

**IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM UPDATE  
CENTRAL VALLEY WATER BOARD  
September 2012**

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 September 2012 Executive Officer's report. Current and past ILRP program monthly reports can be found on the [State Water Board Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program](#) website.

**General**

**Long-term Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program:**

Eastern San Joaquin River Watershed WDRs – The Central Valley Water Board received 14 comment letters submitted by the August 6, 2012 due date. The Board hearing to consider adoption of the waste discharge requirements has been postponed until the December 2012 Board meeting.

On July 23, 2012, Regional Board staff had a teleconference meeting with representatives from the Environmental Justice community to discuss the tentative WDRs.

On August 13, 2012, Regional Board staff had a teleconference meeting with staff from the Department of Pesticide Regulation to discuss comments related to groundwater monitoring efforts for pesticides on DPR's 6800(b) list.

**Sacramento River Watershed Rice WDR:**

On August 4, 2012, Regional Board staff met with the California Rice Commission (CRC) to discuss the long-term strategy for surface water monitoring and discuss the staff review of the draft Groundwater Assessment Report (GAR). The CRC has agreed to submit in early October 2012 a revised GAR with additional information and clarifications. Staff will submit the surface water MRP for the CRC to review in late September 2012.

**Grassland Bypass Project:**

The Grassland Bypass Project manages drainage from nearly 100,000 acres of agricultural land in Fresno and Merced Counties and was designed to control the discharges of selenium to wetlands and the San Joaquin River. Regional Board staff is preparing updated WDRs for the project to address changes in the Basin Plan selenium control program and to incorporate elements of the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. In July 2012, the Drainage Coordinator for the project sent a letter to the Board requesting that the Board develop two WDRs instead of the single WDR

approach being developed for the irrigated lands served by coalitions. One WDR would be structured like the current order for the project and address surface water discharges. It would continue to name the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority as the dischargers. The second WDR would deal with protection of ground water quality and would name the landowners and operators as the dischargers. The Grassland Bypass Project Steering Committee would serve as the third party under this order. Staff has agreed to the proposal and is now drafting two orders for Board consideration.

**Sacramento River Watershed WDRs (excluding rice):**

On July 26, 2012 Regional Board staff met by phone with Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition representatives to agree upon a schedule for the submission of draft text for critical parts of the WDR for the Sacramento Valley watershed (excluding rice). Regional Water Board staff will meet with Coalition representatives in early September 2012 to review and revise the submitted draft.

**Tulare Lake Basin Area WDRs:**

On July 26, 2012, Regional Board staff met with grower representatives from the Tulare Lake bottom to discuss issues related to their irrigation conveyance systems.

On August 27, 2012, Regional Board staff met with the Kings County Water Commission to discuss development of the Draft Waste Discharge Requirements for the long-term Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. A meeting to discuss similar topics with the Kings County Board of Supervisors is scheduled for September 18, 2012.

On August 30, 2012, Regional Board staff attended a Central Valley Agricultural Tour hosted by the Fresno Farm Bureau, the California Grape & Tree Fruit League, and the California Cotton Ginners and Growers Associations. The tour was for Central Valley Water Board staff to meet with farmers and farm managers to discuss their farming operations and to receive their input on the proposed Long-Term Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. Discussions centered upon methods of nutrient application, nutrient monitoring, irrigation practices, and efforts to protect water quality.

**Basin Plan Amendments on Cost Estimate and Potential Sources of Financing:**

On July 17, 2012, the State Water Resources Control Board approved the amendments to the Sacramento/San Joaquin and Tulare Lake Basin Plans that provided cost estimates and potential sources of financing for the long-term irrigated lands regulatory program. The amendments had been approved by the Central Valley Water Board in October 2011.

On August 29, 2012, Regional Board staff and the Executive Officer met with representatives from the State Water Resources Control Board, the Department of Pesticide Regulation, California Department of Food and Agriculture, and Cal EPA to discuss issues related to the ILRP WDRs.

## **Enforcement**

### **Surveillance and Complaint Inspections:**

On June 25, 2012, I Regional Board staff conducted a surveillance inspection of the Sacramento River and Sacramento Slough, Sutter County, via boat. Staff found two discharges of sediment-laden water during this inspection and collected samples and flow measurements of each. Upon returning to the office, staff found that both discharges occurred from parcels owned by the same discharger, who is a member of the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition. Staff met with the discharger and a coalition representative at the site of the discharges on August 14, 2012 to discuss staff's observations and sediment management practices. On August 27, 2012, the Executive Officer issued a Water Code section 13267 Order to the discharger requiring an *Erosion and Sediment Control Plan* with a long-term monitoring component to assess the effectiveness of pollution management practices.

On July 19, 2012, Regional Board staff conducted a surveillance inspection of irrigated lands in the Orestimba Creek area on the west side of the San Joaquin River. Staff found an irrigated parcel discharging sediment-laden wastewater and collected a discharge flow estimate and water samples. Upon returning to the office, staff contacted the parcel's owner, who claimed that discharges from the field in question are treated in a private, vegetated ditch prior to discharge offsite. Staff plans a field meeting with the discharger to investigate the claim.

On August 27, 2012, Regional Board staff received a complaint regarding a corn grower discharging turbid waters to a ditch that discharges to the Clifton Forebay (part of the legal Delta). Staff investigated the complaint on the following day. Upon arrival at the site, staff observed a turbid discharge from a cornfield and proceeded to take photos, discharge flow measurements, and supply and wastewater samples. The results of the investigation are currently pending.

