

**IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM UPDATE
CENTRAL VALLEY WATER BOARD
September 2011**

This month's Irrigated Agricultural 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 October 2011 Executive Officer's report. Current and past ILRP program monthly reports can be found on the [State Water Board Agriculture Regulatory Program](#) website.

General

Long-term ILRP/Groundwater Monitoring Advisory Workgroup:

The Groundwater Monitoring Advisory Workgroup (GMAW) held a public meeting in the Rancho Cordova office of the Central Valley Water Board on 25 August 2011. The GMAW consists of groundwater experts representing State agencies, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the United States Geological Survey, academia, and private consultants. The purpose of the meeting was to gather input from the group of groundwater experts relative to the data requirements necessary to solve the critical questions that should be answered by groundwater monitoring for the Long-Term Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP). These questions and data requirements are meant to assist Central Valley Water Board staff in identifying how groundwater monitoring will be integrated into the ILRP. Groundwater requirements developed for the ILRP will be incorporated into monitoring and reporting programs prepared for coalition waste discharge requirements general orders.

Recommended data requirements for the questions that should be answered by groundwater monitoring will be discussed with Stakeholders during a public meeting of the Irrigated Lands Stakeholder Advisory Work Group (SAWG) to be held on 30 September 2011. Information from these meetings will be considered as staff develops coalition group waste discharge requirements general orders for consideration by the Central Valley Water Board.

Long-term Program Order Development Status

The process for developing the waste discharge requirements (WDRs) that will collectively comprise the long-term irrigated lands regulatory program has been modified. An additional step to allow interested parties to review an administrative draft of the geographic/commodity based WDRs has been included. With that additional step, the schedule for developing the WDRs has changed. An updated schedule can be found on the [Central Valley Regional website](#).

Eastside San Joaquin River Watershed WDR

Regional Board staff met with the eastside San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition board on 25 July 2011 to discuss the development of the WDR for their area. Staff also met with Coalition representatives on 25 August 2011 to discuss the WDR. Primary topics for discussion included the boundaries for the eastside WDR; timing of when the groundwater quality requirements would go into effect; and the identification of “high vulnerability” (or “Tier 3”) groundwater areas. The East-side boundaries will affect the boundaries for three other WDRs (San Joaquin County and Delta; West-side San Joaquin River Watershed; Tulare Lake Basin). Regional Board staff will discuss the boundary issues with the Coalitions representing those respective areas. Staff held an initial meeting on 27 July 2011 with the Westside San Joaquin River Coalition to discuss the eastside/west-side boundary issue.

Sacramento River Watershed Rice WDR

Staff met with representatives from the California Rice Commission on 25 July 2011 and 1 September 2011 to discuss the development of a rice specific general WDR for rice fields in the Sacramento watershed. Topics included how rice growers/rice growing parcels could be identified without conflicting with CRC’s statutory restrictions; ideas for reporting on practices employed by rice growers to protect water quality; potential improvements to the surface water quality monitoring program; identification of “high vulnerability” groundwater areas; and the unique issues regarding fertilization of rice and the associated nitrogen cycle as it applies to flooded fields.

Tulare Lake Basin WDR

Staff met with representatives of the Southern San Joaquin Valley Water Quality Coalition (Coalition) in Fresno on 24 August 2011, to discuss issues related to development of a Waste Discharge Requirements Order (WDRs) for irrigated lands in the Tulare Lake Basin (minus the area that would be covered by the Westlands Water District). Major issues discussed included tiering criteria for both surface water and groundwater, coalition membership, and proposed Coalition boundaries. Staff and Coalition representatives have committed to meet monthly to discuss issues related to development of the new Irrigated Lands WDRs.

Westlands WDR

Staff and representatives of Westlands Water District are scheduled to meet on 27 September 2011, to begin discussions regarding Waste Discharge Requirements under the Irrigated Lands Program.

Individual General WDR

Staff have developed an internal draft of general WDR that would apply to individual growers that are not enrolled under a third party administered WDR. The internal draft is under review.

Petitions on Program Environmental Impact Report and Conditional Waiver Renewal

The renewal of the conditional waiver and the certification of the program environmental impact report for the long-term irrigated lands regulatory program were petitioned separately to the State Water Board by two groups – a group of environmental representatives and a group of agricultural representatives. On 1 August 2011, the State Water Board sent a memo to the Central Valley Water Board requesting the administrative record associated with the Board actions and providing the Regional Board with an opportunity to respond to the contentions contained in the petitions. The record and responses to the petitions were timely submitted on 14 September 2011.

Outreach

Exemption Claim Inspections:

In July and August 2011, Central Valley Water Board staff completed 8 inspections to verify landowner exemption claims to the ILRP. Landowners can respond to ILRP staff's postcards or CWC § 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 (no waste discharges to surface waters). These claims create a need for verification inspections, which staff regularly conducts. Staff verified that lands associated with 7 inspections were exempt from regulatory coverage under the current ILRP. The outcome of one inspection will likely lead to an enforcement action for failure to obtain appropriate regulatory coverage.

