

**Summary of key Issues Discussed during the Triennial Review Workshop  
on April 17, 2017**

**1- Incorporate Revised 2012 U.S. EPA Recreational Water Quality Criteria for Bacteria**

*Board Members:*

- a. Would like to know how staff will handle resulting changes to National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits.

*Public:*

- a. What is the driving force for this, is it to de-list impaired water bodies? Will the reduced monitoring requirements still provide staff with enough data on whether or not this is compliant with BU's? Have you considered other monitoring methods?

*Jose Angel, Regional Water Board Executive Officer:*

- a. US EPA revised indicator organisms from a set of three to just one – Escherichia coli (E. coli).
- b. This will affect National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) facilities' Monitoring and Reporting Program (MRP) requirements. The MRPs will be updated accordingly following standard public hearing and comment period requirements.
- c. This change may also affect impaired surface water listings if a water body is not impaired based on the new regulations, such as the Palo Verde outfall drain and lagoon.
- d. The motivation is not to delist but to have an appropriate standard. USEPA conducted extensive studies to come up with this recommendation to use E. coli and/or enterococcus for fresh surface waters and only enterococcus for saline water.
- e. Regional Water Board staff are aware of some of the new methods to analyze indicator bacteria. However, for regulatory purposes, all analyzing methods need to be approved by the USEPA

**2- Conduct regular monitoring throughout the summer 2017 for cyanotoxins and microcystins (as well as enterococcus) at popular Salton Sea recreation areas**

*[No Discussion]*

**3- Update the Basin Plan discussion concerning New River Developments and projects.**

*Jose Angel, Regional Water Board Executive Officer:*

- a. Additionally, the updated discussion should evaluate what has happened since the completion of the binational projects and identify emerging problems.

**4- Assess increasing trend in chlorpyrifos and pyrethroid pesticide detections and associated toxicity in ag drains.**

*[No Discussion]*

**5- Make monitoring preparations for establishing baseline conditions for sediment and water quality for the proposed aquatic habitats at Salton Sea**

*Jose Angel, Regional Water Board Executive Officer:*

- a. Staff will evaluate the habitat proposed by California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA).

**6- Evaluate the potential for bioaccumulation of selenium, pesticides, PCBs and PBDEs in constructed wetlands.**

*Jose Angel, Regional Water Board Executive Officer:*

- a. This item needs to be completed before moving forward with CNRA's shallow water habitat proposal.

**7- Correct General Errors and Outdated or Obsolete Information Contained in the Basin Plan**

*Jose Angel, Regional Water Board Executive Officer:*

- a. The proposed changes are intended to make the Basin Plan easier to read.

**8- Identify sources of ammonia that are causing toxicity in the Coachella Valley Storm Water Channel**

*Jose Angel, Regional Water Board Executive Officer:*

- a. The work on this issue is partially done.
- b. The region's Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP) has shown that there is toxicity in the channel due to ammonia. Staff need to identify the sources in order to provide recommendations for source control.

**9- Municipal Beneficial Use de-designation for groundwaters with exceedingly high TDS**

*Jose Angel, Regional Water Board Executive Officer:*

- a. When the Basin Plan was adopted in 1970's, there was limited information about groundwater quality throughout the region, and hence all groundwater basins were given blanket designation of the municipal and domestic supply (MUN).
- b. In accordance with State Water Board's Sources of Drinking Water policy (Resolution 88-63), some of the region's groundwater basins may not be suitable for such use because of high Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) concentrations.
- c. MUN designation in groundwater basins with high TDS has been a problem when drafting permits for Imperial Valley. De-designating these groundwaters for MUN would help avoid requiring dischargers to comply

with MUN Water Quality Objectives when the receiving groundwater is not a potential source of drinking water.

- d. Staff would make de-designations of individual basins as necessary information becomes available.
- e. This would be a comprehensive amendment which would start with Imperial Valley and may expand to other areas as well.

