



## EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

September 1, 2026 – September 30, 2026

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### 1. Personnel Report – *Sandra Lopez*

#### Vacancies

- Engineering Geologist, Stormwater and Cannabis Unit, Victorville. This position will help protect water quality in the Lahontan Region by evaluating Dredge and Fill applications in the 401 program to help ensure the protection of valuable natural hydrologic infrastructure such as wetlands, ephemeral streams, and other hydrological systems. This position will also assist in our stormwater program which includes permitting and compliance inspections to help educate the public and protect the environment from surface water discharges.
- Analyst II, Administrative Unit, Victorville. This position provides administrative support to the region by managing contracts and procurement activities, supporting facility management functions, performing data entry for regulatory requirements, and ensuring compliance with financial assurance requirements.
- Water Resource Control Engineer, Forestry Dredge and Fill Unit, South Lake Tahoe. This position will help cover additional dredge and fill permitting, inspection, and enforcement activities on Waters of the State that are no longer designated as Waters of the US thus eliminating any Federal (USACE) support for these waters.

- Analyst I, Administrative Unit, Victorville. This position will provide support for technical and administrative staff, ensure documents comply with accessibility standards, prepare agenda items and staff documents for distribution, and provide administrative support at regional board meetings held throughout the region.

## Departures

- Kimberly Cox, Board Member. Retired.
- Kylie Beaujean, Analyst I, Victorville.

## 2. Former George Air Force Base Environmental Restoration Program Overview Presentations at Mojave Water Agency and Helendale Community Services District – *Molina Hauv, David Corral, and Lorien Sanders*



**Photo 2.1: Water Board staff, Molina Hauv, presenting to Helendale Community Services District Board members and members of the public.**

After the May 2026 Lahontan Water Board meeting Informational Item on the Former George Air Force Base (AFB) Environmental Restoration Program, Water Board staff were invited to provide similar briefings for local public agencies, Mojave Water Agency and Helendale Community Services District (CSD).

On June 4, 2026, and September 17, 2026, Water Board staff, Molina Hauv, provided encore presentations at the Mojave Water Agency Technical Advisory Committee meeting and the Helendale CSD's Board meeting, respectively (Figure 1). For both meetings, in-person attendees included representatives from the Water Board and the Air Force. During each presentation, time was allotted for questions and answers.

Question topics included Former George AFB environmental history, the Air Force's community involvement efforts, cleanup schedules, and groundwater quality data. Presenting at these meetings gave staff a valuable opportunity to engage with communities near the former George Air Force Base and provide updates on the site's cleanup progress.

Water Board staff look forward to continued community engagement regarding environmental restoration at former George Air Force Base. These efforts will support public awareness and provide opportunities for public involvement in the ongoing cleanup work.

### **3. Cannabis Regulatory Program Update: Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board EO Report – *Michael Perez***

This report is part of an annual update for the Eastern California Cannabis Regulatory program that encompasses Lahontan Region (Region 6) and the Colorado River Basin (Region 7). The program encompasses the California Water Board's Lahontan Region (Region 6) and Colorado River Basin Region (Region 7), covering approximately 60,000 square miles (38.4 million acres) of eastern California from Oregon to Mexico. Cannabis program staff are responsible for two broad areas of program implementation: (1) regulating licensed cannabis cultivation operations, and (2) working with law enforcement partners to address water quality issues related to illicit cannabis grows. Over the years, the cannabis program has taken several budget cuts due to lower-than-expected permittee enrollments. By the end of 2024, the cannabis program dwindled down to two technical staff and a part-time supervisor. In early 2025, the program was put on hold through the budget letter exercises and the abolishment of three cannabis positions, including the two cannabis technical staff that were redirected into other programs.

#### **Staffing and Program/Unit Reorganization**

In April 2025, the abolished cannabis positions (WRCE and Environmental Scientist) were being returned to the Cannabis program as part of a statewide return of 32 positions to the state-wide cannabis program. In addition, the Senior WRCE position from the North Basin Regulatory and Cleanup Division in South Lake Tahoe to the Protection, Restoration, and Sustainability Division (formerly South Lahontan Basin Division) was moved to Victorville and began recruiting in July 2025.

