


FY 24/25 Priority Projects

Cosumnes River at Highway 49

Attachment A
Executive Officer's Report

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Introduction

Annual work plans are developed to guide the Board’s numerous water quality programs over the course of a fiscal year (July 1 to June 30). One critical element of these work plans is the division of staff work between “core” activities, like updating permits, conducting compliance inspections, and managing monitoring data, and “priority projects,” which are special projects designed to enhance productivity or achieve a program’s strategic objectives. Examples of priority projects include the development of a General Order to regulate multiple facilities or a special enforcement initiative.

Program Managers work with the Executive Management Team (the Executive Officer, the Assistant Executive Officers, and the Administrative Officer) to ensure that their annual work plans strike an appropriate balance between core activities and priority projects. In certain years, core regulatory work may consume all available resources, while in other years a Program Manager may be able to devote significant staff time towards priority projects.

Each December, the Executive Officer proposes a set of priority projects to the Board. This kicks off the annual work plan life cycle, which concludes 20 months later when the Executive Officer reports back to the Board on the implementation of the prior year’s workplan. This process for the 24/25 workplans will generally look like this:



Like last year, the development of priority projects reflects the Program Manager’s work on achieving the SMARTIE goals that are contained in the Board’s Regional Racial Equity Resolution. Descriptions of the water quality programs, identification of the Program Managers, the resources allocated to these programs can be found at the following address: [About Us - Overview of Board Programs | Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board \(ca.gov\)](https://www.cvrwb.ca.gov/about-us/overview-of-board-programs)

Permitting Programs

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permitting Program

Program Integration of Racial Equity Goals

In FY 24/25 NPDES program staff will continue to enhance outreach with tribal groups and disadvantaged communities potentially affected by the NPDES Permitting Program's proposed permits.

Training and Tools Development

In FY 24/25, the NPDES program will focus on developing tools that will increase the efficiency of its core work. Resources will also be focused on establishing and implementing an NPDES training program for staff.

Waste Discharge Requirements Program

Implementation of Assembly Bill 2108

Assembly Bill 2108 added Section 13149.2 to the Water Code, which requires the Regional Board, when adopting general waste discharge requirements, to make a concise, programmatic finding(s) on potential environmental justice, tribal impact, and racial equity considerations related to the adoption of the order. Similar requirements apply when issuing individual waste discharge requirements that include time schedules for achieving an applicable water quality objective. Program staff and management will continue to meet with the Office of Chief Counsel and the Office of Public Participation to ensure consistent implementation of these new requirements within the program.

Management of the Nitrate Control Program

Implementation of the nitrate control program requires review of the time schedules that will be proposed in various Management Zone Implementation Plans. A large number of permits within the WDR Program will need to be revised to reflect the new Nitrate Control Program requirements. Program management will participate in the Board's consideration of the Management Zone Implementation Plans and will develop a time schedule for permit amendments based off of input provided by the Board.

Develop General Orders for Mid-Sized Wastewater Treatment Plants, Nut Processing, and Other Food Processors

Staff have identified three groups of discharges that are similar in nature and make up a significant number of backlogged permits that need to be updated. The three groups include: domestic wastewater treatment plants that treat more than 100,000 gallons per day, nut processing, and other food processors. Each of our offices will take the lead to develop one of these General Orders. The adoption of the new General Orders will not only result in increased regulatory consistency, but it will also significantly cut down on our permitting backlog as we enroll facilities under the new General Orders.

Water Quality Certifications Program

Implement Improvements to Achieve Racially Equitable and Streamlined Permit Processing

Staff will continue to develop and implement tools to streamline workflow and help the public better understand and navigate the permitting process. Improvements to achieve higher employee and stakeholder engagement will be made, including enhanced noticing for public participation. Efforts to address both Strategic Plan and racial equity goals will be prioritized through the engagement of tribes and disadvantaged communities in the permitting process; the use of EnviroScreen or a similar tool to better understand the cumulative environmental burdens faced by the community in which the project subject to the certification will be occurring; and translation of notices into languages spoken by stakeholders. Work will continue, primarily through the Caltrans liaison, to prioritize and streamline permitting of Caltrans projects, as per the requirements of AB 1282.

Habitat Restoration Projects

Significant staff resources will be required to advance and expedite habitat restoration and enhancement projects in California's Central Valley. Improvements will be made to increase the efficiency of the permitting process and regulatory review, including implementation of State Water Board's Statewide Restoration General Order. Additional staff resources will also be required for compliance oversight.

