



EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REPORT
Covers May 1, 2023 – May 31, 2023

Contents

1. Personnel Report – *Sandra Lopez*..... 1
2. Eastern California Cannabis Team: Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board Unit staff attend the California Hazardous Materials Investigators Association (CHMIA) 36th Annual Training Conference – *Ed Hancock* 3
3. 1st Quarter of 2023 Violations – *Shelby Barker* 5

1. Personnel Report – *Sandra Lopez*

Promotions

- Jan Zimmerman, Supervising Engineering Geologist, Victorville. This position will manage the South Lahontan Basin office, and will plan, organize, manage, coordinate, and report the work of the South Division.

New Hires

- Kristin Tokheim, Water Resource Control Engineer, Regulatory and Enforcement Unit, South Lake Tahoe. This position will be the lead contact on several facilities under state Waste Discharge Requirements to land, discharges to surface water such as wastewater treatment facilities, and stormwater on industrial and construction sites.
- Cristina Sedano, Environmental Scientist, Land Disposal Unit, Victorville. This position will provide regulatory oversight of dredge and fill permitting and compliance of Caltrans projects regionwide.

- Ariel Lafarga, Staff Services Analyst (General), Victorville. This position will provide support to technical and administrative staff, ensure documents comply with accessibility standards, assist with process improvements, prepare agenda items, and staff documents for distribution, and provide administrative support at regional board meetings held throughout the region.
- Cynthia Benato, Staff Services Analyst (General), South Lake Tahoe. This position will provide support to technical and administrative staff, ensure documents comply with accessibility standards, assist with process improvements, prepare agenda items, and staff documents for distribution, and provide administrative support at regional board meetings held throughout the region.

Vacancies

- Water Resource Control Engineer, Wastewater & Agricultural Unit, Victorville. This position provides regulatory oversight of projects involving discharges to groundwater or surface waters and projects intended to restore and/or enhance water quality in the Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs), National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), and Site Cleanup Programs.
- Water Resource Control Engineer, Cleanup/Site Investigation & Enforcement Unit, South Lake Tahoe. This position will oversee/direct site investigation and cleanup activities at various sites, such as underground storage tank sites, dry cleaner sites, mines, landfills, and Department of Defense sites.
- Senior Water Resource Control Engineer, Wastewater & Agricultural Unit, Victorville. This position will assign and direct the work of the unit; provide daily supervision and review work products. Prepare annual work plans and track budget expenditures.
- Senior Engineering Geologist, Land Disposal Unit, Victorville. This position will assign and direct the work of the unit; provide daily supervision and review work products. Prepare annual work plans and track budget expenditures.
- Senior Engineering Geologist, Department of Defense Unit, Victorville. This position will assign and direct the work of the unit; supervise staff performing tasks related to department of defense and site cleanup program sites; prepare annual work plans and track budget expenditures.

Departures

- William Muir, Senior Engineering Geologist, Victorville

2. Eastern California Cannabis Team: Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board Unit staff attend the California Hazardous Materials Investigators Association (CHMIA) 36th Annual Training Conference – *Ed Hancock*

Technical staff from the Water Board's Eastern California Cannabis team attended the 36th Annual Training Conference for the California Hazardous Materials Investigators Association (CHMIA). The conference was held in Pismo Beach, California on April 26 through April 29, 2023, and brought professionals from a range of government and nongovernment organizations together to share experiences and challenges related to tackling illegal cannabis cultivation in the State. The meeting provided an excellent venue for attendees to learn from and network with colleagues working in a variety of environmental, state, and local government, law enforcement, and research-focused organizations. Cannabis team staff travelled to the annual conference because this installment was a focused, multi-day training on the environmental and societal harms illegal cannabis cultivation is causing in California.

The first day of the conference provided an overview of the statewide effort to combat illegal cannabis cultivation. Participants heard about the legal instruments targeting responsible corporate officers and/or orchestrators behind illegal cannabis cultivation activities, and how the California Dept. of Tax and Fee Administration (CDTFA) can be effective against illegal cannabis cultivation operations. Other presentations focused on the environmental and criminal laws that apply to illegal cultivation activities. The last formal presentation summarized agency-specific enforcement tools that are applicable to illegal cannabis cultivation. During the evening of the first day, conference participants were invited to the Conference Dinner which proved an excellent venue to socialize and network with other professionals working on illegal cannabis issues in the State.

The second day of the conference comprised of detailed discussions of illegal cultivation case studies, many of which are directly related to the work of the Eastern California Cannabis team. Conference participants heard a case study about an underground bunker grow in San Bernardino County within the jurisdiction of the Lahontan Water Board. A criminal enterprise buried approximately one dozen shipping containers in an unincorporated part of the county and were using the structure as a self-contained cultivation, processing, and manufacturing facility. The facility was only discovered by law enforcement after a tip off from the local community. There was no formal water quality nexus in this case and Water Board staff were not involved in it. However, this type of facility is illustrative of the lengths that criminal enterprises will go to cultivate cannabis in the Lahontan Region.

