

Water Quality Program
Priority Projects 2023/24

For consideration December 2022



Contents

Introduction	1
Permitting Programs.....	2
National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permitting Program.....	2
Waste Discharge Requirements Program	2
Water Quality Certifications Program.....	3
Stormwater Program.....	3
Planning, Monitoring and Assessment Programs.....	4
Basin Planning and Total Maximum Daily Load Programs	4
CV-SALTS	4
Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP)	5
Nonpoint Source Program	5
Administrative Support Program	6
Administrative Support Survey	6
Special Permitting Programs.....	6
Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP)	6
Oil Fields Program	7
Land Disposal (Landfill) Program	7
Confined Animal Facilities Program.....	7
Mines Program	8
Cannabis Program.....	9
Forest Activities Program.....	10
Enforcement and Cleanup.....	11
Compliance and Enforcement Program.....	11
Site Cleanup Program	11
Underground Storage Tank Program.....	12

Introduction

Annual work plans are developed to guide the Board’s numerous water quality programs over the course of a fiscal year. One critical element of these work plans is the division of staff work between “core” activities, like updating permits, conducting compliance inspections, and managing monitoring data, and “priority projects,” which are special projects designed to enhance productivity or achieve a program’s strategic objectives. Examples of priority projects include the development of a General Order to regulate multiple facilities, or a special enforcement initiative.

Program Managers work with the Executive Management Team (the Executive Officer, the Assistant Executive Officers, and the Administrative Officer) to ensure that their annual work plans strike an appropriate balance between core activities and priority projects. In certain years, core regulatory work may consume all available resources, while in other years a Program Manager may be able to devote significant staff time towards priority projects.

Each December, the Executive Officer proposes a set of priority projects to the Board. This kicks off the annual work plan life cycle, which concludes 20 months later when the Executive Officer reports back to the Board on the implementation of the prior year’s workplan. This process for the 23/24 workplans will generally look like this:



This year, the development of priority projects reflects the Program Manager’s work on achieving the SMARTIE goals that are contained in the Board’s Regional Racial Equity Resolution, which is also up for consideration in December.

Descriptions of the water quality programs, identification of the Program Managers, the resources allocated to these programs can be found at the following address: [About Us - Overview of Board Programs | Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board \(ca.gov\)](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/about_us/program_overview/) at https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/about_us/program_overview/.

Permitting Programs

NATIONAL POLLUTANT DISCHARGE ELIMINATION SYSTEM (NPDES) PERMITTING PROGRAM

Integrate Racial Equity Principles into Program Workflow

In FY 23/24 NPDES program staff will develop a working group to consider how to integrate the Board's racial equity goals into program workflow, which may include the incorporation of CalEnviroScreen scores into prioritization matrices, enhanced culturally relevant outreach, and fact sheets translated into different languages. The group will be tasked with making recommendations for implementing the goals program-wide.

Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability (CV-SALTS) Permit Integration and Development of Salinity Variance

In FY 20/21, the CV-SALTS Basin Plan amendments became effective. In FY 23/24 NPDES program staff will continue to coordinate with and support CV-SALTS program staff to implement the Salt and Nitrate Control Programs in NPDES permits. In FY 23/24 program staff will be focusing efforts on developing a salinity discharge variance for NPDES discharges.

WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS PROGRAM

Develop Process for Incorporating New Legal Requirements for Permits of Regional Significance or Permits with Time Schedule Orders

Assembly Bill 2108 (2022) added Section 13149.2 to the Water Code, creating new outreach and engagement requirements and a new permitting requirement. All permits of regional significance and all permits with time schedules now are required to include findings that describe environmental justice issues, and the Board will be required to increase engagement, particularly among disadvantaged/environmental justice communities. During FY 23/24, the Waste Discharge Requirements Program will allocate staff resources to developing a process to ensure that these requirements are met while continuing to strategize about reducing permitting backlog.

CV-SALTS Program Implementation

The Waste Discharge Requirements Program is at the forefront of implementing the Salt and Nitrate Control Programs. In FY 23/24, implementation of the nitrate control program will require review of the time schedules that will be proposed in various Management Zone Implementation Plans, requiring a significant shift of resources into this area to ensure compliance with applicable Basin Plan requirements.