Wildfire Mitigation

Staff will begin implementation of the State Water Board's newly-proposed Statewide Electric Utility General Order. A significant increase in workload will be required to develop common understandings of the requirements of this Order, process applications, and conduct compliance and enforcement for activities regulated under this Order.

Post-Sackett Staff Training and Development

Staff training related to the Sackett decision (i.e., wetland delineation training), SB 901 related work, AB 1282 Caltrans work, new General Orders adopted by State Board, federal rule changes, racial equity goals, etc. will be needed in addition to extra program-related training for new staff.

Stormwater Program

Renewal of Regionwide Municipal General Permit

The current Regionwide MS4 General Permit expired in September 2021 and Board staff is working to bring a renewed permit to the Board to adoption in December 2024. Board staff will then work with the regulated permittees to finalize storm water management plans and seek approval by the Board.

Targeted Inspections of Industrial Stormwater Sites

A process to identify cases for follow-up has been developed. Consistent with the Central Valley Water Board's proposed racial equity resolution, consideration of impacts to environmental justice communities may be considered in developing priority rankings, along with documented pollutant benchmark concentration exceedances, repeated failures to submit reports, and failures to collect water quality samples.

Planning, Monitoring and Assessment Programs

Basin Planning

Continued Development of Tribal Beneficial Use Designations

Board staff will continue to focus on the Tribal Beneficial Uses project including the regulatory process of adding the definitions to the Basin Plans and will continue the process of designating waterbodies for Tribal Beneficial Uses.

CV-SALTS

Nitrate Control Program Transition Plan

Board staff, including in the CV-SALTS Program and Permitting Programs, will focus on implementing the Nitrate Control Program Transition Plan. This will involve transferring responsibilities from the Basin Planning Section to a Nitrate Control Program Coordinator and Permitting Program Leads. Responsibilities that will be transferred include tracking permitting pathway selection, correspondence with Path A permittees and Management Zones (Path B), document tracking and review, responding to deliverables, and program reporting.

CV-SALTS staff will continue to provide support for Salt and Nitrate Control Program (SNCP) tracking of program participants, drinking water plans and implementation, answering questions from other Central Valley Water Board program staff (e.g., Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program, Non-15, Confined Animals Unit, etc.) and the public, and providing SNCP training for other program staff as needed.

Nitrate Control Program Implementation Support

CV-SALTS staff will support Permitting Programs' effort to incorporate the Nitrate Control Program Priority 1 Management Zone Implementation Plans (MZIPs) into permit updates. Board staff will also ensure dischargers in Priority 2 groundwater basins comply with the Nitrate Control Program on permitting pathway selection and program requirements and will support the development of new or expanded Management Zones in Priority 2 basins. Staff will continue to serve as Central Valley Water Board liaisons at stakeholder implementation meetings, including Nitrate Control Program Management Zone support meetings. Staff will also continue to support enforcement efforts directed at permittees who do not comply with program requirements.

Salt Control Program Implementation Support

Board staff will continue to support Phase 1 of the Salt Control Program, the Prioritization & Optimization Study, and coordinate with stakeholders to characterize the status of salinity in the Central Valley and evaluate salinity management solutions to inform Phases 2 and 3 of the Salt Control Program.

Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP)

Assessment of American River Map-Based Data Reporting Platform

SWAMP staff will be implementing a pilot project to determine how the map-based platform may be updated to better facilitate outreach to members of the community that frequently visit the river for recreation. This may include recommendations for translation, interphase simplification, and/or other changes to facilitate interaction with community members. It is hoped that the process will be relevant to all SWAMP projects utilizing this platform for posting monitoring information. This project will seek to implement Racial Equity Resolution Goals #1 and #2 for the SWAMP Program.

Nonpoint Source Program

Implementation of NPS 5-Year Plan

Implement projects that address NPS 5-Year Plan focus areas: CV-SALTS, Wildfire Response, Harmful Algal Blooms, Agriculture, Water Quality Impacts from Homelessness. Begin development of the next 5-Year Plan, which will cover 2025-2030. One focus will be on prioritizing implementation efforts for communities based on racial equity and environmental justice concerns.

Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Program

Scientific Peer Review of DMCP

The Delta Mercury Control Program and associated Methylmercury TMDL (DMCP) reconsideration will continue with completion of the Scientific Peer Review process and determination if there are any modifications needed to the DMCP based on more recent

data and information provided in the control and characterization studies. Board staff will also implement an outreach component summarizing the new information and implications to the DMCP, including a Board Workshop.

Administrative Support Program

Racial Equity Work Plan/Resolution/Goals

Coordinate with State Water Board on the development of resources/guides to assist our hiring managers with recruitment efforts to ensure our Region selects the most qualified candidates while following applicable laws and rules, agency processes, provisions of relevant bargaining unit contracts, the State Water Board's Racial Equity Work Plan, and as the Central Valley Water Board's Regional Racial Equity Resolution.

Administrative Support Survey

In a continued effort to improve efficiency, consistency, and quality in our core activities, Administrative Support management and staff will review and evaluate internal processes to develop and enhance efficiency to meet the growing administrative needs in all three offices.

Office Space Reduction and Optimization

Program staff will work continue to work with State Board's Division of Administrative Services and the Department of General Service (DGS) to redesign and reconfigure the Rancho Cordova's office footprint to meet our business and operational needs per DGS' Statewide Telework Policy and the hybrid working environment.

Special Permitting Programs

Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP)

Integration of Drinking Water Well Monitoring with Nitrate Control Program

ILRP staff will continue to work directly with coalition members to fulfill drinking water well monitoring requirements while prioritizing impacted drinking water well user notification. ILRP staff will coordinate with CV-SALTS staff to integrate the ILRP drinking water well monitoring results with the Management Zone efforts under the Nitrate Control Program to ensure persons whose domestic wells are contaminated with nitrates in Priority I and II areas are provided with options to obtain free, safe drinking water.

Updating Groundwater Quality Management Plans

ILRP staff will work with coalition representatives and stakeholders on incorporation of approved Groundwater Protection Targets into existing Groundwater Quality Management Plans. Work will focus on establishing appropriate metrics and milestones,

as well as integration with Management Zone Implementation Plans required under CV-SALTS.

Strategic Engagement with Socially Disadvantaged Growers

ILRP staff will work with UC Extension Small Farms Advisor on developing targeted outreach materials for socially disadvantaged small growers within the region. Participate in field events and meetings. Review quarterly progress reports submitted as part of the discretionary funding contract. Continue to coordinate with the Kings River Water Quality Coalition to update alternative nitrogen reporting requirements (if needed) based on outreach feedback.

Review of Management Zone Implementation Plans for Priority 1 Areas

ILRP staff will review and provide input on proposed Management Zone Implementation Plans (MZIPs), which are required as part of the Nitrate Control Program for the Central Valley. The review will focus on nitrate loading estimates, control strategies, and proposed time schedules for compliance. If the Board considers and approves the MZIPs during FY 24/25, some staff time may be needed to revise the ILRP general orders.

Convening New Agricultural Expert Panel

On 20 September 2023, the State Water Board recently issued an Order in response to a petition of the Central Coast Agricultural Order 4.0. As part of their response, State Board staff will review available data collected by the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program, including data from the Central Valley Region. The review will be presented to the State Board by September 2024 and will include a recommendation on whether sufficient information has been gathered to convene a second agricultural expert panel. If so, some staff time may be required in FY 24/25 to assist in convening the panel.

Oil Fields Program

Identify Priority Outreach Sites in DAC/BIPOC Communities

For FY24/25, program staff will continue developing an inventory list to assess which sites are located near DAC and BIPOC communities. This inventory list and associated CalEnviroScreen scores will be used to identify sites for program work prioritization.

Once priority sites have been identified, program staff will then begin planning for potential outreach meetings with communities near high priority sites to provide information regarding work being performed as part of the Oil Field Program.

Land Disposal Program

Continue Project Prioritization Project to Include CalEnviroScreen Scores

For FY24/25, the Program Manager and program staff will continue to prioritize Title 27 projects for WDR updates. Working through the identified priority case projects. WDRs will be prioritized based on developed criteria, including proximity to DAC and CalEnviroScreen Scores. As part of the prioritization process, an assessment of previous year WDR efforts will occur, to better understand where improvements can be made, and realistic targets set. Part of that effort will be better communication with communities as part of the WDR amendment process.