Michael Perez was selected as the Senior WRCE and started on October 20, 2025. Michael brings more than 20 years of experience with the Water Boards, working in many of the water quality programs including Dairies and Confined Animal Facilities, Total Maximum Daily Loads, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, Waste Discharge Requirements, and most recently, Michael was the Enforcement Coordinator in Region 7 where he was also involved in cannabis enforcement cases.

The Environmental Scientist position was filled and the selected candidate Frederick Brott began work in March 2026. Frederick's environmental experience includes

researching, analyzing, and interpreting environmental data such as the interpretation of carbon to nitrogen ratios to evaluate soil nutrient status, contaminant transport and their potential negative impacts to water quality, and with leadership experience through his management experiences in previous places of employment.

The WRCE position was filled and the selected candidate Omar Orozco began work in May 2026. Omar has experience flying drones for research and recreation, research experience using biochar as an adsorbent for pollutant removal from wastewater, experimental testing, data analysis, and leadership experience by being part of the leadership team in the UC Riverside's Chem-E-Car Club, and UCR's Highlanders space program. Omar also joined the Unit as OSHA HAZWOPER 40 HR certified.

In May 2026, a regionwide reorganization was completed. As a part of the reorganization, the 401 dredge and fill and stormwater programs were added to the legacy "Eastern California Cannabis Unit" and the unit was rebranded the Surface Water and Cannabis Unit.

### **Unpermitted Cultivation**

Cannabis program staff continue to focus on the issue of unpermitted cannabis cultivation, due to the threat to water quality. An important part of this focus has been establishing and strengthening relationships with other agencies working on unpermitted cultivation. This includes county sheriff's departments, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), county code enforcement, and the county district attorney's office among others.

Staff are assisting San Bernardino County district attorney's office as requested to support their criminal cases by identifying violations of Water Code sections 13260 and 13264. Staff review law enforcement reports and photos to determine whether a Water Code violation occurred at an unpermitted cannabis site. If a water code violation is supported, a felony enhancement can be charged against the suspect. A felony could deter offenders from cultivating illegally again, which is a common occurrence.

Since June 23, 2026, staff have conducted 14 inspections at unpermitted cultivation sites, including 12 sites in Los Angeles County, one (1) site in San Bernardino County, and one (1) site in Riverside County. As part of the enforcement strategy, landowners were issued Notices of Violation identifying water quality violations observed in association with unpermitted cannabis cultivation. The Notices of Violation require landowners to cease cultivation activities and clean up waste associated with the cultivation activities. Staff have received a response from one (1) of the 14 landowners and are working with the landowner to confirm that required cleanup activities are completed. If cleanup activities are not completed at a site, the site may be reassessed and progressive enforcement may occur.

## Permitted Cultivation

In addition to unpermitted cultivation sites, Regional Water Board staff conduct inspections of permitted cannabis cultivation facilities to evaluate compliance with the Cannabis General Order requirements. There are currently 491 active permitted cannabis cultivation facilities within Regions 6 and 7, including nine (9) facilities in Region 6A, 235 facilities in Region 6B, and 247 facilities in Region 7, as shown in Table below.

Since June 29, 2026, Regional Water Board staff have conducted 14 compliance inspections at permitted cultivation facilities, including seven (7) inspections in Riverside County, five (5) in San Bernardino County, and two (2) in Inyo County. Table 1 summarizes permitted and unpermitted inspections conducted by county, and Figure 1 shows the general locations of active permitted cannabis cultivation facilities within Regions 6 and 7.

**Table 3.1: Cannabis Cultivation Inspections by County and Site Type completed June 2026 to present**

| County         | Permitted | Illicit | Total |
|----------------|-----------|---------|-------|
| Los Angeles    | 0         | 12      | 12    |
| Riverside      | 7         | 1       | 8     |
| San Bernardino | 5         | 1       | 6     |
| Inyo           | 2         | 0       | 2     |
|                |           |         |       |
| Total          | 14        | 14      | 28    |

**Table 3.2: Active Permitted Cannabis Facilities as of September 2026**

| Active Permitted Facilities |                 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Region                      | Number of Sites |
| 6A                          | 9               |
| 6B                          | 235             |
| 7                           | 247             |

**Figure 3.1: Active Permitted Cannabis Facilities in Regions 6 and 7**

