin River (from Stanislaus River to Delta boundary) are currently listed on the 303(d) List due to diuron concentrations that exceeded water quality criteria for the protection of aquatic life (a 4-day maximum average concentration of 1.3 µg/L, not to be exceeded more than once in three years). The Regional Water Board’s Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) requires dischargers to prepare and implement management plans for agricultural pollutants causing or contributing to exceedances of water quality standards. In response to elevated diuron concentrations, two agricultural coalitions representing growers prepared and implemented management plans for diuron in these four water bodies. The plans include management practices to reduce runoff and diuron use.

Water Quality Outcomes

- Diuron levels in all four water bodies have decreased with the implementation of management practices, and diuron concentrations are no longer exceeding water quality criteria (WQC).
- Implementation of the ILRP requirements successfully resolved diuron water quality impairments in these four listed water bodies without the need to develop TMDLs.
- In several other Central Valley water bodies, that are currently not listed on the 303(d) List for diuron, and where diuron management plans have been developed in response to diuron concentrations exceeding the WQC, diuron levels have been successfully reduced to below the WQC.
- The coalitions will continue to monitor these four water bodies as long as diuron remains a concern. The Regional Water Board will pursue delisting all four of these water bodies by 2018.