

California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Colorado River Basin



June 2017 Executive Officer's Report

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Activities and Events Hosted by Region 7:

- **June 12**—Regional Water Board staff met with representatives of the City of Palm Springs (City) Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) to discuss City’s concerns about the proposed Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) staff drafted for the City WWTP. Following the meeting, Regional Water Board staff re-issued revised draft WDRs for public review and comments. The new draft WDRs are scheduled for consideration of adoption by the Regional Water Board at its September 2017 meeting. [*Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.*]
- **June 15**—Regional Water Board staff hosted State Water Board Office of Enforcement attorneys to discuss potential enforcement cases in our region. [*Jeong-Hee Lim, WRCE, PhD., P.E.*]
- **June 20**— Regional Water Board staff hosted the Salton Sea Management Program (SSMP) Outreach Committee meeting. During the meeting, it was reported that Tetra-Tech is scheduled to release details of a water quality evaluation (includes hydrology, drought contingency, etc.), but the release date not yet announced. Salton Sea Assistant Secretary Bruce Wilcox stated that residents on the east and west sides feel left behind, because current restoration efforts are focused to the north and south of the Sea. He remarked the need to reach out them to provide more detailed information about the SSMP. CNRA staff is seeking to record Bruce Wilcox’s presentation at an upcoming event. They hope to use the video for future presentations so that Bruce won’t have to give the presentations in person. [*Maria Davydova, ES; and Jeff Geraci, Senior ES*]
- **June 27**—Regional Water Board staff met with Mr. Nikola Lakic of Geothermal Worldwide to hear his presentation for restoring the Salton Sea. His proposal included many components including a sea-to-sea pipeline and the generation of thousands of acre feet of brine, combined with geothermal energy generation utilizing semi-novel technology. According to his numbers, his proposal to restore the Sea would exceed \$9 billion. Staff is also concerned that his current proposal includes introduction of non-native fish species and reptiles into the Sea, including dolphins and alligators. [*Jeff Geraci, Senior ES*]
- **June 28**—Doug Wylie and Jose Cortez hosted a meeting for a coordination group of staff from Regional Water Boards 7, 8, and 9; and representatives of Riverside County Department of Environmental Health (DEH) to discuss implementation of the County’s Local Agency Management Program (LAMP). [*Doug Wylie, Senior WRCE, P.E.*]
- **June 29**—Regional Water Board staff conducted a Salton Sea Tour for new State Water Board member Joaquin Esquivel. Other tour participants included California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) Salton Sea Assistant Secretary Bruce Wilcox, Regional Water Board Chair Wright, Regional Water Board member Ed Muzik, Jose L. Angel, and Jeff Geraci. Staff from the Sony Bono National Wildlife Refuge provided a boat tour to see areas where the proposed dust control measures and replacement habitat will be located under the Agency’s ten-year plan for the Salton Sea. Board Member Mr. Crites joined tour participants for lunch. A scheduled helicopter tour had to be rescheduled, due to unforeseen complications with the helicopter’s electronics system. [*Jeff Geraci, Senior ES*]
- **June 30**—Regional Water Board staff conducted a New River Tour in the Calexico area for Assemblyman Eduardo Garcia, Senator Ben Hueso, and Mr. Joaquin Esquivel. The purpose of the tour was to provide Assemblyman Garcia, Senator Hueso, and Mr. Esquivel with an overview of New River pollution from Mexico and an update on the New River Improvement Project (NRIP). Chair Nancy Wright and Regional Water Board member Jayne Powell participated in the tour. Jose L. Angel provided the overview of New River

pollution from Mexico, and Assistant Executive Officer Frank Gonzalez presented the update on the NRIP. [*Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.*]

