

**IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM UPDATE**  
**CENTRAL VALLEY WATER BOARD**  
**June 2010**

This month's Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) monthly report will provide an update on activities of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) ILRP, as reported in the Central Valley Water Board's May 27, 2010 Executive Officer's report. Current and past ILRP program monthly reports can be found on [the State Water Boards Agriculture Program](#) website.

**General**

On 18 February staff held a long-term program general stakeholder meeting. During this meeting, staff asked stakeholders whether they would like to see a straw proposal for a long-term irrigated lands program prior to circulation of the draft EIR. The straw proposal would not be the staff recommended alternative but would be developed as a preliminary proposal aimed to give stakeholders an idea of what staff are considering as necessary components of the long-term program. Stakeholders responded affirmatively. Staff informed stakeholders that the straw proposal would be developed and vetted through the small workgroups (agricultural, environmental/ environmental justice, agency, organic) before circulation to all stakeholders.

On 26 March, staff released the straw proposal to the four small workgroups. During the month of April, staff met with each of the small workgroups to discuss the straw proposal. The small workgroup members provided numerous comments at these meetings. Staff intends to revise the straw proposal based on small workgroup comments prior to general public release in the first week of May. The next general stakeholder meeting is scheduled for 11 May. At this meeting, staff will hear comments on the straw proposal and provide stakeholders with an update on the status of long-term program development.

On 5 April, the Superior Court of the State of California endorsed a settlement agreement between California Sportfishing Protection Alliance and San Francisco Baykeeper; Central Valley Water Board; and Northern California Water Association, San Joaquin Valley Drainage Association, East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition, California Farm Bureau Federation, San Joaquin Valley County Resource Conservation District. This agreement requires that the Central Valley Water Board release a draft EIR for the long-term program by 31 July 2010. Also, the agreement requires that staff present and recommend that the Board certify a final EIR by 31 March 2011.

## Outreach

### **Postcards:**

In March and April, Central Valley Water Board staff issued 241 outreach postcards to potential owners of irrigated lands in Nevada, Contra Costa, and Lake Counties. Nevada and Lake County are within the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition, while Contra Costa County is within the San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition as well as part of the Delta Pilot Project. The postcard recipients were identified using county tax assessor rolls and state and federal agricultural land use databases. The postcards advise qualifying owners of irrigated lands to obtain the proper regulatory coverage.

### **Exemption Claim Inspections:**

In March and April 2010, Central Valley Water Board staff completed 13 inspections to verify landowner claims of exemptions to the ILRP. Landowners can respond to ILRP staff's postcards or 13267 Orders by claiming their land is not used for agriculture, not irrigated, or that it has no irrigation tail water or storm water runoff. These claims create a need for verification inspections, which staff regularly conducts.

## Enforcement

### **California Water Code section 13267 Orders:**

In April, the Executive Officer issued 63 CWC §13267 Orders to potential owners of irrigated lands in the San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition area; also, part of the Delta Pilot Project area. These Orders were issued to landowners in Contra Costa County who first received an outreach postcard and subsequently did not respond.

### **Approval to Join a Coalition Group:**

In April, the Executive Officer approved 90 landowners to join coalitions. These additional landowners will add 17,900 irrigated acres to the program. Thirty-two of these applications were a result of mailing informational postcards to landowners and twenty-eight were the result of mailing 13267 Orders.

### **Unauthorized Discharges and Complaints:**

On 16 March, staff responded to a CalEMA Hazmat Spill Report describing a quantity of dead fish in the Blakeley Canal (a tributary of the Kings River) in Kings County. Samples collected at that time were analyzed for physical parameters, nutrients, metals, pesticides, and water column toxicity. No toxicity was found. The herbicide Diuron was detected in all three samples at concentrations too low to be the likely cause of the fish kill. On 26 March, staff received a letter from the Kings River Conservation District describing actions taken to address the fish kill. Staff is currently drafting a response report.

## **Coalition Groups**

On 18 March, Staff met with representations from the agricultural water quality coalitions to discuss the potential increase in fees being considered by the State Water Board. The focus of the discussion was on how staff resources at the Central Valley Water Board are being used to implement the program.

### **California Rice Commission (CRC):**

On 10 March, a three-year Monitoring and Reporting Program (MRP) Order No. R5-2010-0805 was approved for the CRC. The MRP will be in effect until 31 December 2012. Review of the Algae Aquatic Toxicity Management Plan and the voluntary Propanil Management Plan have been completed. The Propanil Management Plan has been approved by the Executive Officer.

The Algae Toxicity Management Plan focused identifying whether rice herbicides could be causing or contributing to the observed toxicity. Concurrent chemical analysis and toxicity testing did not show a relationship between the presence of rice herbicides and aquatic toxicity. Therefore, the CRC has been informed that they have met their obligations under the management plan.

