

**CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
LAHONTAN REGION**

**MEETING OF JUNE 8-9, 2022
BARSTOW, CA**

ITEM 12
FY 21/22 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FY 22/23 STRATEGIC PLAN

CHRONOLOGY	
Fiscal Year 2008-09	State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) began Annual Performance Report with performance measures established for most State and Regional Board programs, requiring regional boards to set targets for each performance measure.
2014 to 2020	Water Board staff have annually presented an informational item summarizing the priorities and accomplishments by fiscal year for the Lahontan region. No annual update was provided during March 2020 due to operational delays during the COVID 19 pandemic.
June 2021	Water Board staff presented the accomplishments of FY 19/20 and described the ongoing actions staff is pursuing to better prioritize limited resources to achieve organizational and programmatic goals in FY 21/22. The Region's first strategic narrative with organizational vision, mission, values, and goals was unveiled.

BACKGROUND
<p>The executive team developed the Lahontan Region Action Plan (Action Plan) in June 2020 to address employee feedback calling for organizational improvements in the areas of leadership, change management, setting priorities, and setting an action-driven but sustainable workload pace. The Action Plan was subsequently refined and updated in August 2020, and again in October 2020.</p> <p>The Action Plan recognizes four areas where organizational improvement is needed: leadership, trust, communication, and process improvement. Lahontan Water Board executive leaders, senior management, staff and Board members worked together during 2021 to develop a vision and mission statement for the Region. Another outcome of this effort was the development of our values and goals. These are described in the Lahontan Region Strategic Narrative for FY 2022/23 contained in Enclosure 1 of this item.</p>

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this informational item is to review the past year's progress on implementation of the Action Plan and highlight successes on performance targets and efforts toward regional goals. The following items will be discussed:

- Lahontan Region Strategic Narrative for FY 2022/23
- Accomplishments in FY 21/22
- Status of FY 21/22 performance targets
- Plan for meeting FY 22/23 performance targets
- Divisional Objectives for FY 2022/23
- Resource challenges and programmatic risks

Strategic Narrative Development

The region's first strategic narrative was codified in the FY21/22 Strategic Narrative presented to the Board during the June 2021 virtual Board meeting. The strategic narrative was a culmination of efforts across all levels of the Lahontan team via a series of leadership coaching sessions and internal workshops.

The region's strategic narrative is designed to tell our story of where we have been, and where we are going as an organization. Each division and the administration unit created its own strategic narrative that explains the nesting of unit workplans and divisional objectives into the region's goals. Similarly, the region's performance targets directly relate to divisional objectives and support regional goals.

Pace

One of the areas needing improvement mentioned in the 2019 Lahontan Region-specific survey was the operational pace of the organization. During 2021 the Lahontan team embarked on a training curriculum known as The Prioritized Leader, graciously offered by the State Board's Training Academy, designed to help team leaders develop tools to prioritize the various workflow demands placed on the region's staff with the goal of creating a sustainable work pace. Many of the work items affecting pace come to the region through programmatic requirements, unplanned events (i.e. spills, complaints, and public record act requests), and emerging work drivers (PFAS, Freshwater Harmful Algal Blooms, etc.). Prioritization strategies and tools are essential to ensuring the region is purpose driven while maintaining a sustainable work pace. Several of these prioritization tools will be discussed in more detail and include:

- Line of Sight Matrix
- 4R Day – Day of Reflection, Release, Recalibration, and Results
- Intentional Focus Worksheet
- Quarterly Managers Meeting (QMM)

Our strategic narrative considers a planning horizon of 1 to 3 years. Progress on regional goals, divisional objectives, and programmatic performance targets will be presented. Refinements in organizational goals and objectives to address emerging water quality concerns will also be discussed.

Performance Targets

Performance Targets are those objectives set by State Board at the programmatic scale for each region to accomplish by the end of the fiscal year. Annually, regions negotiate their anticipated performance goals considering program and budgetary resource allocations. During FY 21/22 the region endeavored to meet these performance targets with more staff available for programmatic work as the temporary contact tracing support duties with the California Department of Public Health expired at the end of June 2021. Also, the 2 workday per month furlough expired at the end of the fiscal year.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INPUT

Agenda materials posted on webpage.

RECOMMENDATION

This is an informational item only. No Water Board action is required for this item; however, the Water Board may provide direction to staff.

