



Irrigated Lands Conditional Waiver Program News
California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Central Valley Region



Issue 3

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Irrigated Lands Conditional Waiver Program Update

In July 2003, through [Resolution No. R5-2003-0105, Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Discharges from Irrigated Lands within the Central Valley](#) (Conditional Waiver), the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) adopted the Irrigated Lands Conditional Waiver Program. In the past eighteen months, Regional Board staff implemented education and outreach efforts to assist dischargers to understand how the new Conditional Waiver requirements apply to them.

If you are a discharger from irrigated lands, as defined in the Conditional Waiver, and have not yet applied for coverage either through a coalition group or as an individual discharger, you must contact your local coalition group or the Regional Board immediately to avoid potential enforcement actions and/or monetary fines.

If you have questions regarding the Condition Waiver Program or would like to invite a Regional Board staff person to give an informational presentation to your group or organization, please contact the Irrigated Lands Conditional Waiver Program staff at the Regional Board office at (916) 464-3291 or IrrLands@waterboards.ca.gov.

As of January 2005, nine coalition groups representing central valley region growers have filed for coverage under the Coalition Group Conditional Waiver. Eight of these groups received a Notice of Applicability from the Regional Board Executive Officer. The newest coalition group that formed is lead by the Goose Lake Regional Conservation District (RCD), and represents growers in the Goose Lake Basin in Modoc County. Regional Board staff has been working closely with each of the coalition groups to approve their Monitoring and Reporting Program (MRP) Plans, and the recent Notice of Intent submitted by the Goose Lake RCD. Consequently, the Regional Board Executive Officer has issued five Coalition Group MRP Plan approvals and one conditional approval. The approval of two coalition group MRP Plans is still pending.

The Irrigated Lands Conditional Waiver Program formed a Program Advisory Committee (PAC) and a Technical Issues Committee (TIC). The PAC provides stakeholders the opportunity to discuss issues related to the implementation of the Conditional Waiver Program. The next PAC meeting is scheduled for 14 February 2005 at the Modesto Ag Center. The TIC, and corresponding focus groups that have formed as a result of the October 2004 TIC Meeting, provide Coalition Groups, growers, agencies and other interested parties a forum to discuss various issues related to the implementation of scientifically defensible monitoring programs, which characterize agricultural discharges and their impact on water quality.

TIC focus groups formed include:

- The Bioassessment Group,
- The Sampling Containers Group,
- The Toxicity Group, and
- The Data Interpretation and Sediment Group.

The focus groups are meeting periodically to discuss the specific issues. The next TIC is scheduled for 16 February 2005 at the Regional Board's office in Sacramento.

Irrigated Lands Conditional Waiver "Tune Up"

The Regional Board is in the process of "tuning up" the Conditional Waivers to further clarify the regulatory requirements. The proposed modifications were presented to the Regional Board at their January 2005 Meeting as an information item only. The public will have the opportunity to comment on the proposed "tune up" items through the public participation process as the modified conditional waivers proceed towards Regional Board adoption later in 2005. If the Conditional Waiver are not tuned up during the year, it will expire on 31 December 2005 unless otherwise revised, rescinded or extending by the Regional Board.

To download a copy of the Staff Report for the January 2005 Information Item go to the Irrigated Lands Conditional Waiver Program website at http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/programs/irrigated_lands/index.html.

Electronic Distribution of Program Information

Program information and Regional Board Meeting agenda items are available electronically on the Board website <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/rwqcb5/> by clicking the



Button,

or by visiting:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/rwqcb5/programs/irrigated_lands/index.html

We encourage interested parties to sign up and receive program information electronically through the Irrigated Lands Electronic Subscription Service by following the instructions provided on the website. The link to the Subscription Service is http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/lyrisforms/reg5_subscribe.html. Program information updates will include how irrigated lands stakeholders can be involved in the public participation process of important regulatory items under development, including the Regional Board's Conditional Waivers "Tune-Up" Item proposed to be considered for adoption in during 2005.

The Irrigated Lands Conditional Waiver informational brochure providing basic program information is located at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/rwqcb5/programs/irrigated_lands/ag_waiver_brochure.pdf

For further assistance regarding the Conditional Waiver Program, please contact the Regional Board at (916) 464-3291, or send an email to IrrLands@waterboards.ca.gov

Monitoring and Reporting Program Workshop

Coalition Group Monitoring and Reporting Program Annual Reports are due 1 April 2005. Regional Board staff conducted a Monitoring and Reporting Program Annual Report Workshop on 11 January 2005, at the Regional Board office. The workshop objective was to help the Coalition Groups how to prepare for Annual Monitoring Report. If you have any questions about the Monitoring and Reporting Program Annual Report requirements, please contact Shakoora Azimi-Gaylon at (916) 464-4852 or sazimi-gaylon@waterboards.ca.gov

Irrigated Lands Monitoring Projects

Phase I Monitoring

UC Davis completed and submitted a draft Phase I report for review and comment. The draft report was sent to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Coalition Groups for review and comment. A meeting was held on 10 November 2004 to discuss a summary of the report and receive comments from the TAC and the Coalition Groups. By 1 March 2005, after the TAC, Water Districts and the Coalition Groups comments have been received and considered, the final Phase I report will be posted on the Regional Board website.

Phase II Monitoring

The Phase II Monitoring Program for the 2004 Irrigation Season was completed on 16 August 2004 in the South San Joaquin River watersheds and on 16 September 2004 in the remaining watersheds. Thirty-two sites were monitored for toxicity and multiple chemical constituents. Sites were monitored five times during this monitoring season. Staff provided information to the Coalition Groups when toxicity was observed. The Phase II data will be posted on the Regional Board web site as soon as the final data are available. The Regional Board contractor will also enter this information into the SWAMP data management system. Staff are currently working in designing the monitoring sites for the Storm Event. The proposed monitoring sites for the storm event monitoring have been provided to the Coalition Groups for review and coordination.

If you have any questions about the Phase I or II Monitoring efforts, please send them by email to sazimi-gaylon@waterboards.ca.gov or by mail to:

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This newsletter was prepared by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board Irrigated Lands Conditional Waiver Section. This newsletter will be published periodically to inform interested parties of the activities and documents available related to the Irrigated Lands Conditional Waiver Program.