Develop General Orders for Mid-Sized Wastewater Treatment Plants, Nut and Seed Drying Operations, and Food Processors

Staff have identified three groups of discharges that are similar in nature and make up a significant number of backlogged permits that need to be updated. The three groups

include: domestic wastewater treatment plants that treat more than 100,000 gallons per day, nut and seed drying operations, and food processors. Each of our offices will take the lead to develop one of these General Orders. The adoption of the new General Orders will not only result in increased regulatory consistency, but it will also significantly cut down on our permitting backlog as we enroll facilities under the new General Orders.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATIONS PROGRAM

Develop Permitting Process Informational Module(s)

Staff will develop an informational module or modules to help the public better understand and navigate the permitting process. Development of the module will include a reassessment of how the Board provides the public with opportunities to provide input on projects. Updated workflow will include enhanced pre-project engagement with tribes and disadvantaged communities and will consider the use of tools such as EnviroScreen to better tailor outreach efforts and to better understand cumulative environmental burdens.

Adapt to State Water Board's Waste Discharge Requirements General Order for Electric Utility Operations and Maintenance Activities Related to Wildfire Mitigation and Other Similar Activities (General Order)

Staff will develop expertise in implementing and overseeing the State Water Board's proposed General Order, which is expected to be in effect during FY 23/24. A significant increase in workload will be required to process applications and conduct compliance and enforcement for activities regulated by the General Order.

Staff Training and Development

The Water Quality Certifications unit will be called upon to develop expertise in implementing the new Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification and Waste Discharge Requirements for Implementation of Large Habitat Restoration Projects General Order, the proposed General Order for Electric Utility Operations and Maintenance Activities Related to Wildfire Mitigation and Other Similar Activities, as well changes to federal regulations that are expected to occur during or before FY 23/24.

STORMWATER PROGRAM

Renewal of Regionwide Municipal General Permit

The current Regionwide MS4 General Permit expired in September 2021 and Board staff is working to bring a renewed permit to the Board to adoption in the first quarter of FY 2023-24. Board staff will then work with the regulated permittees to finalize storm water management plans and seek approval by the Board.

Conduct Targeted Inspections of Industrial Stormwater Sites

A process to identify cases for follow-up has been developed. Consistent with the Central Valley Water Board's proposed racial equity resolution, consideration of impacts

to environmental justice communities may be considered in developing priority rankings, along with documented pollutant benchmark concentration exceedances, repeated failures to submit reports, and failures to collect water quality samples.

Planning, Monitoring and Assessment Programs

BASIN PLANNING AND TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD PROGRAMS

Continue to Develop Tribal Beneficial Use Designations

Consistent with the Central Valley Water Board's proposed racial equity resolution, Board staff will continue to focus on the Tribal Beneficial Uses project. This will include completing the process of adding the definitions to the Basin Plans and continuing the process of designating waterbodies for Tribal Beneficial Uses.

Scientific Peer Review for Delta Mercury Control Program and associated Methylmercury Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)

The Delta Mercury Control Program and associated Methylmercury TMDL (DMCP) reconsideration will continue with completion of the Scientific Peer Review process and a determination if there are any modifications needed to the DMCP based on more recent data and information provided in the control and characterization studies. Board staff will also implement an outreach component summarizing the new information and implications to the DMCP, including a Board Workshop.

Pyrethroid Research Plan

Board staff will complete development of the Pyrethroid Research Plan that is a component of the Control Program for Pyrethroid Pesticide Discharges throughout the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins. The Pyrethroid Research Plan will undergo a stakeholder engagement process and a public review before coming to the Board for adoption.

CV-SALTS

Coordination with Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program on Domestic Well Sampling Efforts

CV-SALTS staff will coordinate with the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program to integrate the domestic well sampling efforts currently being undertaken by Management Zones under the Nitrate Control Program and those efforts being undertaken by growers under the ILRP to ensure persons whose domestic wells are contaminated with nitrates in Priority I areas are provided with options to obtain free, safe drinking water.

Support the Development and Evaluation of Management Zone Implementation Plans and Associated Permit Revisions

CV-SALTS staff will coordinate with the Nitrate Control Program's Priority 1 Management Zones in the development and evaluation of Management Zone Implementation Plans (MZIPs). The MZIPs will detail the Management Zones'

implementation strategies and timelines to meet nitrate objectives over the next 35-years and will serve as the basis for permits revisions to incorporate Nitrate Control Program requirements.

SURFACE WATER AMBIENT MONITORING PROGRAM (SWAMP)

Broaden Public Availability of Water Quality Monitoring Data

SWAMP will broaden availability of water quality monitoring data by translating public-facing map tools, such as the one used to display water quality results for the Lower American River, into languages spoken by visitors and by creating a video that explains, in accessible language, how tools can be used by the public.