Assess Composting Efforts

Program Manager and seniors will perform an assessment regarding the amount of effort by staff and number of sites where composting is occurring and/or is in development. The shift to composting organic waste in California (SB 1383) has created an effort burden on staff that needs to be fully assessed.

Confined Animal Facilities Program

Dairy General Order Revision

The Central Valley Water Board participated in meetings with the State Water Board and petitioners as the State Water Board works to draft a remand order potentially requiring significant changes to the Central Valley Water Board's Confined Animal Facility (CAF) Program. Staff anticipate that the remand order for the Dairy General Order will be issued in FY 23/24 and will address pond liner requirements, ponds in shallow groundwater, salt and nutrient loading, and new and expanding dairies. The remand order will also likely result in the need to revise several of the Board's other CAF-related general orders. Staff will prioritize development of general order revisions in FY 24/25 based on direction from the State Water Board following issuance of a remand order. Staff will ensure that development of CAF general orders includes "equitable, culturally relevant community outreach to promote meaningful civil engagement from potentially impacted communities." The revised orders will also include findings that consider impacts on potential environmental justice, tribal impacts, and racial equity considerations that shall be developed in collaboration with affected communities.

CV-SALTS Implementation/Enforcement

Notices to comply were issued to confined animal facilities for both the Nitrate and Salt Control Programs. Staff is working with industry representatives to ensure facilities in Priority 1 areas participate in the applicable Management Zones and that all facilities contribute to the Prioritization and Optimization Study. Staff will continue to prioritize enforcement as necessary to ensure compliance with the notices to comply.

Digesters/Composting/Alternative Manure Management

As a result of grants from the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), approximately 100 digesters have been installed at dairies in the Central Valley over the last several years and more are in process. CDFA has also received \$85 million to fund

alternative manure management practices. Staff will prioritize the review of digester and alternative manure management designs and post-construction reports to ensure they meet CDFA specifications and water quality protection standards. Staff also participates in a multi-agency workgroup to foster on-farm composting and to improve options for transport and use of composted manure by non-dairy farmers who can use the compost as a soil amendment and supplemental source of fertilizer.

Mines Program

Afterthought Mine

Work with USEPA, DTSC, and CalEPA on the listing of the mine on the National Priorities List, which includes compiling relevant information to support publication in the Federal Register of listing proposal.

Newton Mine

Work with Department of Conservation on setting up a funding source to address water quality issues at the mine.

Prioritize Mine Cleanup or Oversight Based on Threat to Water Quality and Disproportionate Environmental Burdens

Staff will select two mine projects for development of SMARTIE goals. For each selected project, staff will develop an individual action plan through enhanced public outreach and tribal engagement.

Efforts on Key Sites

Iron Mountain Mine Superfund Site: Finish development of a three-dimensional mixing model of Keswick Reservoir to assist with assessing the extent of impacts from Spring Creek Debris Dam discharges and developing a long-term strategy to protect water quality and fisheries in Keswick Reservoir and the Sacramento River. Support USEPA in its work towards the OU-6 remedy and an updated Memorandum of Understanding that identifies operational conditions to minimize the threat to water quality.

Sulphur Bank Mercury Mine Superfund Site: Work with USEPA, other agencies, and Tribal governments to identify and select protective remedies to address the mercury flux to Clear Lake from the mine site. Work with stakeholders in oversight and implementation of USEPA's Operable Unit 1 Record of Decision (ROD).

Walker Mine: Oversee ARCO in its implementation of the Cleanup and Abatement Order requirements.

Rising Star Mine: Assess performance of recent site hardening projects. Implement long-term solution for RS-500 mine pool management. Begin preparations for transitioning long-term stewardship from the Lyondell Environmental Custodial Trust to State oversight.

Cannabis Program

Conduct Enrollment Enforcement in Priority Watersheds to Increase Enrollment of Potential Legal Cultivation Sites

Increasing enrollment in the General Order through targeted enrollment enforcement, outreach and education, and coordination with local agencies is a statewide program priority. Water Code section 13260 notices to enroll will be scaled to ensure accountability. Staff will conduct outreach in priority watersheds and in the surrounding county where enrollment enforcement is occurring. Staff will continue to coordinate with local agencies to dovetail General Order enrollment and county use permit application processes.

Create Efficiencies, Improve Workflow, and Reduce Backlog

The program's supporting managers will continue efforts to align resources with workload. These efforts will involve evaluating and making improvements to templates, workflow, document production, and enforcement efforts to increase program efficiency and productivity regionwide and in-line with the 2020 Executive Oversight Committee recommendations.