Key Policy Correspondence and Orders Issued on Behalf of the Board

- **June 1**—The Regional Water Board Executive Officer issued two Water Quality Certifications Orders for Caltrans. One Order is for Caltrans' proposed widening of US Route 95, which involves installation of ground-in rumble strips along the centerline and outside shoulders of the highway, roadway excavation, cleaning and grubbing, and re-paving. The other Order is for removing and reconstructing the slope protection structural provisions at South Fork Piute Wash on I-40. [*Kai Dunn, Senior WRCE, PhD, P.E.*]
- **June 20**—The Executive Officer sent a letter to Earthrise Nutritionals (Discharger) informing the Discharger that its ROWD was incomplete. The letter requests that by July 5, 2017, the Discharger submit a proposed plan with milestones and a time schedule to file a complete ROWD to bring its discharges of industrial wastewater into compliance with applicable state regulations. The letter transmits a Regional Water Board staff memorandum that lists the deficiencies of the ROWD. [*Jennie Snyder, WRCE, P.E.*]
- **June 28**—The Executive Officer issued a Notice of Violation to the City of Calipatria for failure to meet the terms of Settlement specified in Administrative Civil Liability Order R7-2012-0025. The NOV requires that the City pay \$108,000 in liability within 30 days of the date of the NOV. [*Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.*]
- **June 28**—The Executive Officer issued a Water Quality Certification Order to the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) company to replace the bridge along Mainline 2 (west track) at Mile 657.37 on the UPRR Yuma Subdivision, which is approximately 2.5 miles northeast of the community of Wister in Imperial County, California. The new bridge is needed to meet to comply with Federal Railroad Administration regulations and UPRR safety and design standards. The bridge and rail line support Amtrak passenger service through Riverside County and the replacement will maintain and improve both freight and passenger rail service. [*Kai Dunn, Senior WRCE, P.E.*]

New River Pollution from Mexico

- **June 5**—Frank Gonzalez met with representatives of the Customs and Border Protection in Calexico to discuss the proposed trash screen for the New River at the Border. [*Frank Gonzalez, AEO, P.E.*]
- **June 9**—The Executive Officer participated in a teleconference with representatives of CalEPA and State Water Board to discuss the raw sewage discharges from Mexicali into the New River and options to address the problem. [*Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.*]
- **June 13**—The Executive Officer participated in a teleconference with representatives of CalEPA and USEPA to discuss funding opportunities to enable Mexico to acquire equipment to prevent bypasses of raw sewage from Mexicali into the New River. USEPA recommended that Mexico apply to the NADBank/BECC for the equipment, but as part of an overall project to fix the sewage infrastructure in Mexicali. The NADBank/BECC funding process can take up to 2 years to complete. [*Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.*]
- **June 26**—Frank Gonzalez prepared and submitted to State Water Board a revised scope of work to contract out professional services for the design and environmental documentation for the Phase 1 the New River Improvement Project (NRIP) for Calexico. [*Frank Gonzalez, AEO, P.E.*]

- **June 27**— The Executive Officer participated via telephone in a meeting of CalEPA's Border Coordinators and provided an update on the Regional Water Board's border activities. [*Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.*]

Groundwater Protection Activities

- **June 1**—Regional Water Board staff participated in a teleconference with Brett McDaniel of Environmental Technologies to discuss *Path to Closure* for the Callan Oil Highway 78 tanker spill near Ripley, California. The spill occurred in the Spring of 2017, releasing approximately 4500 gallons of petroleum to the roadway and ground surface. Impacted soils were characterized/excavated, and four groundwater monitoring wells installed. Analytical data from the initial sampling event (May, 2017) indicate no impacts to groundwater. Site closure will be considered pending additional groundwater analyses. [*Theresa Kimsey, ES*]
- **June 15**—Regional Water Board staff participated in a *Joint Execution Team (JET)* meeting via teleconference with the claimant for the former Coachella Valley Minimex (located on Avenue 66, in Mecca, California), the claimant's consultant, and State Water Board staff. The purpose of the meeting was to assess expanding the remediation system to address groundwater contamination and a potential soil-vapor threat southwest of the site. [*Kola Olatunboson, WRCE*]
- **June 16**—Jose L. Angel and Jennie Snyder met with representatives of the Earthrise Nutritionals (Discharger) algae harvesting facility near Calipatria and then toured the facility. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss permitting requirements for the Facility, including requirements for a proposed double-lined, 2.5-acre evaporation pond adjacent to other disposal ponds. The Discharger submitted a Report of Waste Discharge (ROWD) on May 2, 2017 for the facility. During the meeting, Regional Water Board staff discussed technical deficiencies of the ROWD and provided regulatory guidance to the Discharger to bring onsite discharges in compliance with applicable state regulations. [*Jennie Snyder, WRCE, P.E.*]
- **June 21**—Doug Wylie met in Palm Desert with Facility Project Manager Gary Koontz of Burrtec Waste Industries, Inc. to discuss the Coachella Valley Compost facility in Coachella, currently permitted under Board Order R7-2008-0003. The EIR for the facility expansion was approved by Riverside County on May 23, 2017. Burrtec plans to submit a Notice of Intent to enroll in the State Water Board Order WQ 2015-0121-DWQ General WDRs for Composting Operations, and then request rescission by the Regional Board of the individual WDRs Order R7-2008-0003. [*Doug Wylie, Senior WRCE, P.E.*]
- **June 22**— The Executive Officer met with the representatives of One World Beef (OWB) in Brawley to discuss the status of OWB's proposed BioFiltro wastewater treatment plant.
- **June 27**—Doug Wylie and Abid Khalaf held a teleconference with Steve Jones, Manager of the Riverside County Service Area 62, owner/operators of Ripley Wastewater Treatment Plant to discuss proposed WDRs for the WWTP. [*Abid Khalaf, WRCE*]
- **June 28**—Staff from Region 7, 8, and 9 met with representatives of Riverside County Department of Environmental Health (DEH) to discuss implementation of the County's Local Agency Management Program (LAMP). The Colorado River Basin Regional Water Board adopted the Riverside County LAMP on November 17, 2016. The coordination group continues to provide outreach to the 27 incorporated cities in the County. The goal