Coordinate With Internal and External Stakeholders to Develop and Support Regional Monitoring Priorities

This fiscal year, the SWAMP program will reevaluate its approach to developing and supporting regional monitoring priorities. SWAMP staff will coordinate with Central Valley Water Board Program Managers to identify potential projects that will best support the region's strategic goals. In addition, SWAMP staff will reassess existing and potential partnerships with other agencies to better leverage monitoring resources in high priority watersheds. SWAMP will also collaborate with the State Water Board on the development of a process to solicit input from community members on monitoring priorities for the SWAMP Program, including areas where additional funding is necessary to monitor and protect recreational areas of high value to environmental justice communities.

Support Statewide Efforts to Monitor Wildfire Impacts

SWAMP staff will develop a project plan to build on statewide efforts to monitor wildfire impacts on water quality and watershed health.

Improve Data Management and Operational Procedures

SWAMP staff will continue to work on a data management project with State Board staff to facilitate and improve the submittal process of ambient surface water quality data to the California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN). SWAMP staff will also add measures to internal operating procedures and field safety documents to enhance protections and support for at-risk staff, including women and people of color.

NONPOINT SOURCE PROGRAM

Implementation of NPS 5 Year Plan

Implement projects that address NPS 5-Year Plan focus areas: CV-SALTS, Wildfire Response, Harmful Algal Blooms, Agriculture, Water Quality Impacts from Homelessness. Begin development of the next 5-Year Plan, which will cover 2025-2030. One focus will be on prioritizing implementation efforts for communities based on racial equity and environmental justice concerns.

Administrative Support Program

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SURVEY

The Administrative Support Program will continue to focus its efforts on efficiency, consistency, and quality in our core activities. Administrative Support management and staff will continue to review and evaluate our internal processes to develop and enhance efficiency to meet the growing administrative needs in all three offices.

Racial Equity Work Plan/Resolution/Goals

Coordinate with State Water Board on the development and implementation of the State Water Board's Racial Equity Work Plan as well as the Central Valley Water Board's Regional Racial Equity Resolution and Administrative Support Program specific goals.

Office Space Reduction and Optimization

Program staff will work with State Board's Division of Administrative Services and the Department of General Service (DGS) to design and reconfigure the Rancho Cordova's office footprint to meet our business and operational needs per DGS' Statewide Telework Policy and the hybrid working environment.

Special Permitting Programs

IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM (ILRP)

Integration of Drinking Water Well Monitoring with Nitrate Control Program

ILRP staff will continue to work directly with coalition members to fulfill drinking water well monitoring requirements while prioritizing impacted drinking water well user notification. ILRP staff will coordinate with CV-SALTS staff to integrate the ILRP drinking water well monitoring results with the Management Zone efforts under the Nitrate Control Program to ensure persons whose domestic wells are contaminated with nitrates in Priority I areas are provided with options to obtain free, safe drinking water.

Updating Groundwater Quality Management Plans

ILRP staff will work with coalition representatives and stakeholders on incorporation of approved Groundwater Protection Targets into existing Groundwater Quality Management Plans. Work will focus on establishing appropriate metrics and milestones, as well as integration with Management Zone Implementation Plans required under CV-SALTS.

Strategic Engagement with Socially Disadvantaged Growers

ILRP staff will work with UC Extension Small Farms Advisor on developing targeted outreach materials for socially disadvantaged small growers within the region. Participate in field events and meetings. Review quarterly progress reports submitted as part of the discretionary funding contract. Continue to coordinate with the Kings River

Water Quality Coalition to update alternative nitrogen reporting requirements (if needed) based on outreach feedback.

OIL FIELDS PROGRAM

Implementation of goals outlined in the Board’s Racial Equity Resolution

For FY23/24, program staff will begin creating an inventory list to assess which sites are located near DAC and BIPOC communities. This inventory list and associated CalEnviroScreen scores will be used to identify sites for program work prioritization. In addition, once priority sites have been identified, program staff will then begin planning for potential outreach meetings with communities near high priority sites to provide information regarding work being performed as part of the Oil Field Program.

LAND DISPOSAL (LANDFILL) PROGRAM

Consider New Process for Prioritizing Facilities for WDR revision

Program staff will develop a process to prioritize Title 27 permit revisions that may consider cumulative environmental impacts within the community adjacent to each facility using CalEnviroScreen scores. The revised scoring may include scores for the following:

- Threat to water quality from the facility
- Compliance and enforcement concerns that require time-critical permit revisions
- Whether the facility’s financial assurances must be updated to address current potential closure costs
- CalEnviroScreen score

Adaptive management processes will be implemented to address constraints associated with any vacancies or re-direction of programmatic resources.