Other case studies illustrated illegal cultivation issues from around the state that continue to create issues for local communities. These included cases from Yolo County where trespass grows caused extensive water diversions and land disturbance on public lands. Additionally, sites in San Diego County contained illegal dumping of hazardous wastes from cannabis processing and manufacturing processes. Specifically, one site in San Diego County related to an indoor grow resulting in enforcement action

from the Water Boards South Coast Cannabis Unit and led to the subsequent clean-up of the affected site.



Photo 2.1: Water Board staff from the South Coast Cannabis Unit presenting to the conference

The afternoon of day two opened with a joint presentation from Riverside County District Attorney and Code Enforcement Departments regarding the countywide Cannabis Regulation Task Force (CRTF). The CRTF has successfully targeted illegal cannabis cultivation operations masquerading as hemp farms. Much of Riverside County falls within the jurisdiction of the Colorado River Basin Water Board where the team has a support presence, and Water Board staff were able to meet their Riverside County colleagues in person during the conference.

The second presentation during the afternoon of day two was a technical training regarding the Water Board's cannabis enforcement mechanisms given by Water Board colleagues from the South Coast Cannabis Unit, which covers Water Board Regions 4, 8, and 9. The presentation covered the types of Water Code violations commonly observed in relation to illegal cannabis cultivation activities, and the enforcement tools the Water Board has at their disposal to target illegal cultivation. Staff provided information regarding how the Water Board can assist other agencies to prosecute

those responsible for environmental crimes related to illegal cultivation activities. Following this presentation, colleagues from the California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) provided a similar technical presentation focused on the enforcement tools and administrative authority that CDFW has to combat illegal cannabis activities.

The final morning of the conference was dedicated to the Integral Ecology Research Center's (IERC) (<https://www.iercecology.org>) Cannabis and Ecology Program. Dr. Greta Wengert, IERC's Executive Director, provided a fascinating technical overview of the work the organization does to study ecotoxicology related to contaminants from illegal cannabis cultivation sites. Pesticides banned in the United States, such as the carbamate insecticide carbofuran and the organophosphate insecticide methamidophos, are commonly found at illegal cultivation sites, including in the Lahontan and Colorado River Basin Regions. These types of chemicals have detrimental impacts to the surrounding terrestrial and aquatic environments. IERC's work has focused on the toxicology of the Pacific fisher and the northern spotted owl in the northern and central coast areas of California. Both species have been greatly impacted by chemical waste and land disturbance related to illegal cannabis cultivation in these areas. Through their work investigating and cleaning up illegal cultivation sites, IERC has developed a wealth of toxicology and land disturbance data and is working on a predictive model to help agencies, such as the Water Boards, identify and prioritize areas of the state which are most at risk from illegal cultivation activities.

The Eastern California Cannabis team found the training conference to be greatly beneficial to the illegal cannabis site work the team is charged with undertaking. Meeting similar professionals from around the State for an in-person conference provided excellent relationship-building and networking opportunities and provided staff with highly specialized and technical training. Illegal cannabis cultivation continues to be highly impactful throughout the State, including in the Lahontan and Colorado River Basin Regions, and unit staff are now better placed to participate in the multi-agency effort to tackle this type of environmental crime.

3. 1st Quarter of 2023 Violations – *Shelby Barker*

There were 18 violations documented for the first quarter of 2023. Violations consisted of 1 groundwater constituent exceeding primary and secondary maximum contaminant level (MCLs), 2 failures to obtain an industrial general permit, 2 wastewater order exceedance (1 dairy and 1 wastewater treatment facility), 3 Landfill Board Order violations, 5 late reports, and 5 exceedances of effluent limit concentration. The exceedances were all self-reported by dischargers as part of permit compliance monitoring and reporting.

Enforcement actions beyond those listed in the attached table may be taken as needed to protect water quality and environmental health within the region.