Postcards:

Postcard mailings were on hold during July and August 2011 while staff completed a grower assessment using Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The purpose of the assessment is to identify irrigated lands lacking regulatory coverage, and to prioritize these lands based on parcel size and proximity to the Delta and other sensitive receiving waters. Staff expects postcard mail outs to resume in October 2011.

Enforcement

In August 2011 the ILRP mailed 17 NOVs for failure to respond to a CWC §13267 Order. These NOVs were issued to landowners in Butte, Contra Costa, Lake, & San Joaquin counties.

Also, in August 2011, the ILRP mailed 54 CWC §13260 Orders to landowners who were on the East San Joaquin County Water Quality Coalition's 2010 membership list but are no longer listed on the 2011 membership list. This Order requires the "dropped members" to come back into compliance by either submitting a Report of Waste Discharge or by re-enrolling in the coalition. These Orders were issued to landowners

in Madera, Mariposa, Merced, San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties.

Coalition Groups

East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition:

On 19 July 2011, The East San Joaquin County Water Quality Coalition and Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition submitted a proposed plan for follow-up actions that will occur when water quality monitoring results indicate that the San Joaquin River is out of compliance with the chlorpyrifos and diazinon TMDL. The Coalitions have jointly developed a draft decision tree outlining those actions. The proposed decision tree is under staff review.

On 2 August 2011, staff held the 12th quarterly meeting with the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition (Coalition) to discuss progress of implementing the Coalition's Management Plan.

Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition (SVWQC):

On August 8, 2011, letters from the Executive Officer were mailed to the SVWQC in response to the Coalition's June 15, 2011 submittal for the Pilot Watershed Management Practices Plans in El Dorado County and Napa County. The Coalition's submittal demonstrated that both subwatershed areas had met Plan requirements of at least 95% adoption of best management practices on irrigated acreage. The letters confirmed that staff reviewed these results and accepted them as adequate progress in fulfillment of the Pilot Plans.

On August 9, 2011, Staff sent a letter to the SVWQC regarding 19 *E. coli* Management Plans. The Coalition had requested that these Management Plans be deemed completed. However, staff determined that the available data is insufficient to rule out agricultural sources of pathogen indicators. In addition, pending deliverables for these Plans have been suspended by the Executive Officer pending the development of a regional approach to pathogen indicator management plans.

San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition:

On August 2, 2011 staff held the 12th quarterly meeting with the San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition (Coalition) to discuss progress of implementing the Coalition's Management Plan and the Delta chlorpyrifos/diazinon TMDL.

Southern San Joaquin Valley Water Quality Coalition (SSJVWQC):

At a 24 August 2011 meeting, to discuss the Tulare Lake Basin WDRs, the Coalition provided staff with written comments on currently required surface water Management Plans for the Kaweah Sub-watershed.

Westside Coalition:

On 29 July 2011, the Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition submitted their performance goals report for the Westley Wasteway, Del Puerto Creek and Orestimba Creek Subwatersheds as required by the Westside Coalition's Management Plan—General Approach and Focused Plan 2. This report outlines the performance goals and interim milestones for the Focused Plan 2 subwatersheds. The performance goals were approved on 12 August 2011.

On August 3, 2011 staff held the Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition quarterly meeting to discuss Management Plan and Focused Management Plan updates and water quality data.

Other Projects Data Management

Data reports received through September 1, 2011 that arrived in an electronic SWAMP comparable format are currently being prepared for loading into a California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN) comparable database provided by the Central Valley Regional Data Center (CV RDC). These reports and future data sets will be sent to the CV RDC to be uploaded into CEDEN for state-wide assessment efforts. At this time, 38 reports have been successfully processed and loaded into the CEDEN comparable database.

Concurrent to processing and loading of submitted electronic data, data submission feedback packages have been developed to assist the Coalitions with formatting and reviewing data prior to submission to meet the electronic data submittal requirements of the program. The feedback packages contain guidance documents, electronic versions of quality assurance project plans, review checklists and code look up lists. The Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition received a feedback package on August 8, 2011 for their June 1, 2011 quarterly data submittal. The Westside San Joaquin Water Coalition received their feedback package on August 19, 2011 for their June 30, 2011 semi-annual monitoring report.

Prop 84 Grant Funding

On 30 August 2011, the Coalition for Urban/Rural Environmental Stewardship (CURES) held a meeting with its Advisory Selection Committee (ASC) to discuss the ranking for the first round of grower applications for funding. The ASC is made up of members from state agencies (the Department of Food and Agriculture, the Department of Pesticide Regulation, State Water Board, and Central Valley Water Board), the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the UC Cooperative Extension, and the ILRP Coalition Groups.

The first round of successful applicants are now being processed and should be able to start project implementation work within a month.