

IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM UPDATE

June 2014

This month's Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program 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 June 5-6, 2014 Executive Officer's report. Current and past ILRP program monthly reports can be found on the [State Water Board Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program](#) website.

STATE WATER BOARD

On June 2, 2014, ILRP staff participated in a Farm Food Safety Conservation Network steering committee meeting to discuss proposed revisions to the United States Department of Agriculture Food Safety Modernization Act.

On June 3-4, 2014, ILRP staff participated in a California Bioresources Alliance (CBA) Annual symposium. The symposium was held at the Mondavi Center on the UC Davis campus. Topics discussed included:

- Status of waste-to-energy in California;
- Innovative biosolids and renewable energy technologies;
- Developments in biogas systems;
- Overview of bioresources legislation;
- AB 1900 Implementation;
- Drought, bioresources and nutrient management; and
- Field trip to the UC Davis READ digester.

On June 10, 2014, ILRP staff participated in the California Roundtable on Agriculture and the Environment (CRAE) meeting held at the Mondavi Center on the UC Davis campus.

On June 11, 2014 ILRP staff participated in a meeting with Anne Katten of the Pesticide and Work Safety Project California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation to discuss ongoing chlorpyrifos and diazinon issues. Also participating in the discussions were representatives from DPR, Central Valley and Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Boards.

On June 12, 2014 ILRP staff participated in a meeting with DPR, California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA), the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board staff, and several POTWs. The meeting was to discuss the status of DPR pyrethroid re-evaluation process and what the next steps DPR will be taking.

On June 19, 2014, ILRP staff participated in a discussion regarding a Senate Environmental Quality Committee analysis of AB 371 (Salas). AB 371 passed unanimously (7-0) in the Senate Environmental Quality Committee on June 18, 2014.

Of concern to the Water Board is that AB 371 was amended to delete *unincorporated* and *imported* so that it now applies to everyone who land applies biosolids in Kern County. Requirement was also added for the State/Regional Water Boards to monitor the groundwater for the 18 compounds of interest. Not sure what the cost would be or who would bear the cost for groundwater monitoring.

On June 26, 2014 ILRP staff participated in a National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) meeting with Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and USEPA Region 9 to discuss NWQI monitoring criteria. Tetra-Tech also participated in the meeting and stated they would be able to provide training on setting-up a monitoring network in Calleguas Creek. Tetra-tech stated they would assist in providing similar training in other regions of the state.

CENTRAL VALLEY WATER BOARD

General Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs):

Development Eastern San Joaquin River Watershed WDRs

On March 27, 2014, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) adopted revisions to the Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) for the Eastern San Joaquin River Watershed. The key change is a two-month extension of deadlines for the third- party members in high vulnerability areas to submit the first Farm Evaluation (due on May 1, 2014, rather than March 1, 2014), and for the third-party to prepare and report a summary of management practice information collected as part of Farm Evaluations (due on July 1, 2014, rather than May 1, 2014).

Grasslands Bypass Project

On February 27, 2014 a conference call was arranged between Regional Water Board staff, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Bureau), and representatives of the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority (SLDMWA) to discuss questions on the draft WDR and Monitoring and Reporting Program (MRP).

Comments from the Bureau and SLDMWA were received in late March/early April 2014. On April 22, 2014, a second conference call was arranged to discuss comments, clarify reasoning for requirements and requested changes, and to work out discrepancies. An outcome of the conference call was the Bureau and SLDMWA provided recommendations on sampling and reporting necessary under the draft WDR and MRP.

A draft administrative WDR and MRP reflecting new compliance dates to meet selenium objectives in Mud Slough (north) and incorporating relevant requirements from the ILRP is expected to be released in late May 2014.

California Rice Commission WDR

The Regional Water Board adopted WDR General Order for Sacramento Valley Rice

Growers, Order R5-2014-0032 on March 27, 2014. The California Rice Commission is a recognized third-party entity and will represent rice (defined as species *Oryza sativa*) and rice seed growers in the Sacramento Valley.

Sacramento River Watershed WDR

The Regional Water Board adopted the WDR General Order for Growers within the Sacramento River Watershed that are Members of a Third-Party Group, Order R5-2014-0030 (Order) on March 12, 2014. Only the Sacramento River Water Quality Coalition applied to serve as a third-party to represent growers in this area by the April 11, 2014 deadline for submitting a Notice of Intent. The Coalition has represented growers to comply with the requirements of the ILRP since 2003. The Notice of Intent submitted by the Coalition is under review.

San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition WDRs

On March 12, 2014, the Regional Water Board adopted the WDR General Order for Growers within the San Joaquin County and Delta Area that are Members of a Third-Party Group, Order R5-2014-0029 (Order). By the April 11, 2014 deadline for submitting a Notice of Intent, only the San Joaquin County Resource Conservation District (District) applied to serve as a third-party to represent growers in the San Joaquin County and Delta Area. The District has been serving as the umbrella organization for the irrigated lands served by the San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition since 2003.