### **10-2014 Triennial Review Issue: Research Threats To Groundwater Quality From Septic System Wastewater Discharges [in the La Quinta Cove]**

#### *Board Members:*

- a. Add this item back to the list. The region needs a groundwater study that would apply to the entire region
- b. Want Staff to develop a prioritized list of areas at risk from septic discharges based on groundwater data.
- c. Staff need to address effects of septic systems on groundwater, and focus on finding the biggest risks and work on them.
- d. Complete the Salt and Nutrient Management Plans.
- e. Look into existing wells for potential groundwater monitoring to improve data. The focus should be to protect the groundwater. Staff need to be proactive in dealing with GW issues because the cost for cleaning up is high.
- f. Staff need to look into how to address Polanco septic tanks in East Coachella Valley more. These are small systems, but there is a large number of them.

#### *Jose Angel, Regional Water Board Executive Officer:*

- a. Agree. Staff will continue to compile all available [septic system] data. Additionally, we need to use a more GIS-based system to manage the data and make [appropriate policy recommendations to control their impacts].
- b. Proliferation of Septic discharges in the I-10 Corridor area between Palm Springs and Desert Hot Springs are deterred at staff level by recommending developers to connect to an existing collection system, or installing package plants. Policy Statement from the Board would be helpful to staff to make sure that the area does not end up with a high density of septic systems. It is also not in the interest of the Board to allow proliferation of package plants in that area either. Therefore, it is important to encourage connecting to existing centralized collection systems.
- c. The Board is facing some additional [septic systems] issues at Joshua Water Basin, as it does not have anything formal yet to address the septic discharges there.
- d. On the other hand, the City of Twentynine Palms recently adopted a Sewer Master Plan that calls for installation of a central collection system, and identifies areas where septic systems should be okay.

**11-2014 TR issue: Update Salton Sea Discussion and associated information contained in The Basin Plan.**

*Jose Angel, Regional Water Board Executive Officer:*

- a. Expect to complete by the end of the year.

**12-2014 TR issue: Assess BUs of Constructed Wetlands In Imperial & Coachella Valleys.**

*Jose Angel, Regional Water Board Executive Officer:*

- a. Expect to complete by the end of the year.

**13-General Discussion: Salton Sea**

*Board Members:*

- a. Salton Sea should be on the Triennial Review list. The sea has the attention of the governor.
- b. This issue will take quite a bit of staff's time. Every single Regional Water Board unit will be working on it in some capacity.
- c. New River is closely linked because it is one of the main tributaries. The Board is working with US EPA and International Boundary and Water Commission to prevent raw sewage from being discharged to the New River and ultimately discharged to the Salton Sea.

*Jose Angel, Regional Water Board Executive Officer:*

- a. Agree. Staff is already working on that.

**14-General Discussion: Outreach and education**

*Board Members:*

- a. Want to see outreach done to communicate to the public what the Regional Water Board is.

*Jose Angel, Regional Water Board Executive Officer:*

- a. The Board does not get dedicated resources to do outreach, but we use whatever flexibility we have to do so, including opportunities when out in the field.
- b. Board staff started two school programs, starting in Coachella Valley focused on outreach and education to protect water quality. The programs also cover water conservation.
- c. Staff also participates in Environmental Justice task forces and other activities as needed.
- d. There is nothing formal [regarding outreach education] on the Basin Plan, but can be formulated in [its Implementation Section] if the Board Members want to enhance what staff is already doing. However, this activity is best done through actions outside of Basin Planning.

## **15-Resources to accomplish the 2017 Triennial Review Issues**

### *Board Members:*

- a. Asked staff to identify how much staff time and resources these issues will require and whether there are currently enough resources to address these issues.
- b. Policy Statements could be used to address Regional Water Board's priorities without getting into the weeds, in order to save resources.

### *Jose Angel, Regional Water Board Executive Officer:*

- a. Regional Board staff will provide the Board with recommendations on the ranking of the issues and identify the amount of resources each issue will require, along with amount of resources we already have.
- b. It is unlikely that the Board will get additional resources for Basin Planning in the next fiscal year. Staff can handle another 2-3 issues.