ENCLOSURE	ITEM	BATES NUMBER
1	Lahontan Region Strategic Narrative for FY 2022/23	12 - 5

ENCLOSURE 1

Lahontan Region Strategic Narrative

FY 2022/23



LAHONTAN WATER BOARD EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT ACTION PLAN (ACTION PLAN)

The *Lahontan Water Board Action Plan* was developed during fall 2020 with the goal of improving the work environment and employee morale. There are four main pillars to the action plan: **leadership, trust, communication, and process improvement**. You can view the 10-21-2020 action plan here: [Action Plan](#)

STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND FOCUS

A product of the action plan was strategic planning and the development of an organizational vision, mission and values statement. These are contained in the regional strategic narrative. The regional strategic narrative tells the story of our team, our journey, and where we are going. It is intended to provide broad direction for the entire Lahontan Regional Water Board organization and aid in the prioritization of our limited resources to achieve the region's identified goals.

During 2021, the Lahontan Team developed its first regional strategic narrative covering Fiscal Year 2021/2022. Each division and the Admin Unit created their own strategic narratives showing how their respective divisional objectives align with the regional goals. It was presented to the Lahontan Water Board at its June 16th, 2021, meeting. The vision, mission, goals and values are presented on the next page.

The *Lahontan Region Strategic Narrative FY 2022/23* capitalizes on the strategic planning foundation created from our first strategic narrative and now incorporates into our strategic plans new program initiatives from State Board, emerging region-specific water quality issues, and input from the regulated community and stakeholders.

Vision Statement

Clean water for human uses, wildlife viability, and environmental resource protection for current and future generations.

Mission Statement

Restore, enhance, and preserve the quality of the Lahontan Region's water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses, from mountain crests to valley floors.

Core Values

Integrity

- Act in all endeavors in an ethical and professional manner with an open mindset
- Be truthful in all actions and communications
- Honor commitments, keep promises, and build trust
- Choose to do what is right, over what is easy
- Practice our values rather than just profess them

Accountability

- Make technically and scientifically sound decisions from experience, good judgment, and collaboration
- Find solutions that contribute to desired results
- Give and seek clear direction and expectations
- Take ownership of, and responsibility for, actions, risks, and results, and use outcomes as learning opportunities
- Act with character and go the extra mile

Transparency

- Encourage open, honest, and effective communication
- Give productive feedback and the “why” underlying decisions
- Approach every situation with honest, good intentions
- Listen, collaborate, and share across the Region

Respect

- Be courteous, responsive, and professional
- Stay present in the moment and actively listen to understand others
- Treat every person with kindness and humility
- Be receptive to new and diverse ideas
- Value and recognize every individual for their unique skills, talents, and contributions

Balance

- Be clear about work priorities while maintaining reasonable time commitments
- Embrace opportunities for personal and professional development
- Maintain focus on long-term goals while meeting short-term needs
- Support a healthy personal and professional life
- Support an environment that is optimistic, enjoyable, and fun, in which relationships can prosper across our region, our organization and our communities

The *Action Plan* calls on the regional team to build our leadership skillsets so that we can address the myriad water quality challenges in our region in an effective manner. To that end, the team underwent leadership coaching during the past fiscal year under The Prioritized Leader curriculum. The Prioritized Leader or TPL is a training program offered by the State Board's Training Academy designed to improve individual performance, enhance team communication, and increase productivity in alignment with the organization's goals.

The team collaborated on a definition of leadership during March 2022. This exercise was designed to inspire the leader in all of us and is thematic to the lessons we have learned through The Prioritized Leader.

Leadership
<i>Leadership is an individual or a group of individuals who influence, motivate, and guide others with clear direction and a positive approach towards successfully achieving the mission, vision, values, and goals of the organization.</i>
<u>Qualities and Attributes of a Leader</u>
Approachable and creates a safe environment for all
Effective communicator
Leads by example
High moral and ethical standards
Accountable
Humble, vulnerable, and open to feedback
Decisive and timely decision-maker
Good at managing conflict
Team builder
High level of Emotional Intelligence (EQ)
Visionary and Strategic Thinker

LAHONTAN REGION GOALS

Our regional goals are our North Star that helps provide focus, clarity and direction for everything that we do. From major policy direction, prioritization of permit development or renewal, to day-to-day workplan prioritization decisions, our regional goals help us stay focused, consistent, and true to our mission, vision, and values. The goals herein were updated at the June 2021 Lahontan Water Board meeting with Board member and staff collaborative input.