of the outreach is for the incorporated cities to enter into formalized contractual agreements with the DEH that allow the DEH to provide technical services to the cities for regulation, installation, and management of Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) under the County's LAMP. The contractual agreements can identify the specific responsibilities of the cities and the DEH under the LAMP. DEH currently provides technical services to many of the cities in the county, though Banning and Desert Hot Springs are not using these services. The DEH will continue to provide these services to the cities without a contractual agreement until May 13, 2018.

- **June 28**—Regional Water Board staff finalized *Path to Closure* activities, including closure documents, for the following 5 Underground Storage Tank (UST) cases: Danny Barnes Automotive; Mobil #18 H57; Shell Minimart; Texaco Station Quick Check; and Value Service Station. UST releases from these sites are part of a comingled petroleum plume located on East Hobsonway in Blythe, California. Closing these Sites is a significant achievement, and satisfies the performance projection for site closure for fiscal year 2016/2017 for the Region's UST/SLC Unit. [Phan Le, WRCE]
- **June 2017**—Regional Water Board staff completed the Annual Case Review for all Region 7 UST and Spills/Leaks/Complaints cases (approximately 90). This effort results in updating the Low Threat Case Closure Program Checklist for each site, assessable in the Geotracker database. [Phan Le, WRCE, Kola Olatunboson, WRCE, and Theresa Kimsey, ES]

Other Policy and Program Meetings

- **June 5**—Regional Water Board staff attended the first Salton Sea Management Program (SSMP) "All-Committees" meeting. The meeting was facilitated by Consensus Building Institute (CBI) and held at the College of the Desert Thermal Campus. Attending staff were Maria Davydova of the Outreach Committee, Jeff Geraci of the Long Range Planning Committee, and Jeong-Hee Lim of the Science Committee. Assistant Secretary for the Salton Sea Bruce Wilcox gave a presentation on the status of the SSMP and the 10-year plan. CBI presented results of a survey to assess Salton Sea stakeholder engagement process, as well as a new proposed structure and meeting schedule for the advisory committees. CBI committed to take comments into consideration and come back with a more detailed revised proposed structure after discussion with CNRA. [Maria Davydova, ES; et al.]
- **June 6**—Regional Water Board participated in a teleconference organized by the State Attorney General (Los Angeles Office). The purpose of the teleconference was to discuss potential water rights and water quality concerns about the proposed Cadiz Project. The proposed project has two phases. Phase 1 involves installation of a network of groundwater wells to extract approximately 50,000 acre-feet of groundwater per year from the areal aquifer in the Cadiz Valley and sell the water to water purveyors in Southern California. Phase 2 consists of getting excess surface water from either the State Water Project or the Colorado River and storage it in the areal aquifer for later use. Regional Water Board staff is concerned about potential loss of intermittent beneficial uses of areal surface waters, among other regulatory concerns for Phase 1. For Phase 2, staff is concerned about groundwater degradation if Colorado River water ever becomes available for the project. Other meeting participants included State Water Board staff from the Division of Water Rights. [Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.]
- **June 8, 2017**—Francisco Costa participated via teleconference in the Non-point Source Program Roundtable meeting. The main topics discussed in the meeting were the CWA