First Quarter 2023 Violations Report

Program Category	Priority Violation	County	Responsible Party	Facility	WDID	Violation Description	Corrective Action	Enforcement Action
Industrial Stormwater	B	Alpine	Tahoe Asphalt Inc	Fredericksburg Gravel Pit	6A02I030161	Conducted operations without an IGP enrollment; waste discharge (sediment) in violation of R6 Basin Plan.	Conduct work properly under an Industrial Permit	Notice of Violation
				Tahoe Asphalt Inc Quarry	6A02IN607705	Failure to obtain permit (IGP); waste (sediment) discharge in violation of R6 Basin Plan.	Conduct work properly under an Industrial Permit	Notice of Violation
NPDES Wastewater	B	Lassen	Amedee Geothermal Venture I	Amedee Geothermal Power Plant	6A188410000	Annual monitoring report for 2023 was due on January 1, 2023	Submit reports on time or request to terminate permit if not operating	Oral Communication
		Mono	California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Hot Creek Hatchery NPDES	6B260801001	Total Suspended Solids (TSS) Monthly Average limit is 6 mg/L and reported value was 11 mg/L at EFF-001.	Take measures to address TSS in effluent	Staff Enforcement Letter
WDR - Dairies	B	San Bernardino	Dutch Dairy Mike Devries	Dutch Dairy	6B368010001	During a site inspection on 1/19/23, ponding was observed in some corrals, as well as elevated levels of manure in corrals following a storm event. Muddy tracks with ponding were observed and not following best management practices after a storm event.	Discharger must remove manure from the corrals and take measures to ensure best management practices are followed.	Oral Communication
Wastewater Treatment Facilities	B	San Bernardino	Victor Valley Wastewater Reclamation Authority	Victor Valley Wastewater Reclamation Authority WTP	6B360109001	Copper, Total Recoverable Maximum Daily (MDEL) limit is 12.9 ug/L and reported value was 25 ug/L at EFF-001.	VWVRA is planning to perform significant source identification monitoring and analysis using composite samples from each potential source area (to better characterize each source area over a 24 hr period), to identify any preventable sources of copper in the collection system.	Pending
						Copper, Total Recoverable Monthly Average (Mean) limit is 0.76 lb/day and reported value was 1.2 lb/day at EFF-001.		
						Copper, Total Recoverable Monthly Average (Mean) limit is 6.5 ug/L and reported value was 25 ug/L at EFF-001.		
		Inyo	USDI National Park Service Death Valley SW Village	Stovepipe Wells Village	6B140704001	Annual data is due on January 15th of the following year. The 3rd and 4th quarter 2022 data was due by January 15, 2023, but was submitted to GeoTracker 15 days late.	Discharger to submit monitoring reports on time by the due date specified in the Board Order.	Oral Communication
						USDI National Park Service Death Valley	DVNM HDQ Furnace Creek WWTF	6B140706001
		This report was due on 1/15/2023 but was not submitted until 1/30/2023.						
Kern	Rosamond CSD	Rosamond WTF (Ponds)	6B150112001	Freeboard at aeration basins were below the freeboard limit of 24 inches.	On April 3, 2023, District staff discussed potential solutions to address the freeboard issue at the aeration ponds. One of the potential solutions includes the adjustment of weirs in flow to the aeration ponds, which District staff believes may solve the freeboard issue.	Oral Communication		
Mono	US Marine Corps Coleville	USMC MWTC Coleville Housing WWTF	6A268512900	Total Suspended Solids Instantaneous Maximum limit is 45 mg/L and reported value was 56 mg/L.	To be determined	Pending		

First Quarter 2023 Violations Report

Program Category	Priority Violation	County	Responsible Party	Facility	WDID	Violation Description	Corrective Action	Enforcement Action
Land Disposal	B	Lassen	Lassen Cnty	Bass Hill Sanitary Landfill (Lassen County Class III Landfill)	6A180013000	Failed to submit the second semi-annual monitoring report by February 15, 2023.	Discharger to submit monitoring reports on time by the due date specified in the Board Order.	Staff Enforcement Letter
		Los Angeles	Waste Management of California	Lancaster Sanitary LF & Recycling Center	6B190343001	While conducting inspection a significant amount of windblown trash was piling up along fence line and was blowing to adjacent properties.	Photo documentation was provided to Waterboard staff via email on Monday March 13, 2023.	Oral Communication
						Palm trees observed growing in Landfill cover in January 3, 2023 and on March 10th, 2023. Water Board staff commented that trees should not be growing in interim cover. During March 2023 inspection, palm trees were observed to concentrate storm water flow and runoff and resulted in erosion of interim cover.	Photographs of Palm Tree removal shall be submitted to water board staff by March 15, 2023.	Oral Communication
						Ponding on the southern and western roadways and site boundaries of the site is inconsistent with the site drainage plan and Stormwater Pollution and Prevention Plan. Observations of ponding water were observed on January 3, 2023 and March 10, 2023.	WM is provide an updated SWPPP drainage plan by March 30, 2023.	Oral Communication
DOD	B	Kern	US Air Force Edwards Air Force Base	Main Base Class III Landfill	6B150316001	Groundwater sample data exceeded MCLs and SMCLs for the arsenic, total chromium, chloride, nickel, nitrate (as N), selenium, sulfate, total dissolved solids, and iron	Continued monitoring	Oral Communication