



EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

April 1, 2025 – April 30, 2025

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1. Personnel Report — *Sandra Lopez*

Vacancies

- Executive Officer for the Lahontan Region
- Senior Water Resource Control Engineer (Specialist), Leviathan Mine Cleanup, South Lake Tahoe. This position provides senior level technical responsibility within the Leviathan Mine Cleanup Program. The position focuses on the following tasks:
 - ensure compliance with the USEPA requirements for the Water Board
 - lead engineering activities
 - develop and direct cleanup and maintenance contracts for the project
 - provide expert review of Superfund documents
 - support the legal staff on technical topics
 - advise supervisors on project cleanup and regulatory compliance
 - update Water Board management, Water Board members, and other high-level officials
- Water Resource Control Engineer, Regulatory and Enforcement Unit, South Lake Tahoe. This position will be regulating waste discharges to Waters of the State

via National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and Waste Discharge Requirement (WDRs) permits.

- Scientific Aid, Regulatory and Enforcement Unit, South Lake Tahoe. This position will be reviewing Self-Monitoring Reports submitted from facilities under permit. The reports will be associated with discharges to land, and surface water. The facilities vary from construction sites to wastewater treatment plants.
- Scientific Aid, Non-Point Source and Forestry/Dredge & Fill Units, South Lake Tahoe. This position will review and evaluate water quality data, assist with harmful algal bloom response, and assess compliance with water quality orders and permits associated with grazing, restoration, timber, and forestry activities.

Departures

- Mike Plaziak, Executive Officer, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Chris Stetler, Senior Water Resource Control Engineer (Specialist), Leviathan Mine South Lake Tahoe

2. California Abandoned Mine Lands Agency Group, and the Good Samaritan Remediation of Abandoned Hardrock Mines Act of 2024 — Ashley Taylor

Lahontan Water Board staff Ashley Taylor, Kerri O'Keefe, Christina Guerra, and Jeff Brooks attend quarterly California Abandoned Mine Lands Agency Group (CAMLAG) meetings hosted by California's Department of Conservation (CDC), associated with the Lahontan Water Boards' land disposal program. These meetings focus on discussing the progress of California's abandoned hardrock mine reclamation efforts. Attendees include members from various agencies such as California's Department of Mine Reclamations, Bureau of Land Management, United States Environmental Protection Agency, California's Regional Water Quality Control Boards, State Water Resource Control Board, National Park Service, United States Geological Survey, Department of Toxic Substance Control, and United States Department of Agriculture. Discussions typically cover federal updates, grants, reports, and California's 2023 Abandoned Mines Priorities List (previously known as the 2007 Feinstein List).

On December 17, 2024, President Joe Biden signed the Good Samaritan Remediation of Abandoned Hardrock Mines Act of 2024. This bill encourages the remediation of abandoned hardrock mine sites by Good Samaritans—individuals or entities that did not own or operate the site, did not contribute to the mine residue, and are not liable for the remediation efforts. The bill mandates the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to establish a Good Samaritan pilot program, allowing EPA to issue specific permits for remediating qualifying historic mine sites. The pilot program is limited to 15 projects and a seven-year duration.

During the February 27, 2025, CAMLAG meeting, the CDC expressed optimism about California's chances of obtaining permits for mine investigations or cleanups. The US

EPA's Office of Mountains, Deserts, and Plains (OMDP) in Lakewood, Colorado, is developing guidance documents for these permits, aiming to issue a few each year. Input from land management agencies is aiding this process. At a summit in April 2025, CDC staff presented California's abandoned mines to support the guidance document development, with hopes of securing permits for California's impacted mines.

The State Water Resource Control Board has recently taken the lead in addressing inquiries related to abandoned mine lands in California, helping prioritize projects that would qualify for Good Samaritan permits. The Lahontan Region currently lacks dedicated personnel for abandoned mine lands. Over the past six months, Lahontan Water Board staff have assisted the State Water Board by responding to a survey focused on agency goals, budgets, and prioritization concerning abandoned mine lands. Additionally, Lahontan Water Board staff have refined the region's nine identified abandoned mine lands listed in the 2023 Abandoned Mines Priorities List. The nine mines located in our region identified on the 2023 Abandoned Mines Priorities list are the Hanna Millsite, Kelly Mine Rand Project (part of the Rand Project), Rex Montis Mine, Ruth Mine, Lucky Green Mine, Iron Dike Mine, Leviathan Mine, Morning Star Mine, and the Zaca Mine. Lahontan Water Board staff are working in collaboration with the State Water Resource Control Board to gather information and answer any questions or comments the various agencies need to further evaluate the environmental impacts at each mine site. It is hoped that the Good Samaritan bill will enable a few abandoned mine lands in California to be investigated and cleaned up, further protecting the environment.

3. Standing Item – Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems — *Jose Valle de Leon*

This item provides a status update of the State Water Resources Control Board's (State Water Board's) Water Quality Control Policy for Siting, Design, Operation, and Maintenance of Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS or septic systems), or OWTS Policy. The OWTS Policy allows the continued use of OWTS with permitting authority lying with the local agency.

