

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARD

June 2025

EMPLOYEE: Rob Fagerness

UNIT: Site Cleanup Program – Private Sites Cleanup Unit

TITLE: Water Resource Control Engineer (WRCE)

SUPERVISOR/TITLE: Kristi Shelton, Senior WRCE

Rob Fagerness is a Water Resource Control Engineer in the Site Cleanup Program Private Sites Cleanup Unit. Rob joined the Water Board in Fall 2023 after working in the private sector. Rob oversees cleanup activities at numerous sites including dry cleaners and industrial sites that range in size from former small “mom and pop” businesses to large industrial facilities.

Rob recently began oversight for both the Sacramento Railyards project and the Titan 1A facility in Lincoln when another staff person retired. Both of these projects are high profile and require a lot of finesse.

The Railyards is one of the largest brownfields projects in the country and requires coordination with other agencies, consultants, and the responsible party. Rob worked this year to issue a revised MRP to monitor the groundwater contaminant plume along with several WDRs to monitor pilot study testing results at the site. Recently several Regional Board members expressed interest in conducting a visit to the Railyards site. Rob did an excellent job of coordinating the visit, which highlighted the significant work underway. Rob also answered questions from Board Chair Avdis, Vice Chair Lee Reeder, and Regional and State Board staff that also participated in the visit.

The Titan 1A facility in Lincoln continues to receive significant public attention, including phone calls and emails from concerned public and articles in local newspapers. The US Army Corps of Engineers is conducting the cleanup as part of the Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) program. Following months of public interest, the Corps started a Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) for the site in 2024. Rob attends regular RAB meetings both with the public and various committee members and has provided several presentations to the RAB and the interested public. He can answer questions from the public and explain complex issues in an understandable manner. Rob has done an excellent job answering questions professionally while being responsive to the public and local officials.

Amazingly, Rob can handle both the Railyards and Titan projects, while also managing one of the more complex caseloads in the unit. Rob does all this with a great attitude and willingness to help tackle difficult projects. He also finds time to volunteer to support the Employee Association and cook on the grill at the recent BBQ.

Rob is a valuable member of the Site Cleanup Program and Private Sites Cleanup Unit. He consistently provides high quality written reviews of reports and is responsive and respectful to the regulated community. He demonstrates patience when engaging with difficult dischargers and has a unique ability to diffuse contentious situations. He is also a key mentor for newer staff in the Unit.

For all this and more, Rob is well deserving of this Employee Recognition Award.