Section 319 Grants, including: (1) an update on 2017 Grant applications (total expected funding, adjustments to PYs, and additional projects, with no changes for Region 7); (2) an update on 2016 Grant Agreements; (3) outreach materials for 2016 grantees; and (4) the status of the 2018 Grant Guidelines. [*Francisco Costa, PhD, ES*]

- **June 10**—Regional Water Board staff participated the Desert Task Force meeting. Other meeting participants included representatives from Riverside County Flood Control District, Riverside County Transportation Department, CVWD, City of Banning, Indio, La Quinta, Palm Desert, Palm Springs, Rancho Mirage, Indian Wells, and Cathedral City. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an update of the storm water program and share information with permittee for implementation of storm water program. Implementation of Trash Provision for MS4 program was discussed during the meeting. [*Jeong-Hee Lim, WRCE, PhD, P.E.; Kai Dunn, Senior WRCE, PhD., P.E.*]
- **June 15**—Jeff Geraci attended the Salton Sea Authority’s regular monthly meeting, which was held in El Centro. During the meeting, it was announced that SB701 has passed the Senate. This bill would enact the Salton Sea Obligations Act of 2018, which, if approved by the voters, would authorize the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$500,000,000 pursuant to the State General Obligation Bond Law to finance a program to comply with specified state obligations relating to the Salton Sea. This bill would go for voter approval at the November 6, 2018, statewide general election. Phil Johnson presented the Authority’s revised website, which was prepared by a hired contractor. It includes a GIS project showing land use at Salton Sea (Tribal lands, energy producers, etc.). Phil Rosentrater announced the Authority Board has approved its annual budget. He added the Authority intends to form an ad-hoc legislative committee to advance Authority’s interests. He also reported that the Bureau of Reclamation is meeting with tribes in the Region to bring them into the restoration efforts. [*Jeff Geraci, Senior ES*]
- **June 15**—Regional Water Board staff attended the Storm Water Program Roundtable Meeting, which was held at San Diego Regional Water Board office. Implementation of Trash Provision for MS4 program was a major topic for discussion among Regional Boards and State Board. [*Kai Dunn, Senior WRCE, Ph.D., P.E.*]
- **June 17**—The Executive Officer represented the Regional Water Board at a meeting of the Imperial County Local Agency Formation Commission in El Centro. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss potential dissolution of the Niland Sanitary District. Jose provided testimony regarding the terms of the liability Settlement the Regional Water Board reached with the District in March 2017. [*Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.*]
- **June 20**—Regional Water Board Chair Wright, Jose L. Angel, and Jeff Geraci attended the “Saving the Salton Sea” forum sponsored by UC Riverside (UCR), at the UCR Palm Desert Campus. Speakers at the event included Salton Sea Assistant Secretary Bruce Wilcox, Salton Sea Authority Executive Director Phil Rosentrater, Kim Delfino of Defenders of Wildlife, who shared their perspective about the Sea’s problems and ongoing efforts to address them. [*Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.*]
- **June 22**—Nadim Shukry-Zewar participated via teleconference in the TMDL Roundtable meeting. Key topics discussed during the meeting included: (1) Updates by representatives of Regional Water Boards, State Water Board, and USEPA on the TMDL Program; (2) Program management and updates by the new State Board Program Manager Rebecca Fitzgerald; (3) Discretionary contracts and role of the Roundtable in reviewing and ranking proposals; (4) Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS)

Policy TMDL Requirements; and (5) Preparations for the August 24, 2017 TMDL Roundtable meeting. [*Nadim Shukry-Zeywar, Senior ES, PhD*]

- **June 26**—Regional Water Board staff briefed California Department of Food and Agriculture staff about proposed General WDRs for discharges of agricultural wastewater and discharges from drain operation and maintenance activities in the Palo Verde Valley and Palo Verde Mesa. The proposed General WDRs would supersede the existing Conditional Waiver of WDRs for these discharges. [*Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.*]
- **June 27**—Regional Water Board staff participated in the Water Quality Certification Program Roundtable meeting by teleconference. The major topics discussed during the Roundtable were: (1) U.S. Waters Rule status; (2) Certification Expiration Date; and (3) fees for WQC. [*Kai Dunn, Senior WRCE, PhD., P.E.*]

