

Section 3.10 Wetlands Program Activities ('Regionwide')

The RWQCB's framework for wetlands protection and management is described in its *Water Quality Control Plan for the Lahontan Region* or Basin Plan (as amended in 1995). Important Basin Plan elements concerning wetlands are as follows:

- Major wetland resources are identified and listed by hydrologic unit; beneficial uses are designated for each listed wetland.
- In addition to traditional beneficial uses designated to surface waters, two beneficial uses in recognition of water quality enhancing and flood attenuation properties of wetlands are used.
- A 'nondegradation of aquatic communities and populations' water quality objective for wetlands is included.
- An implementation plan for wetlands protection and management includes a 'no net loss' policy, a commitment to ensure 'sequencing', and a commitment to explore means to reduce procedural complexity in wetlands permitting issues.

The condition of major wetland resources are described in the RWQCB's Water Quality Assessment (see Section 3.4 of this Chapter), and in the RWQCB's developing wetlands database. Wetlands issues and tasks specific to the focus watersheds can be found in Section 2 of this Chapter.

Ongoing and Planned Tasks for FY 02/03 to FY 06/07

Wetlands Planning Tasks -- These tasks include:

- Continue work to identify and assess wetlands by location, size, type, condition and function as this is a necessary to implement the RWQCB's 'no net loss' and 'sequencing' policies, to ensure appropriate mitigation, and as tool for effective wetlands permit streamlining
- Continue to propose wetlands monitoring sites to further assess wetland conditions, and to determine success of restored sites
- Continue coordination with other agencies to exchange wetlands assessment information, and to further wetlands permit streamlining efforts.
- Continue to work in Mono County, Lassen County and other locations within the Region to further wetlands permit streamlining efforts, and to establish restoration or mitigation sites.
- Work with Mono County to pursue grant moneys to develop a wetland protection/overall watershed assessment and management plan
- Continue staff training in wetlands identification, mitigation site review, and other issues.
- Continue to work with project proponents and stakeholders regarding wetland issues.
- Continue to coordinate with other agencies and stakeholders to pursue conservation easements or other efforts to conserve wetland sites

Water Quality Certification Tasks -- The RWQCB will continue to implement its Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification tasks such as project review, inspections, and enforcement, and issuance or denial of certification. The RWQCB will continue to coordinate with the SWRCB on

hydroelectric projects requiring FERC action. RWQCB staff will continue to participate in statewide meetings and training such as the Section 401 Coordinators' Quarterly meetings, fluvial geomorphology courses, etc. The RWQCB plans to coordinate with the SWRCB to develop a 401 Certification tracking system for wetland impacts within the Region on a watershed specific basis, and to develop standardized permitting/certification procedures.

Wetlands Grant Project Management Tasks -- The RWQCB will continue its budget administrative tasks for two Wetlands grants received under Section 104(b) of the federal Clean Water Act, and for any additional grants received during the FY 02-03 to FY 06-07 time period (a third grant is currently pending award from USEPA). For contractual portions of the grant-funded work, RWQCB will write and manage contracts. The RWQCB will continue to write and submit quarterly reports to USEPA, develop and/or revise workplans as necessary, and participate in the annual State/federal wetlands partnership conference.

Estimated annual cost for the above activities is 1 PY, plus contracts for wetland technical assistance. Grant amount needed is approximately \$75,000 to \$100,000 per year.