Forest Activities Program

Pesticide Lab Methodology Development Project

Staff will provide subject matter expertise in the review of new laboratory methods being developed to scan water samples for a long list of pesticides and degradates under the State Water Board's Office of Information Management and Analysis (OIMA) contract with Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP). The resulting accredited and validated method will then be available for use statewide, both by regulatory agencies and the public. Project is expected to be completed March 2025.

Commercial Timber Harvesting Regulatory System Streamlining

Staff will participate in a Lean 6 Sigma analysis of our internal administrative processes as part of a larger, multi-agency analysis, to evaluate potential for permitting system improvements and efficiencies.

Enforcement and Cleanup

Compliance and Enforcement Program

CV-SALTS Compliance Initiative

In FY 20/21, the CV-SALTS Basin Plan amendments became effective and notices to comply were issued to dischargers. Responses have been received in FYs 20/21 and 21/22, with program staff tracking responses in a database or spreadsheet. Responses from these 1000+ facilities have been distributed among multiple program's staff to

review, evaluate, approve, and follow-up. In FY 23/24, Compliance and Enforcement Program staff continued to coordinate with and support CV-SALTS program staff to implement the Salt and Nitrate Control Programs in NPDES permits including issuance of Notices of Deficiency, Notices of Violation, developing permit language, and ongoing enrollment for new dischargers within the Central Valley's priority salt and nitrate control program areas. In FY 24/25, it is anticipated that additional compliance and enforcement support will be needed to support enrollment and compliance with the CV-SALTS program, such as progressive enforcement for those enrollees not making progress.

Enhanced Engagement with Disadvantaged/Environmental Justice Communities

Compliance and Enforcement Program staff, with assistance from the State Board's Office of Public Participation, is continuing to engage with multiple stakeholders in the Central Valley Region including Counties, Cities, Caltrans, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Central Valley Flood Control Board, as well as community residents from the region, to form working groups to tackle environmental justice efforts where similar goals can be accomplished by working cooperatively, leveraging resources, and coordinating efforts. The Compliance and Enforcement Program continues to prioritize, and reprioritize, enforcement cases that rise to the level of urgency utilizing tools such as CalEnviroScreen.

Site Cleanup Program

Site Cleanup Program Ranking

Develop a Site Cleanup Program site ranking system to ensure sites are incorporated into Core work appropriately. This ranking system will include elements of environmental risk, contaminant severity, and will include trackable metrics for addressing sites in overburdened communities. These metrics will be derived from GeoTracker and CalEnviroScreen (e.g. sites in communities with CES scores above 75%).

SCAP Funding Alignment for Cases in Disadvantaged Communities

Ensure cleanup cases in disadvantaged communities with limited progress are nominated for or encouraged to apply for funding through the State Water Board's SCAP funding programs.

Review Public Outreach Procedures

Program staff will review public outreach procedures. Where necessary, staff will coordinate with the State Water Board's Office of Public Participation to ensure outreach is consistent with the requirement of AB 2108.

Priority Cleanup Cases

The Site Cleanup Program includes several sites identified as priority sites due to the threat they pose to groundwater and human health. Projects expected to require

significant staff oversight time include the UPRR Dunsmuir case, the Aerojet-Rocketdyne case, the Sacramento Railyards case, and the Modern Cleaners case.

Emerging contaminants

Site Cleanup Program staff expect that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will finalize the Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) for PFAS during the 2024 calendar year. In response, staff anticipate the need to assess and prioritize the investigation of PFAS affected sites in the Central Valley Region. These sites will be integrated into the site ranking system described above.

Underground Storage Tank Program

Continue to Incorporate EnviroScreen Scores in Case Prioritization

UST cases will continue to be prioritized based on developed criteria, including the Racial Equity goals outlined in the Board's Racial Equity Resolution. More specifically this could include proximity to DAC and CalEnviroScreen Scores. Efforts to continue outreach to DAC, including timely notifications in applicable languages are a priority.

Our staff will continue to lay the groundwork with State Board to facilitate timely funding arrival for identified sites. In terms of pressing UST work in FY24/25, a list of potential single walled UST sites have been identified and a confirmation and prioritization effort (that includes Racial Equity criteria) can done in advance of the 12/31/25 closure deadline.