The OWTS Policy establishes a five-tiered approach (Tiers 0-4) for the regulation and management of OWTS installations and replacements (Table 3.1). The Lahontan Water Board currently is the lead contact for the implementation of nine Local Agency Management Programs (LAMPs). There are also two cities that permit septic systems without a LAMP within the Lahontan Region. These cities permit systems by following guidelines in the OWTS Policy under Tier 1.

Table 3.1 – OWTS Policy Tiers and Local Agencies Reporting to Lahontan Water Board

Tier	Description of Tier	Effect in Lahontan Region	Local Agencies under Lahontan Water Board Jurisdiction
0	Existing OWTS that are properly functioning and do not meet the conditions of failing systems or otherwise corrective action	Applies to most existing OWTS	
1	New or replacement OWTS that meet low risk siting and design requirements as specified in Tier 1	Applies to two local agencies issuing OWTS permits without a LAMP	Adelanto Victorville
2	Local agencies that permit OWTS with an established LAMP that has standards specified	Applies to local agencies issuing OWTS permits with an approved LAMP	Lassen County Alpine County Mono County Inyo County San Bernardino County California City Barstow Apple Valley Hesperia
3	OWTS in surface watersheds impaired by nutrients or pathogens	Currently, there is none in Region 6	
4	Failed existing OWTS	When local agency required corrective actions are completed, OWTS returns to Tier 0	

Summary of OWTS Policy Revisions and Amendments

On April 18, 2023, the State Water Board adopted the revised OWTS Policy. The revised OWTS Policy replaced the original OWTS Policy that was adopted on June 19, 2012. The revised policy includes minor clarifications to the applicability of OWTS Policy tiers, including:

- Specifying that LAMPs must comply with local ordinances.
- Clarifying the mechanism for defining the geographical reach of certain requirements contained within LAMPs or Advanced Protection Management Programs.

- Clarifying the timing for the submission of reports.
- Removing legacy language addressing applicability during the initial phase-in period of the OWTS Policy which has now passed.
- Including non-substantive revisions for improved website accessibility and readability.

Revisions to clarify authority already afforded to local agencies, concerning LAMPs, including:

- Defining domestic wastewater to include wastewater normally discharged from systems serving multiple dwelling units, including accessory dwelling units that are the subject of recent legislation.
- Clarifying that the OWTS Policy Tier 2 LAMPs can include alternative collection and disposal systems that use subsurface disposal that are determined to be appropriate alternative systems by a qualified professional to satisfy Tier 2 LAMP requirements. All OWTS, including alternative collection and disposal systems that use subsurface disposal under a LAMP, must adhere to monitoring requirements, any service provider roles outlined by an approved LAMP, and any other applicable Tier 2 requirements. OWTS covered by a LAMP utilizing supplemental treatment may be required to meet Tier 3 conditions, which may include nitrogen and pathogen monitoring and mitigation requirements.
- In addition to the existing surface water considerations in the OWTS Policy, noting that LAMPs should consider whether any additional requirements may be needed to be more protective of water quality, including groundwater degradation, in specific areas within a local agency's jurisdiction, including areas vulnerable to groundwater pollution from OWTS.

Local Agency Management Program (Tier 2) Update

Per Tier 2 requirements of the OWTS Policy, local agencies may submit "Local Agency Management Programs" for approval by the applicable Regional Water Board, and upon approval then manage the installation of new and replacement OWTS under that program. LAMPs approved under Tier 2 provide an alternate method from Tier 1 programs to achieve the same policy purpose, which is to protect water quality and public health.

Discussions with San Bernardino County started in October of 2023 to update the San Bernardino LAMP after the County expressed its intention. On March 8, 2024, San Bernardino County submitted an initial draft LAMP to the Water Board as the County intends to revise its LAMP. The Lahontan Water Board staff, along with Colorado River Water Board and Santa Ana Water Board staff have been working with the County of San Bernardino to address any concerns and conflicts with the existing OWTS Policy. Collaboration with the County has led to a second draft submitted in October of 2024.

and is the currently proposed LAMP revision. The proposed draft is scheduled to be presented during the Lahontan Regional Water Board meeting on May 13. No other local agencies other than San Bernardino have expressed intentions of revising their LAMP.

Reporting to GeoTracker

As a requirement in the LAMPs and the OWTS Policy, local agencies must report annually by February 1 on the permitting and enforcement activities of the previous year. Additionally, Lahontan Water Board staff are requesting local agencies to provide the following information in the annual permitting and enforcement reports to evaluate the density loading of OWTS in the Lahontan Region:

- Map of septic installations, failures, and complaints
- Narrative summary of septic installations, failures, and complaints from the previous calendar year

As of April 2025, of the eleven local agencies reporting to the Water Board (see Table 3.1) under the OWTS Policy, seven agencies have not submitted their 5-Year LAMP Assessment reports and eight have not submitted their 2024 annual reports (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 – Summary of LAMP Reporting