Develop Fact Sheets for Environmentally Burdened Facilities during the WDR Revision Process

WDR Fact sheets will be developed and shared with underrepresented and underserved communities with high CalEnviroScreen scores that are near Land Disposal Facilities slated for permit revisions. Specifically, Fact Sheets will be developed for communities with the highest 20% of CalEnviroScreen scores to encourage engagement in communities with the highest environmental burdens.

CONFINED ANIMAL FACILITIES PROGRAM

Dairy General Order Revision

Staff anticipate that the State Water Board will issue a remand order for the Dairy General Order in FY 23/24, requiring the Board to address pond liner requirements, ponds in shallow groundwater, salt, and nutrient loading, and new and expanding dairies. The remand order will also likely result in the need to revise several of the Board’s other CAF-related general orders. Staff will prioritize development of general

order revisions based on direction from the State Water Board following issuance of a remand order. Staff will ensure that development of CAF general orders includes “equitable, culturally relevant community outreach to promote meaningful civil engagement from potentially impacted communities.” The revised orders will also include findings that consider impacts on potential environmental justice, tribal impacts, and racial equity considerations that shall be developed in collaboration with affected communities.

CV-SALTS Implementation/Enforcement

Notices to comply were issued to confined animal facilities for both the Nitrate and Salt Control Programs. Staff is working with industry representatives to ensure facilities in Priority 1 areas participate in the applicable Management Zones and that all facilities contribute to the Prioritization and Optimization Study. Staff will continue to prioritize enforcement as necessary to ensure compliance with the notices to comply.

Review of Design and Post-construction Reports for Dairy Digesters

As a result of grants from the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), approximately 100 digesters have been installed at dairies in the Central Valley over the last several years. Additional dairy digester projects funded by CDFA are in the design or construction process. Staff will prioritize the review of design and post-construction reports to ensure digester projects meet Department of Food and Agriculture specifications and water quality protection standards.

Participate in Composting Work Group

Program Staff will be dedicated to participating in a multi-agency workgroup to foster on-farm composting and to improve options for transport and use of composted manure by non-dairy farmers who can use the compost as a soil amendment and supplemental source of fertilizer.

MINES PROGRAM

Implement Revised Water Quality Threat Prioritization Scheme

Staff will continue ranking Central Valley Water Board mine sites using the 2020 water quality threat prioritization scheme. Staff will use the revised rankings to ensure that available resources are directed to sites posing the greatest water quality threat.

Continue Financial Assurance Review Initiative for Mine Waste Management Units

Staff will continue reviewing the financial assurances for active and closed mine waste management units to ensure each mine site has sufficient funds for closure and post-closure care and that appropriate financial assurance mechanisms are in place.

Prioritize Mine Cleanup or Oversight Based on Threat to Water Quality and Disproportionate Environmental Burdens

Consistent with the Central Valley Water Board’s proposed racial equity resolution, staff will select two mine projects with special interest to environmental justice communities

and develop individual action plans for these projects through enhanced public outreach and tribal engagement.

Efforts on Key Sites

Iron Mountain Mine Superfund Site: Finish development of a three-dimensional mixing model of Keswick Reservoir to assist with assessing the extent of impacts from Spring Creek Debris Dam discharges and developing a long-term strategy to protect water quality and fisheries in Keswick Reservoir and the Sacramento River. Support USEPA in its work towards the OU-6 remedy and an updated Memorandum of Understanding that identifies operational conditions to minimize the threat to water quality.

Sulphur Bank Mercury Mine Superfund Site: Work with USEPA, other agencies, and Tribal governments to identify and select protective remedies to address the mercury flux to Clear Lake from the mine site.

Walker Mine: Oversee ARCO in its implementation of the Cleanup and Abatement Order requirements.

Rising Star Mine: Assess performance of recent site hardening projects. Implement long-term solution for RS-500 mine pool management. Begin preparations for transitioning long-term stewardship from the Lyondell Environmental Custodial Trust to State oversight.

Sites with Requested EPA Funding and Support. In FY21/22, staff requested assistance from USEPA on selected mines in the Central Valley Region. EPA has recommended next steps for Afterthought Mine, Copperopolis, and Mount Diablo Mercury Mine. Staff will work with USEPA on these steps, including gathering additional data as needed.

Proposal to Re-Open Idaho-Maryland Mine: Engage with project proponent, county, and interested parties on proposal to re-open mine. Consistent with Strategic Plan objectives, gain understanding of proposed project and interested party perspectives, and, if project moves forward, ensure clear communication of Board requirements and efficient application of Board resources.