On April 25, 2014, the Regional Water Board Executive Officer issued a Notice of Applicability to the district designating the entity as a representative third-party under the General Order for growers within portions of San Joaquin, Amador, Contra Costa, Stanislaus, Alameda, and Alpine counties.

Western San Joaquin River Watershed WDRs

On March 17, 2014, the Regional Water Board Executive Officer issued the Notice of Applicability to the San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority (Drainage Authority), approving its February 5, 2014 application to represent growers in the Western San Joaquin River Watershed. The Drainage Authority, which has been serving as the umbrella organization for the irrigated lands served by the Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition since 2003, submitted additional information on March 7 and 13, 2014 to support its application.

On March 28, 2014, the Regional Water Board Executive Officer provided the proposed Farm Evaluation template to the San Joaquin Valley Drainage Authority for comments. The public was invited to provide comments on the proposed template, and one comment letter was received by the deadline on April 28, 2014.

State Water Resources Control Board Agricultural Expert Panel:

Regional Water Board staff participated in the meetings of the State Water Board's Expert Panel the week of May 5, 2014 in San Luis Obispo, Tulare, and Sacramento. The State Water Board's report to the Legislature included a recommendation to

convene a panel of experts to assess existing agricultural nitrate control programs and develop recommendations, as needed, to ensure that ongoing efforts are protective of groundwater supply quality. The State Water Board contracted with the Irrigation Training and Research Center (ITRC) at the California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, to assemble the expert panel. Information on the proceedings of the Expert Panel can be found at the [ITRC website](#).

As identified in the public notice, the role of Expert Panel Members is as follows:

- Review the Water Boards' Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program;
- Evaluate ongoing agricultural control measures that address nitrate in groundwater and surface water;
- Evaluate and address other risks to water quality posed by agricultural practices;
- Address questions posed by the State Water Board in its order regarding the petitions of the Central Coast Water Board;
- Address questions developed by an Advisory Committee, other agencies and the public as approved by the State Water Board;
- Propose new agricultural control measures, if necessary;
- Hold meetings with the Advisory Committee as necessary;
- Conduct three public meetings to take public comment; and
- Prepare a Final Report on the findings and a summary of project discoveries and recommendations.

The Expert Panel is expected to prepare their final report at the September 23, 2014 State Water Board meeting. The Central Valley Water Board has indicated in the adoption of its ILRP Orders that it will consider the recommendations of the Expert Panel.

Mapping of Nitrate High-risk Areas:

On March 4, 2014, Regional Water Board staff participated in a State Water Board workshop on a state-wide effort to map nitrate high risk areas. Regional Water Board staff presented information on the Central Valley Water Board's requirements for coalitions to identify high vulnerability areas through their Groundwater Quality Assessment Reports (GAR). Coalition representatives from the California Rice Commission and East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition presented the results of their GAR efforts.

Management Practice Evaluation Program (MPEP):

On March 18, 2014, the Regional Water Board Executive Officer conditionally approved the Management Practices Evaluation Program (MPEP) Group Option for the East San Joaquin Coalition, the San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition, and the Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition. The Group Option allows multiple entities to prepare a joint MPEP Workplan to determine the effects, if any, irrigated agricultural practices may have on first encountered groundwater under different conditions that could affect the discharge of waste from irrigated lands to groundwater, and to address the conditions relevant to high vulnerability groundwater areas.

Grower Enrollment under New Orders:

The new ILRP Orders provide an opportunity for growers who do not have regulatory coverage to directly join the coalition. After the allowable time frame to directly join the coalition, the growers must submit a Notice of Intent to the Regional Water Board to get approval for regulatory coverage under the applicable third-party group Order. As each Order has been adopted, and the coalitions approved, Regional Water Board staff and the coalitions initiate outreach efforts to inform non-participating growers of the opportunity to join the coalition.

The Coalitions generally are required to report their Member lists 60 days after the opportunity to join the coalition directly. Member lists are then reported annually, thereafter.

Compliance and Outreach:**East San Joaquin Agricultural Parcel Inspections**

In March, April, and on May 8th, 2014, Regional Water Board staff inspected 427 parcels in the East San Joaquin River Watershed. The purpose of these inspections is to determine if the parcels are commercial irrigated lands that require coverage under the Eastern San Joaquin River Watershed General Order. Data gathered during these inspections will be used to focus and prioritize the issuance of 13260 directives to commercial irrigated lands that are not covered by the Eastern San Joaquin River Watershed General Order.