Local Agency Management Program	5 Year LAMP Assessment	Last Annual Report Submitted
Apple Valley Town	Submitted to GeoTracker – Not Reviewed	2022
Inyo County	Not Submitted	2022
California City	Not Submitted	2023
Barstow City	Not Submitted	2020
San Bernardino County	Submitted to GeoTracker – Reviewed	2024
Mono County	Not Submitted	2024
Hesperia City	Not Submitted	2022
Alpine County	Not Submitted	2022
Lassen County	Not Submitted	Not Submitted
Victorville City OWTS Tier 1	N/A	2020
Adelanto City OWTS Tier 1	N/A	2021

Staff has only reviewed the San Bernardino County LAMP 5-Year assessment report thus far due to prioritization of time and the recent revision of the LAMP. The San Bernardino County LAMP coverage accounts for almost 85% of the population in the Lahontan Region. The only other 5-year assessment report was submitted by the Town

of Apple Valley, which accounts for about 3% of the population in the region. Staff are contacting the other local agencies regarding the late submittal of their 5-year assessment and annual reports.

4. Standing Item – Update on Salt and Nutrient Management Plans in the Lahontan Region — Anna Garcia

This item is a regular update on the progress of Salt and Nutrient Management Planning (SNMP) efforts in the Lahontan Region. The State Water Board's *Water Quality Control Policy for Recycled Water* (Recycled Water Policy) was adopted in 2009, then amended in 2013 and 2018. The [2018 Recycled Water Policy Amendment](#) provides updated guidance on developing groundwater basin-wide or subbasin-wide SNMPs.

Information on SNMP efforts in the Lahontan Region is available on our updated [SNMP webpage](#). The [SNMP webpage](#) includes a link to our [2022 Staff Report on Developing a Salt and Nutrient Management Planning Strategy](#) for the groundwater basins/subbasins in our region. The strategy consists of three parts: updated data assessments for existing SNMPs, basin/subbasin evaluation and prioritization, and groundwater basin/subbasin alignment.

Updated Data Assessments for existing SNMPs:

Stakeholders in the Lahontan Region developed, and the Lahontan Water Board previously accepted, five SNMPs that cover 12 groundwater basins/subbasins and almost 90% of the population living across all the Department of Water Resources (DWR) defined groundwater basins/subbasins in our region. This list provides the SNMP name and the date of plan acceptance:

- Antelope Valley SNMP - November 2014
- Mojave SNMP - February 2016
- Fort Irwin SNMP - January 2017
- Indian Wells Valley SNMP - April 2018
- Fremont Basin SNMP - January 2019

During review of several existing SNMPs from across the State, State Water Board Division of Water Quality (DWQ) staff noted that SNMPs contain project implementation tables that include benchmarks and goals. DWQ staff identified the need for a process to track SNMP implementation progress. DWQ staff and the SNMP Data Management Group are looking for ways to improve tracking of SNMP implementation. Lahontan staff continue to work with DWQ staff and the SNMP Data Management Group to advance SNMP efforts in our region. The SNMP Data Group met in early March 2025 to discuss SNMPs across the state and share resource materials.

Basin/subbasin evaluation and prioritization:

The [2018 Recycled Water Policy Amendment](#) requires stakeholders to upload SNMP water quality data to the SWRCB's Groundwater Ambient Monitoring and Assessment Program (GAMA) system. The [GAMA Groundwater Information System](#) integrates and displays water quality data from various sources on an interactive Google-based map. Data is compiled from multiple sources and includes well chemical data and depth to water measurements. This system centralizes and increases the availability of groundwater information to the public and decision makers.

Lahontan staff review water quality data through the [GAMA Groundwater Information System](#) for our basin/subbasin evaluation and prioritization process in support of our region-specific SNMP Strategy.

Alignment of groundwater basins/subbasins:

Lahontan staff identified a discrepancy between the basins/subbasins identified in the [Basin Plan](#) and the basins/subbasins defined by DWR in [Bulletin 118, California's Groundwater](#). Table 2-2 of the [Basin Plan](#) lists 346 basins in the Lahontan Region. The 2020 update of [Bulletin 118, California's Groundwater](#) by DWR lists 105 groundwater basins/subbasins for the Lahontan Region. Staff are currently reviewing the locations of regulated facilities across the region in relation to the basin/subbasin boundaries identified in our Basin Plan and the boundaries defined in GIS layers from [Bulletin 118, California's Groundwater](#). This work will provide staff with an understanding of how many and which facilities may be affected by a basin/subbasin boundary shift that would be required to align with DWR defined basin/subbasin boundaries.

Lahontan staff also worked with staff from the Central Coast Regional Board on a joint presentation regarding basin/subbasin alignment issues for the January 2025 Basin Planning Roundtable. A Roundtable is the coordinating body for a specific program within the Lahontan Water Board organizational structure that ensures efficient, consistent, and effective implementation of program requirements and provides a forum for exchange of information. Central Coast Regional Board staff indicated they have similar basin/subbasin alignment issues. Collaboration on the basin/subbasin alignment issues between regions, with DWQ, and with the California Water Data Consortium is planned for later this calendar year.