The 2009 Annual Monitoring Report has been reviewed by staff and is undergoing review by management.

Due to wet weather, monitoring for the Rice Pesticide Program will be delayed at least two weeks. The CRC will inform stakeholders when monitoring for thiobencarb begins.

### **East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition (ESJWQC):**

On 1 March, the ESJWQC submitted its 2010 Annual Monitoring Report, and staff completed the report review on 30 March. Staff comments have been prepared and are undergoing management review.

On 3 March, staff held a meeting with the ESJWQC, the San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition, and Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition to discuss compliance with chlorpyrifos and diazinon TMDL implementation. The purpose of this meeting was to clarify and provide responses to coalition questions regarding implementation of the TMDL requirements within current management plan strategies. The coalitions agreed to follow up with a proposal. The ESJWQC and Westside Coalitions agreed on the submittal of a separate-single Annual Chlorpyrifos and Diazinon TMDL Report (Annual CD TMDL Report) to determine compliance with the TMDL requirements. The coalitions will follow up with a letter that includes schedules and content of the Annual CD TMDL Report.

On 1 April, the ESJWQC submitted its 2010 Management Plan Update Report. Staff is reviewing and preparing comments for the 4 May quarterly management plan meeting.

**Goose Lake Coalition:**

On 8 April, Goose Lake Coalition conducted its pre-irrigation sampling event on Lassen Creek. Subsequent sampling events will be conducted monthly during the irrigation season (April-June) and one sampling event in the fall. In April, Central Valley Water Board staff received, and the Executive Officer approved a request from the Goose Lake Coalition to drop total ammonia from the list of parameters during Core monitoring years. The Coalition will continue to conduct sampling of total ammonia during Assessment monitoring years beginning in 2011. Water Board staff will travel to Goose Lake the week of May 10 to attend a meeting with Coalition leads regarding the *E. coli* management plan that is being developed for Lassen Creek.

**Pleasant Valley Coalition:**

The Pleasant Valley Coalition collected signed landowner agreements from its growers that wish to join Westlands Storm water Coalition. The official adoption of Pleasant Valley landowners into the Westlands Storm water Coalition is scheduled to occur prior to 30 June 2010.

**Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition (SVWQC):**

On 1 March, the SVWQC submitted its 2010 Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), including a brief update on the Management Plan Status report. Staff is currently reviewing the AMR and preparing comments. Staff requested that the Coalition prepare a separate, comprehensive Management Plan Status Update Report and provided guidance regarding report contents. The Coalition submitted the Management Plan Status Update Report on 3 May 2010.

On 23 March, SVWQC and staff held the first 2010 Quarterly Management Plan Meeting. Participants reviewed and discussed upcoming 2010 management plan tasks, the status of 2009 management plan tasks, and management plan survey results. Additional agenda items included staff review of Source Evaluation Reports, QAPP approval, and MRPP change requests under review.

On 30 March, staff held a telephone meeting with SVWQC, El Dorado subwatershed, and Napa subwatershed representatives regarding their Pilot Watershed Management Practices Plans. The purpose of the meeting was to affirm that final Pilot Plan proposals and questionnaires were received by staff and did not need further revision. In addition, staff clarified that documentation of grower implementation (75% requirement) of management practices are required by 15 June (revised due date) and must be approved prior to discontinuing monitoring activities within the two subwatershed areas.

On 14 April, staff attended the SVWQC Quarterly Coalition Group meeting. Staff provided an overview of the ILRP Monitoring and Implementation Unit priorities for 2010 and an update on development of the long-term Irrigated Lands Program.

On 15 April, a letter from the Executive Officer was sent to the Coalition and the Placer-Nevada-South Sutter-North Sacramento Subwatershed Group in response to letters dated 9 February and 23 March regarding current monitoring requirements and development of the long-term irrigated lands program. The subwatershed group proposed that they be recognized as a low threat to water quality impacts and that their monitoring requirements should reflect this status. The letter responds to the subwatershed group's concerns.

On 16 April, the SVWQC and Upper Feather River Watershed Group submitted a letter to the Executive Officer requesting a reduction in the number of monitoring stations in the subwatersheds' area from three to one. Justification for the request was based on the similarity of crops and agricultural operations throughout the area; the lack of metals, nutrients, and pesticide exceedances; and ongoing special studies and outreach activities being conducted to address pH, DO, and E. coli exceedances. The request was approved by the Executive Officer on 29 April.

On 22 April, proposals from the El Dorado subwatershed and the Napa subwatershed for a Pilot Watershed Management Practices Pilot Plan were approved by the Executive Officer. The proposal is the first of two requirements that must be met before the Pilot Plan can begin in each subwatershed area. Upon submission and acceptance of documentation that 75% of growers are implementing appropriate management practices, Core and Assessment Monitoring activities will be suspended in the respective subwatershed areas.