### **Exemption Claim Inspections:**

In July 2012, Regional Board staff completed 13 inspections to verify landowner exemption claims to the ILRP. Landowners can respond to Regional Board staff 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 (no waste discharges to surface waters). These claims create a need for verification inspections. Staff verified that the lands associated with 12 of these inspections were exempt from regulatory coverage under the ILRP. The remaining landowner's claim requires further investigation.

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

In September 2012, the Executive Officer approved 47 irrigated lands owners or operators to join a coalition group. Thirteen of these applications are the result of ILRP postcard mailings, and 24 of the applications are the result of CWC §13267 Orders; the remainder are property transfers. These approvals add about 14,000 acres to the program.

### **Agricultural Supply Well Complaint, Fresno County:**

On May 15, 2012, Regional Board staff received a complaint regarding a potential for injected liquid agricultural amendments to backflow into an agricultural supply well located in Fresno County. The complainant also notified the Fresno County Health Department of the issue.

On June 21, 2012, Regional Board staff issued a letter to the operator of the supply well requesting they submit a detailed description of the supply well and irrigation system, including evidence of backflow prevention enough to prevent any injected agricultural amendments from entering the supply well casing. Staff coordinated with the Fresno County Health Department prior to issuing the letter to reduce duplicity of response efforts between agencies and ensure public health aspects of the complaint would be addressed by the installation of backflow prevention.

The operator modified the supply well design to address staff's request and contacted the Southern San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition to inspect the modified well and develop the requested technical report. Staff reviewed the submitted report and determined the modifications made to the supply well were adequate to prevent backflow from entering the well casing. On August 9, 2012, staff issued a letter to the operator declaring the complaint resolved.

## **Coalition Groups**

### **California Rice Commission:**

Monitoring for the Rice Pesticide Program (RPP) is complete for the season. There were no detections (reporting limit 0.1 µg/L) at the drinking water supply intakes and performance goals were not exceeded in the upstream monitoring sites.

### **East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition:**

On July 6, 2012, staff's review of the 2012 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 was provided to the Coalitions. The review is posted on the Central Valley Water Board website.

On July 23, 2012, the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition (Coalition) requested an extension for the management plan schedule. The Coalition's request for additional time was due to delays in scheduling meetings with individual growers during the irrigation season, and scheduling conflicts with general member meetings regarding the upcoming Waste Discharge Requirements. On July 30, 2012 the Executive Officer approved the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition's request to postpone management plan deliverables by one month.

On July 31, 2012, the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition submitted their annual member participation list as required under the MRP Order.

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

On July 3, 2012, staff completed the review of the SVWQC Annual Management Plan Progress Report and sent a review memorandum with a cover letter.

On 13 July, staff sent the Coalition a review memorandum and cover letter in response to the Coalition's Annual Monitoring Report. On August 16, 2012 the Coalition submitted a revised Annual Monitoring report and additional report documentation that was requested by staff.

The Water Board received two Source Evaluation Reports from the Coalition: one for chlorpyrifos in Ulatis Creek received on July 10, 2012, and one for malathion in the Colusa Basin Drain on July 23, 2012. The reports are currently under review by staff.

On August 2, 2012, staff received a report on compliance with the diazinon and chlorpyrifos TMDL from the Coalition. This report is currently under review by staff.

**San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition:**

On August 1, 2012, the San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition requested an extension for submitting their annual member participant list. The Conditional Waiver requires that each coalition group provide an electronic participant list by July 31, 2012 of each year. On August 15, 2012, the Executive Officer sent a Notice of Violation to the Coalition for failing to provide an updated participant list by July 31, 2012. The Coalition was given until August 31, 2012 to submit their participant list and it was received on August. 29, 2012.

**Westside Coalition:**

On July 12, 2012, Regional Board staff sent a letter to the Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition to remind the growers about the importance of and responsibility to prevent off-site movement of pesticides. The letter will be distributed by the Coalition.

On July 31, 2012, the Westside Coalition submitted their annual member participation list as required under the MRP Order.

On August 7, 2012, Regional Board staff attended the Westside Coalition Board meeting held in Los Banos. The Westside Board oversees the Coalition's activities. Staff was there to answer questions regarding the upcoming WDR Order.

**Data Management**

Data reports received through September 1, 2012 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). At this time, data from 2009 through early 2012 for all Coalitions have been loaded into the CEDEN

comparable database. Over 90% of these data have been successfully transferred to CEDEN. The remaining data sets for this time period, as well as the data submitted in September for mid-2012 monitoring, are slated to be transferred by the end of the year. Additionally, data received prior to 2009 have been prioritized for processing and future upload to the database as resources permit.

Regional Board staff, in coordination with the CV RDC, continue to maintain real time feedback with the Coalitions through the feedback packages on each submission. Feedback packages were developed in 2011 to serve as real-time communication from staff to assist the Coalitions with the review and formatting of datasets prior to submission. Significant improvements in the formatting and business rule adherence of data submissions have been witnessed since the feedback packages have been implemented. This improvement has reduced the amount of resources required by the ILRP to successfully load and transfer the data as well as assisted the Coalitions in meeting the data submission requirements. Regional Board staff plan to continue to develop and provide resources and tools to assist the Coalitions with their data submissions.

### **Prop 84 Grant Funding**

Twenty projects have been completed and invoiced under the grant program. Most of the projects are in the Delta and involve conversion from furrow to drip irrigation systems. Those receiving grant funds are required to provide a 50% match for their project. On August 27, 2012 the Selection Advisory Committee met and awarded the third-round of grants. To date, 87 projects have been awarded funding. Approved applicants in the second and third rounds are expected to start construction after this year's harvest.

The [CURES website](#) has additional information on the Prop 84 funding and photos of completed projects.