The goals are:

1. Protect human health and aquatic life.
2. Protect/Improve aquatic resources and water quality.
3. Promote a Safe Work Environment
4. Provide exceptional customer service, while being realistic about resources and commitments.

WHERE WE HAVE BEEN

In FY 2021/22 we continued to operate under a global pandemic. Our team conducted much of our work remotely under the statewide Emergency Telework Policy. During that time, California experienced a continuation of severe drought conditions combined with a record-breaking wildfire season. Consequently, the Tamarack Fire drew dangerously close to the Leviathan Mine site after burning much of the area around Markleeville during July and August. The Caldor Fire started in mid-August and forced the closure of the South Lake Tahoe main and annex offices and the evacuation of our Tahoe-based team due to unhealthy air conditions and advancement of the fire perimeter to the southern edge of the Tahoe Basin. Drought conditions also caused record low water levels in reservoirs throughout the State. Consequently, Lake Tahoe's water level reached a four-year low during October. Despite these environmental factors, the Lahontan team continued to find ways to perform inspections, meet with dischargers, collaborate with team members, and stay on pace to meet regional performance targets. Additionally, the team navigated through an executive leadership change, numerous retirements, and a year-long organizational culture shift that included strategic planning and leadership training under The Prioritized Leader curriculum.

SUCCESSSES IN FY 2021/22

We accomplished much during the past fiscal year. Here is a summary of our successes:

- *Teamwork.* Throughout the challenges of 2021/2022, we came together as a team. During the Caldor Fire, leadership, communication, and project management skills were put to the test. Many of us found ourselves operating from unfamiliar locations with relatives and friends or from hotels and campgrounds. Others gave willingly to open their homes to displaced coworkers. The values we adopted in June were not simply abstracts. Rather, the values were being lived out through practical experience in our daily individual and team behaviors.
- *Getting the right people on the bus.* We filled numerous vacancies with stellar new team members.
- *The Prioritized Leader.* We continued to improve in our leadership, communication, and trust areas. Several tools were created to help us prioritize our work activities and improve our pace. The Line-of-Sight matrix is a prioritization tool developed to place our work efforts in context to our regional goals. Projects with high scores remained on the workplan while those with low scores were placed into the "release" bucket and either removed from the workplan entirely or delayed until resources were available. Another tool developed through TPL to address our pace are the Intentional Focus Worksheet and the 4R Day which together help the team at all levels evaluate what is working and what work efforts are not working or aligning with our goals and are candidates for release.

- *Process Improvement Plan.* We identified numerous process improvements and implemented an employee suggestion box to raise issues to the management team and/or collaboration team for prioritization and action. One of the key process improvements was promulgation of the document review process expectations guidance. The need to improve our document review cycle and feedback communications was one of the loudest demand signals we heard from the team.
- *Expanded Cannabis Regulatory Program resources.* We competed with other regions and State Board for limited Cannabis vacancy positions and won another position in our Victorville office. This position will provide much needed support to investigate and ultimately regulate illegal Cannabis grow activities in the southern basin and the Colorado River Region.
- *Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association Controlled Measures Test Permit.* We formed a team of subject matter experts to craft an NPDES permit, CEQA document, and a Basin Plan Prohibition Exemption to regulate testing of nonchemical and chemical means to treat aquatic invasive species in the Tahoe Keys, a tributary to Lake Tahoe.
- *Triennial Review.* We hosted a workshop and Board meeting decision on the Triennial Review. The Planning and Assessment Unit developed a prioritization process that incorporated elements of the Line-of-Sight matrix.
- *Informational Items.* We provided the Board, our stakeholders, and the public with outstanding informational items to include the regional climate change strategy, an update on the PGE hexavalent chromium cleanup, an update on the Leviathan mine cleanup and early final remedial action plan, the status of Lake Tahoe clarity, and an update on dredge and fill activities in the region, information on the many sources of PFAS in our region, and the status of Truckee TMDL.
- *Establishment of Mojave Mitigation Bank.* In partnership with the USACE, USEPA, and CDFW, we helped to establish a second mitigation bank in our region. This mitigation bank is located at the eastern end of the Mojave River at Cronese Dry Lake.

JOB TO BE DONE IN FY2022/23

What will our path look like in the coming fiscal year? We have completed much strategic foundation building during FY 20/21 and FY 21/22 to create our vision, mission, values and goals. We will continue to build on that foundation which implements the four pillars of our *Action Plan*. The coming fiscal year will continue to focus on achieving a sustainable pace of operations. To that end, we will continue to work on our communications, building psychological safety in our organization, and refine our leadership skills with team coaching opportunities.

