Overview

Nonpoint source pollution is the leading cause of water quality impairment in California. The primary nonpoint sources in the Central Valley include runoff and percolation from land use activities related to agriculture, timber harvests, cannabis cultivation, abandoned mines, recreation, and urban and rural development. The goal of the Central Valley Nonpoint Source Program (NPS Program) is to restore waters impacted by NPS pollution and protect unimpaired water bodies by assessing problem sources and implementing management programs.

The Central Valley NPS Program implements the statewide California Nonpoint Program Implementation Plan for 2014-2020 (Six-Year Implementation Plan), which was approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) in August 2015. The purpose of this plan is to improve the State’s ability to effectively manage NPS pollution and conform to the requirements of the federal Clean Water Act and the federal Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendments of 1990. The Six-Year Implementation Plan focuses on impaired water bodies and water bodies that face immediate water quality threats from new and expanding development.

The Central Valley NPS Program encompasses several programs and more than 70 staff who are working together to address NPS pollution. State funding supports the majority of NPS Program staff time. The USEPA provides a limited amount of funding from the Clean Water Act Section 319(h) grant program (“319(h) funding”) to implement Six-Year Implementation Plan activities that are consistent with federal nonpoint source priorities, with focus on impaired water bodies. Section 319(h) funding supported ~5% of all FY2016-17 staff time for Central Valley NPS Program efforts. The second page of this fact sheet describes Section 319(h)-funded activities.

Six-Year Implementation Plan Initiatives

The Six-Year Implementation Plan identifies the following six “initiatives” where the Central Valley NPS Program and its associated programs will focus their efforts; associated programs are noted in parentheses and are described in separate program-specific fact sheets.

1. Protect Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Beneficial Uses (Delta Program and TMDL Program)
2. Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability (CV-SALTS Program)
3. Dairies (Confined Animal Facility Program)
4. Irrigated Lands (Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program)
5. Timber Harvest Activities and Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements (Forest Activities Program)
6. Protect Threatened and High Quality Waters (multiple programs, including above programs, Water Quality Certification Program and Mining Program)

The Six-Year Implementation Plan identifies goals and performance measures for each of the initiatives. The Six-Year Implementation Plan also identifies a set of “targeted waterbody-pollutant combinations” with water quality improvement goals designed to demonstrate the success of NPS Program activities. Targeted waterbody-pollutant combinations include pesticides in the Delta and its tributaries, phosphorus and mercury in Clear Lake, selenium in Mud Slough, among others.
Accomplishments of 319(h)-Funded Activities FY 2016-2017

1. Supported stakeholder efforts to implement the Clear Lake Nutrient Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Control Program and initiated development of a report on implementation progress
2. Implemented the Grasslands Bypass Project Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) under the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program, which implements the San Joaquin River, Mud Slough, and Grasslands Bypass Selenium TMDLs
3. Implemented WDR-required pesticide management plans under the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program, which implement pesticide TMDLs
4. Managed three 319(h) grant projects continued from the previous year, managed two new Timber Fund grant projects, and executed agreements for three new Timber Fund grant projects
5. Worked with power companies to update their maintenance plans and schedules to more effectively reduce sediment discharges from power-line corridor maintenance roads
6. Assessed and implemented enforcement to reduce sediment and metals discharges from shooting ranges that discharge to high-quality, threatened, and impaired waters
7. Participated in the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) planning process
8. Conducted 319(h) and Timber fund grant proposal review and selection process, provided performance reports to the USEPA, and identified measures to account for climate change factors and potential NPS water quality impacts

Unaddressed Work

During the year all Section 319(h) Work Plan goals were substantially met except for completing a report to the Central Valley Water Board on implementation progress for the Clear Lake nutrients TMDL. The primary reason for this is Section 319(h)-funded positions had an approximately 20% vacancy rate for FY 2016-17 (0.7 PY in two positions that were to develop the report). Section 319(h)-funded positions enter FY 2017-18 with no vacancies.

319(h)-Funded Priority Projects FY 2017-2018

There are five types of 319(h)-funded priority projects planned for FY17/18: TMDL implementation, grant management, evaluation of cyanobacteria and other harmful algae blooms (cyanoHABs), erosion and sediment control, and watershed management planning. The priority projects include the following:
1. Implement the Clear Lake Nutrient TMDL
2. Implement the San Joaquin River Selenium TMDL
3. Implement pesticide TMDLs and pesticide management plans
4. Manage 319(h) grants
5. CyanoHAB evaluation
6. Erosion control for power-line corridors
7. Erosion and metals control for shooting ranges
8. Participate in the Integrated Regional Water Management planning process
9. Grant proposal review, development of success stories, and other program administration