Water Code section 13260 Directives

On March 19 and May 9, 2014, Regional Water Board staff mailed 187 Directives to landowners who staff has determined own irrigated agriculture. Landowners in the Eastern San Joaquin River Watershed whose parcels are used for commercial irrigated lands (as determined by staff inspections) are being mailed the directives that require the recipients to submit proof of coalition membership or a Notice of Intent to get regulatory coverage.

Letter to Western San Joaquin Watershed Growers

In March 2014, Regional Water Board staff used Geographic Information Systems and county tax assessor's parcel information to prepare a list of landowners with parcels that likely require coverage under the Waste Discharge Requirements General Order for Growers within the Western San Joaquin River Watershed (General Order). And on March 26, 2014, 388 landowners with a total of 45,293 acres of land were mailed an outreach letter informing them of new ILRP requirements under the General Order, and how they could join the Western San Joaquin Coalition or get more information.

Regional Water Board staff is working with the Western San Joaquin Coalition representatives to determine landowner response to the outreach letters. Follow up outreach to these landowners is pending response results.

Coalition Groups:

East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition

On February 26, 2014, Regional Water Board staff held an ILRP stakeholder meeting at the Stanislaus County Agricultural Center in Modesto. At this meeting, the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition provided an overview of the Groundwater Quality Assessment Report and the Sediment Discharge and Erosion Assessment Report. Regional Water Board staff review of the two assessment reports is underway.

On March 3, 2014, Regional Water Board staff received the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition's Quarterly Monitoring Data Report for the period July-September 2013.

On April 30, 2014, Regional Water Board staff received the 2014 Annual Monitoring Report for the San Joaquin Chlorpyrifos and Diazinon TMDL Compliance Monitoring prepared jointly by the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition and the Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition. Regional Water Board staff is reviewing the report and preparing comments.

On May 1, 2014, Regional Water Board staff received the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition Monitoring Report and the Management Plan Progress Report for the period from January through September 2013. Regional Water Board staff is reviewing the report and preparing comments.

On May 1, 2014, the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition submitted an updated Comprehensive Surface Water Quality Management Plan. Regional Water Board staff is reviewing the updated Management Plan and will consider comments received during the 30- day public comment period.

Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition (SVWQC)

The SVWQC submitted its Annual Monitoring Report on March 3, 2014. This report includes information and analysis for the monitoring program from October 2013 through September 2013. This report is under Regional Water Board staff review.

On April 1, 2014, the Coalition submitted the 2013 Chlorpyrifos and Diazinon TMDL Compliance Monitoring Report. This report is under Regional Water Board staff review.

On April 3, 2014, the Regional Water Board Executive Officer approved the Pilot Watershed Management Practices Plan Annual Reports for the Napa County Putah Creek and El Dorado subwatersheds. These reports describe the management objectives, management practices and implementation approach taken by the respective subwatershed groups to ensure continued protection of water quality in these two foothill/upper watershed areas.

On April 23, 2014, Regional Water Board Executive Officer and staff met with representatives of the Northern California Water Association (NCWA). The discussion

focused on NCWA's preparation of its groundwater quality assessment report, and related groundwater reports.

On May 1, 2014, the SVWQC submitted its 2013 Management Plan Progress Report, describing steps taken and progress made toward correcting water quality problems in areas where irrigated agriculture has been identified as contributing to exceedances.

San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition

On March 1, 2014, Regional Water Board staff received the San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition Annual Monitoring Report. The AMR is under Regional Water Board staff review and will be posted on the Regional Water Board website.

On March 11, 2014, Regional Water Board staff provided a review of the San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition 2013 Management Plan Update Report. The Coalition provided the necessary information for the components of the Management Plan Update Report, Basin Plan – TMDL requirements, with only minor omissions.

On April 1, 2014, the San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition submitted their 2014 Management Plan Update Report. The MPUR is under Regional Water Board staff review and is posted on the Regional Water Board website.

Tulare Lake Basin Third-party Groups

The Kings, Kaweah, Tule, Kern, Cawelo, and Buena Vista Water Quality Coalitions have submitted, or are preparing to submit, Surface Water Monitoring Plan and Groundwater Quality Assessment Report outlines. Regional Water Board staff is in the process of reviewing these outlines as they come in.

In March and April 9, 2014, about 693 outreach letters were sent to the Kings and Kern Coalitions for landowners of irrigated lands that are not enrolled in those coalitions. The Kings Coalition has now received two phases of outreach letters. The opportunity for growers to enroll directly with the Kings Coalition will close on May 19, 2014. Regional Water Board staff is preparing a second mailout to landowners with parcels that have not yet enrolled with the Kern Coalition. Regional Water Board staff is preparing the initial mailouts for the remaining Coalitions.

