

# EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARD

September 2025

**EMPLOYEE:** Heather Staplin (STAH-plin)

**UNIT:** Mercury and Metals TMDL Unit

**TITLE:** Environmental Scientist

**SUPERVISOR/TITLE:** Lauren Leles, Senior Environmental Scientist, Supervisor

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Heather Staplin is being recognized for her hard work and flexibility in the Mercury and Metals TMDL Unit. Heather joined the team in May 2024 as an Environmental Scientist, and she consistently shows up with a positive, collaborative attitude and willingness to learn.

From Day 1, Heather quickly became familiar with highly technical program documents for the Delta Mercury Control Program, including thousands of pages of Staff Reports and studies. Her supervisor went on maternity leave four months after she started and Heather showed a great deal of maturity and flexibility during this time. For example, she stepped up to coordinate the peer review of the Delta Mercury Control Program Review's staff report where she frequently communicated with program managers and other staff to ensure a thorough and beneficial final Peer Review Report.

Heather regularly uses her technical background in stormwater management to review requests from our 401 Certification Unit and communicates with a clear and professional voice. She always asks appropriate and insightful questions to further gain understanding of the projects and follows up when necessary. Likewise, Heather's willingness to learn new projects is also evident by her enthusiasm to become familiar with multiple Clear Lake TMDLs. She has traveled to Clear Lake twice to meet with community and tribal members and will continue to represent the Board in this community that is affected by multiple environmental concerns.

The Central Valley Water Board is fortunate to have Heather as part of its staff and greatly appreciates her contributions!