Pace

In FY 22/23 we will continue work to bring our pace into a more manageable “marathon” speed, rather than the “100-meter sprint” that we have been accustomed to. We will utilize and improve on tools such as the Circle of Influence worksheet and the Line-of-Sight Matrix. We will continue to bring our work planning and pace setting into focus via the quarterly 4R day (Reflect, Release, Recalibrate, and Results) process and integrate these with our quarterly management meetings where we refine our workplan focus of efforts to align with our performance targets, divisional objectives and our regional goals. Additionally, we will encourage and direct staff and managers throughout the organization to reflect on their own time management and project management skills and behaviors to develop more efficient and effective way to complete our highest priority goals/objectives. And by doing so, create a more sustainable pace that is in alignment with our organizational values of integrity, accountability, transparency, respect, and balance.

Implement Water Quality Programs

We will continue to implement the various water quality programs administered by each division and tracked by performance targets at State Board. We implement a variety of water quality programs that are comprised of 43 separate Fi\$Cal task codes. Our prioritization process and pace setting work will be instrumental in guiding our limited resources and energies to achieve our regional goals and the maximum positive impact on water quality.

Transition to In-Person Meetings and Interactions

Starting with our May 2022 Board meeting, future board meetings will be conducted under a hybrid arrangement where Board members are available in person to the public, but meetings will be broadcast over Zoom for the public who cannot attend in person. Water Board staff who have an item on a Board meeting can be expected to present that item in person unless the item is On Consent.

Climate Change-Drought-Wildfires

DWR data indicates California will continue to experience drought conditions through this fiscal year into the upcoming fiscal year. The Governor Issued Executive Order N-7-22 on March 28th, 2022, directing the State Water Board to consider adopting new water conservation emergency regulations to prepare for and mitigate the effects of worsening drought conditions. Some of this regulation could influence our implementation of dredge and fill, water quality certification, and stormwater regulatory programs where recharge management projects are proposed. If these projects are proposed in our region, we must be prepared to elevate them in priority as they directly relate to public health, our number one regional goal.

Following lessons learned from the Tamarack, Dixie, and Caldor Fires, we must be prepared to work with local, state and federal agencies to address post fire and burn area recovery impacts on watersheds and surface water quality.

Racial Equity

During the upcoming fiscal year, we will endeavor to learn more about racial equity and environmental justice issues with the goal of applying that knowledge into our regulatory programs and our community outreach efforts. There is much to learn from other regions and the State Board in this area. Our previous foundational work to build a safe and healthy work environment will allow us to have meaningful internal conversations about our role in communities where racial equity and environmental justice issues exist. We will start the process to develop a racial equity resolution for our region that will be taken to the Board in FY22/23. We can also expect future legislation to subsequently require Regional Board evaluation of racial equity concerns in future Board actions.

AIS

Aquatic Invasive Species is a problem that we have seen grow in our region. Drought conditions and extreme temperatures are promoting opportunities for AIS to occur in many surface waters throughout our region. Most recently, the AIS problem has become a widespread problem in the Tahoe Keys lagoons. However, there are other parts of our region where warmer seasonal temperatures and drought conditions are exacerbating AIS proliferation. We will look for ways to build relationships with other agency partners, share experiences and information through collaboration with stakeholders and subject matter experts, and evaluate a better regulatory framework to address the AIS problem utilizing our programmatic resources effectively and efficiently.

EXECUTIVE OBJECTIVES

Sustainable PACE. It is important that we seize upon gains we have made towards getting our pace closer to the marathon pace utilizing tools: 4R Days, quarterly management meetings, line of sight matrix, and the intentional focus worksheets to set realistic work planning and performance targets. Executive management will endeavor to provide timely guidance on priorities where applicable.

Process improvements. Executive management will continue to work on process improvements and improving workflows in our work efforts. Improving document review timeliness was started during FY 21/22 and will be refined during early FY22/23.

Building TRUST in the organization. Trust is a precious commodity that cannot be taken for granted. We have made much progress on building trust in the organization through leadership training, communication exercises, EO and AEO office hours, all staff meetings, and periodic reports to the whole team on status of key decisions. This practice will continue into the next fiscal year.

Increase executive presence in the VVL office. Executive management will continue to be present in the Victorville branch office to be accessible to staff. Also, the executive team will explore opportunities to add another AEO to the regional organization that would operate from the Victorville office.