On March 3, 2014, the Southern San Joaquin Valley Water Quality Coalition, which covered the majority of the Tulare Lake Basin Area under the previous ILRP Order, submitted their final Annual Monitoring Report covering the 2013 monitoring year.

On April 8, 2014, Regional Water Board staff issued Farm Evaluation templates to the Kings, Kaweah, Tule, Kern, and Buena Vista Coalitions for comment. The deadline to submit written comments to be considered prior to the Regional Water Board Executive Officer providing the final template to the Third-Party Groups is May 28, 2014.

On April 17, 2014, Regional Water Board staff attended the San Joaquin Valley Sustainable Farming Project Almond Field day in Fresno County. Topics of discussion included: in season pest pressures and preserving beneficial insect populations, spring and summer disease management, and irrigation management during a drought year.

Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition

On April 30, 2014, the Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition and East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition submitted their 2014 combined chlorpyrifos and diazinon TMDL annual compliance monitoring report based on the 2013 water year. The report is under Regional Water Board staff review.

Tule Basin Water Quality Coalition

On May 15, 2014, the Tule Basin Water Quality Coalition sent an email expressing concern that Regional Water Board staff had not yet sent letters to non-members in the Tule Basin area and that an extension to the 180-day sign-up period would be necessary. Regional Water Board staff responded that the work to assemble the non-member growers list had been completed and that approximately 2,800 letters to non-members in the Tule Basin Water Quality Coalition area would be mailed shortly [by May 23, 2014] and therefore, an extension of the August 5, 2014 date for sign up did not appear necessary.

Data Management:

Data from 2009 through 2012 for all Coalitions are available to the public on CEDEN. The latest transfer occurred in March 2014 and added data though late-2013 for most coalitions. The next transfer is planned for July 2014 and will add data through 2013 for all coalitions and for some coalitions data as recent as early 2014. New data will continue to be transferred to CEDEN on a quarterly basis.

Data reports received in acceptable condition through June 2, 2014 are currently being processed and loaded into the California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN) comparable database provided by the Central Valley Regional Data Center (CV RDC).

Data collected prior to 2009 will continue to be available on the ILRP surface water quality data webpage until those sets have been processed and transferred to CEDEN as resources permit. Regional Water Board staff is currently processing the Westside San Joaquin Watershed Coalition data and the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition collected between 2004 and 2008. Once complete, these sets will complement the existing data on CEDEN providing all the data submitted by the coalition since program inception. The current goal is to complete and load the Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition data to CEDEN by September 2014. The Sacramento Valley Coalition data is currently slated to be complete by mid-2015.

In August of 2013, CEDEN released the most updated and consolidated version of

their electronic data templates. Over the course of late 2014 and into early 2015, the ILRP will be transitioning to the use of these new CEDEN templates for Excel based data submissions from Coalitions. This transition will assist all parties in better maintaining comparability and efficient use of resources. On January 22, 2014, stakeholders were notified via email of the ILRP's intent to transition to new templates. A brief history and explanation of the transition was provided, as well as a schedule for future communications and updates to available resources and tools. A second email communication was issued March 27, 2014. A series of informational graphics comparing the current templates to the new templates was provided. Stakeholders were also informed about a delay in the availability of a critical online tool for the new templates. The next communication is planned for early June 2014 and should provide an update on the status of the online tool as well as provide a revised schedule for the transition.

Managed Wetlands Workgroup:

During the WDR Order adoption hearings for the Long-term ILRP, the Board directed the Regional Water Board Executive Officer and staff to address issues raised by wetlands managers. Following an initial meeting with the Regional Water Board Executive Officer on February 12, 2014, a work group consisting of representatives from public and private managed wetlands formed to address concerns about the applicability of the ILRP framework for regulating discharges from managed wetlands. Regional Water Board staff held a kick-off meeting with the Managed Wetlands Workgroup on March 19, 2014 with the primary objective to begin discussion of options for wetlands regulatory coverage. During the meeting, wetlands representatives provided background information about managed wetlands to clarify the basis of their concerns and asked Regional Water Board staff to explain the Regional Water Board's perspective for requiring regulatory coverage. The work group developed a preliminary list of desirable outcomes for a managed wetlands regulatory framework. Regional Water Board staff will schedule additional work group meetings.

Rice Pesticides Program:

On April 24, 2014, the Regional Water Board Executive Officer issued a letter to the California Rice Commission (CRC) approving the Rice Pesticides Program (RPP) management practices for the 2014 season. Regional Water Board staff's review of the 2013 RPP monitoring report was attached to the letter. The CRC provided the necessary information for the monitoring report, with only minor omissions.

The California Rice Commission notified Regional Water Board staff and the City of Sacramento that 2014 RPP monitoring for thiobencarb will be delayed by one week to the second week of May 2014.