**San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition (SJCDWQC):**

On 3 March, staff held a meeting with the San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition, East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition, and Westside Coalition to discuss compliance with the chlorpyrifos and diazinon TMDL implementation. The Coalitions requested the meeting.

On 23 March, staff completed review of the San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition 1 March 2010 Annual Monitoring Report. Staff comments have been prepared and are undergoing management review.

On 1 April, the San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition (Coalition) submitted its 2010 Management Plan Update Report. Staff is reviewing and preparing comments for the 4 May quarterly management plan meeting.

**Southern San Joaquin Valley Water Quality Coalition (SSJVVQC):**

On 22 March, staff met with the SSJVVQC to discuss its draft MRP Plan. Representatives of the Coalition discussed issues they have with the conditions for approval. Staff is drafting a memo to address the issues and provide clarification on Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program requirements.

On 14 & 15 April, staff conducted sampling on the Tule River above Lake Success and on the South Fork of the Kern River above Lake Isabella. The sampling is the

result of an agreement with the Coalition to jointly assess potential influences from irrigated agriculture above the reservoirs that may warrant additional Coalition monitoring. The Coalition will collect a second set of samples during the middle or end of the 2010 irrigation season. The samples will be analyzed for Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program Assessment site parameters.

**Westlands Coalition:**

This storm season produced higher than normal flows in each of Westlands Storm water Coalition's three monitored ephemeral streams, with most streams flowing intermittently since December. Westlands was able to collect monthly samples from most of its monitoring sites.

**Westside Coalition:**

On 28 April, staff met with coalition leads for the quarterly update on management plan activities. Several key components of the management plan were updated as well as a detailed discussion on planning for the new focused management plans for Del Puerto Creek, Orestimba Creek, and Westley Wasteway. Staff also discussed the past irrigation season Semi-Annual Monitoring Report submitted in November 2009 and additional information that will be added to the next monitoring report in the June non-irrigation season.

### **Individual Dischargers**

**Waiver Order Merced Irrigation District (Merced ID):**

On 26 February, staff received the Merced Irrigation District 2010 Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) for the 2009 reporting period. The AMR was due on 1 March 2010.

**Modesto Irrigation District (Modesto ID):**

On 24 February, staff received an email from Modesto ID stating that submittal of the 2010 Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) would be delayed.

On 10 March, staff received the Irrigation District 2010 Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) for the 2009 reporting period, which was dated 5 March 2010. The AMR was due on 1 March 2010.

**Oakdale Irrigation District (OID):**

On 1 March staff received the Oakdale Irrigation District 2010 Annual Monitoring Report for the 2009 reporting period. On 25 March, staff completed its review of the annual monitoring report; comments have been prepared and are in the final stages of edits and senior review.

**South San Joaquin Irrigation District (SSJID):**

On 22 February, the South San Joaquin Irrigation District submitted an extension request for the 1 March 2010 Annual Monitoring Report. The District requested a 29

March extension because the final monitoring results for the reporting period were not received until mid-February giving the District 2 weeks to prepare the report. The Executive Officer approved the District's request on 25 February.

On 27 March, staff received the South San Joaquin Irrigation District's 2010 Annual Monitoring Report for the 2009 reporting period as per the 25 February extension approval. On 16 April, staff completed its review of the annual monitoring report; comments have been prepared and are in the final stages of edits and senior review.

**Turlock Irrigation District (TID):**

On 24 February, staff received the Merced Irrigation District 2010 Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) for the 2009 reporting period. The AMR was due on 1 March 2010.

**Data Management**

The ILRP Participant Monitoring Data web site is scheduled for an update in early summer to add data through the end of 2009 for all Coalitions and the CRC who have submitted quarterly or annual monitoring reports through 1 March 2010. All reports received through this time frame that arrived in an electronic SWAMP comparable format are currently being loaded into a California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN) comparable daughter database provided by the UC Davis Data Center. These reports and future data sets will be sent to the UC Davis Data Center to be uploaded into CEDEN for state-wide assessment efforts.

The consolidated ILRP data warehouse project is nearing completion and is slated for release to staff on 1 June. The data warehouse consolidates and formats older data to be combined with newer SWAMP formatted data being received. This warehouse will allow rapid and large-scale data analysis to be performed for the program on a timeline much shorter than waiting for all the historical data to be SWAMP formatted. The San Joaquin Watershed SWAMP unit has aided in this project as well as support for the continued efforts of formatting and loading data into the CEDEN comparable database.

**MOU Pilot Program**

Requests to amend and extend the MOU contracts were denied. Requests to extend the contracts, at no additional costs, to 31 December 2011 were submitted and are being processed. The Quarterly Report for January to March 2010 is under final review and should be approved and posted on the ILRP website by the May Board meeting.