Outreach and Education Activities

- **June 22**—The Executive Officer met with staff from One World Beef who operate and maintain the onsite WWTF to explain the Board's monitoring and reporting requirements for WWTF. [*Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.*]
- **June 13 and 29**—Maria Davydova assisted the Natural Resources Agency with planning a series of seven community workshops to inform public of the status of the Salton Sea Management Program. She also is attending some of the workshops in person to provide further assistance. [*Maria Davydova, ES*]
- **June 20**—Jeff Geraci represented the Regional Water Board in the SSMP Outreach Committee meeting, which was hosted by the Board. [*Jeff Geraci, Senior ES*]

Management Meetings

- Regional Water Board Executive staff and supervisors met twice during the June 2017. The main issues discussed during the meetings included status of workload commitments and Board priorities, upcoming Board meetings workshops, vacancies, and staff's performance appraisals for SFY 2016-17. [*Frank Gonzalez, AEO, P.E.*]

Environmental Justice

- **June 27**—Maria Davydova participated via conference call in the monthly CalEPA Environmental Justice Liaisons meeting. CalEPA staff informed the liaisons that a new Assistant Secretary for EJ has been hired and will be joining future meetings. The State Water Board Office of Public Participation staff announced that hard copies of the 2017 edition Citizen's Guide to Working with the Water Boards are now available in hard copy. The Spanish version is expected to be approved by the end of the summer. [*Maria Davydova, ES*]
- **June 28**—Maria Davydova represented the Regional Water Board in the Coachella Valley Environmental Justice Task Force monthly meeting in Indio. The task force did not have any new environmental reports to discuss from ivan-coachella.org. Coachella Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District reported increased West Nile Virus activity in the east of the Coachella Valley. [*Maria Davydova, ES*]
- **June 22**—Jose Figueroa-Acevedo represented the Board at the Imperial Valley Environmental Task Force meeting in El Centro. The main topics discussed during the

meeting continued to be air pollution problems in the Imperial Valley. [*Jose Figueroa-Acevedo, WRCE*]

Staff Training and Professional Development

- **June 6**—Jeff Geraci was promoted to Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist). Among other key projects, Jeff will be responsible for handling water quality matters regarding the Salton Sea. He is currently lead for the 2017 Basin Plan Triennial Review. Congratulations Jeff! [*Frank Gonzalez, AEO, P.E.*]
- **June 15**—Roselyn Fleming participated via teleconference in the California Environmental Exchange Network (CEDEN) Management Meeting Teleconference. The training included discussions on CEDEN database improvement, data for CWA Section 303(d) assessment and Regional Data Center contracts. [*Rosalyn Fleming, WRCE*]
- **June 22**—Regional Water Board staff attended one day workshop on development of Industrial Pretreatment Programs. The workshop was held at San Francisco Bay Regional Board Oakland office, and covered development and review of local limits and other key pretreatment program issues. [*Jeong-Hee Lim, WRCE, Ph.D., P.E.*]
- **June 20-22**—Maria Davydova attended the Introduction to Environmental Statistics Training in Riverside. [*Maria Davydova, ES*]

Other Salient Events

- **June 7, 2017**—Regional Water Board conducted the monthly sampling event of the New River at the International Boundary with Mexico in Calexico. Logan Raub prepared equipment, field book, and chain of custody forms and reserved a vehicle for the sampling event. Kola Olatunbosun and Jose Figueroa-Acevedo (WRCEs) collected water samples and delivered them to a local laboratory for analysis. [*Logan Raub, ES*]
- **Retirement**—Robert Perdue, Supervising Engineering Geologist, is retiring after 28 years of State Service. His last day in the office was June 29, 2017 and his official retirement date is July 14, 2017. [*Jose L. Angel, EO, P.E.*]

Office Visitors and Public Records Act Request

- During the month of May, the Regional Water Board received and responded to 13 PRAs; and it had 30 visitors. [*Hilda Vasquez, SSM*]