

Regional Water Quality Control Board
North Coast Region

Executive Officer's Summary Report
Thursday, April 19, 2018
Weed City Council Chambers
Weed, CA

ITEM: 2

SUBJECT: Presentation on the Tulelake Wastewater Treatment Facilities upgrade and disposal modifications. *(Justin McSmith of Water Board, Brett Nystrom, Director of Public Works, and Henry Ebinger, Mayor, City of Tulelake)*

BOARD ACTION: This is an informational item. No action will be taken by the Regional Water Board.

BACKGROUND: The City of Tulelake (Permittee) has made significant improvements to their wastewater treatment and disposal systems in the last ten years that will have a positive impact on water quality in the Tulelake Basin. As a result of enforcement actions taken by the Regional Water Board, and in partnership with Regional Water Board and State Water Board staff, the Permittee successfully completed a project to upgrade its wastewater treatment and disposal systems.

The Permittee owns and operates a wastewater collection, treatment, and recycling facility (Facility) that provides sewerage service to the City. The wastewater system serves a population of approximately 1,010 and has 439 connections, of which 46 are commercial connections, including a supermarket and agricultural potato storage facilities. The Facility was previously regulated under Order No. R1-2013-0029, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit No. CA0023272 (2013 NPDES Permit) for discharges of wastewater to surface water. On November 2, 2016, the Facility ceased all surface water discharges. As a result, the Facility is currently regulated under waste discharge requirements (WDRs) Order No. R1-2015-0002 (2015 WDRs) to comply with Title 22 regulations for the treatment, storage and reuse of the wastewater via crop irrigation.

Historically, the City has violated discharge prohibitions and numerous effluent limitations of its NPDES permit. On June 21, 2006, the Regional Water Board issued Administrative Civil Liability Complaint (ACLC) No. R1-2006-0070. The ACLC assessed \$495,000 in mandatory minimum penalties (MMPs) for 165 effluent limit violations that occurred during the period of January 1, 2000, through April 30, 2006. Many of the violations were related to exceedances of the percent removal and concentration based effluent limitations for Biochemical Oxygen Demand and Total Suspended Solids, and exceedances of water quality based effluent limitations for Coliform, pH, and chlorine residual. On July 18, 2006, the Permittee waived its right to a public hearing and requested approval to conduct a Compliance Project (CP) in lieu of paying the MMPs of \$495,000.

For its CP, the Permittee proposed a Capital Improvement Project (CIP) to upgrade the treatment and collection systems, and to increase operator hours. On July 25, 2007, the Regional Water Board issued Administrative Civil Liability Order (ACLO) No. R1-2007-0045. The ACLO contained a compliance schedule and a list of tasks that required the Permittee to complete the CP by July 25, 2012.

Due to financial constraints, the Permittee was unable to comply with the compliance dates as set forth in the ACLO. Additionally, the Permittee determined that to ensure adequate compliance with discharge prohibitions in its NPDES permit, it needed to expand the CIP to include an agronomic rate recycled water project. On June 7, 2012, the Permittee secured a \$3.8 million loan from the State Water Resources Control Board's State Revolving Fund to plan, design and construct the newly expanded CIP.

On June 13, 2013, the Regional Water Board adopted Cease and Desist Order R1-2013-0030 (CDO) requiring the Permittee to comply with effluent limitations and discharge specifications in the 2013 NPDES Permit. The CDO required the Permittee to complete and operate the expanded capital improvement project (CIP) to allow the reuse of wastewater for crop irrigation and thereby eliminate the need to discharge to Tulelake Irrigation District Drain No. 44-B-1, a tributary of the Tule Lake Sump, Tule Lake Refuge, and Lower Lost River. The Permittee completed all CDO tasks and ceased all discharges to surface water in accordance with the compliance schedule. Completion of the CIP resulted in a rehabilitated headworks with new influent pumps, conversion of a sand filter into a treatment lagoon (No. 3), dredging of lagoon No. 1 and lining of lagoons 1 and 3 with synthetic liners, construction of two irrigation storage ponds with an irrigation pump station and development of a recycled water irrigation field. On October 19, 2017, the Regional Water Board adopted Rescission Order No. R1-2017-0030 to rescind the 2013 NPDES Permit and the CDO.

Over the past ten years, the Permittee has made significant Facility upgrades to improve treatment performance, operational practices, effluent disposal and achieve compliance with permit requirements. The purpose of this information item is to update the Board on the new treatment process and recycled water disposal area and system. The Mayor of Tulelake, Henry Ebinger, and the Director of Public Works, Brett Nystrom, will speak to the Board on the collaborative efforts undertaken by staff at the Regional Water Board, the State Water Board Division of Financial Assistance and the City of Tulelake to plan, design, and complete upgrades to the Facility and disposal system.

RECOMMENDATION: N/A

SUPPORTING

DOCUMENTS: None