CANNABIS PROGRAM

Increase Enrollment of Potential Legal Cultivation Sites

Increasing enrollment in the General Order through targeted enrollment enforcement, outreach and education, and coordination with local agencies is a statewide program priority. Water Code section 13260 notices to enroll will be scaled to ensure accountability. Staff will conduct outreach in priority watersheds and in the surrounding county where enrollment enforcement is occurring. Staff will continue to coordinate with local agencies to dovetail General Order enrollment and county use permit application processes.

Workflow Reassessment

The program's supporting managers will continue efforts to align resources with workload. These efforts will involve evaluating and making improvements to templates,

workflow, document production, and enforcement efforts to increase program efficiency and productivity regionwide and in-line with the 2020 Executive Oversight Committee recommendations.

Translation Effort to Reach Non-English-Speaking Growers

Program staff will work with the Office of Public Participation to translate important information, including the implementation of best management practices, into languages other than English to increase awareness of the regulatory program among BIPOC communities, including within counties where cannabis cultivation may still be banned.

FOREST ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

Timber General Order Compliance Improvement Project

Staff will conduct an analysis of the reasons why the Timber General Order annual monitoring report submittal compliance rate dropped to 76% in 20/21. The analysis will result in recommendations to increase compliance to a rate greater than 90% for FY 23/24.

Oversight for Utility Companies Engaged in Vegetation Management

Upon adoption of the State Water Board's statewide permit for utility corridor work not covered under the State Water Board's Construction General Stormwater Permit (expected early 2023), staff will assist with outreach, provide compliance assistance, regulatory oversight and enforcement for utility companies engaged in vegetation management and post-fire emergency restoration work.

Federal NPS Permit Implementation

Upon adoption of the Federal NPS Permit and CEQA Environmental Impact Report by the Central Valley Water Board, staff will conduct region-wide outreach and collaboration to ensure effective implementation of permit conditions. This effort will include the affected dischargers, the USFS and BLM, as well as affected tribes and disadvantaged communities.

Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan Implementation

SB 456 and the Governor's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan has resulted in and will continue to result in increased workload on program staff to provide support, assistance and regulatory/policy solutions for pertinent Key Actions outlined in the Plan. FY 23/24 will see third party evaluation, recommendations, and initial steps completed to align the Water Boards' various timber harvest permitting mechanisms with those of CAL FIRE and the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Pesticide Lab Methodology Development Project

Staff will provide subject matter expertise in the review of new laboratory methods being developed to scan water samples for a long list of pesticides and degradates under the State Water Board's Office of Information Management and Analysis (OIMA) contract with Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP). The resulting

accredited and validated method will then be available for use statewide, both by regulatory agencies and the public.

Enforcement and Cleanup

COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

CV-SALTS Compliance Initiative

In FY 20/21, the CV-SALTS Basin Plan amendments became effective and notices to comply were issued to dischargers. Responses have been received in FYs 20/21 and 21/22, with program staff tracking responses in a database or spreadsheet. Responses from these 1000+ facilities have been distributed among multiple program's staff to review, evaluate, approve, and follow-up. In FY 23/24, Compliance and Enforcement Program staff will continue to coordinate with and support CV-SALTS program staff to implement the Salt and Nitrate Control Programs in NPDES permits including issuance of Notices of Deficiency, Notices of Violation, developing permit language, and ongoing enrollment for new dischargers within the Central Valley's priority salt and nitrate control program areas.

Enhanced Engagement with Disadvantaged/Environmental Justice Communities

Compliance and Enforcement Program staff, with assistance from the State Board's Office of Public Participation, is continuing to engage with multiple stakeholders in the Central Valley Region including Counties, Cities, Caltrans, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Central Valley Flood Control Board, to name a few, to form working groups to tackle environmental justice efforts where similar goals can be accomplished by working cooperatively, leveraging resources, and coordinating efforts.

SITE CLEANUP PROGRAM

Development of Enhanced Outreach and Prioritization Process in Disadvantaged Communities and Environmental Justice Communities

Consistent with the Central Valley Water Board's proposed racial equity resolution, program staff will incorporate additional environmental justice criteria into prioritization and engagement efforts. This will include training for staff on the availability and use of GeoTracker tools for tracking CalEnviroScreen scores for communities surrounding cleanup sites, the development of a tracking system to record the CalEnviroScreen score of communities surrounding cleanup sites to potentially identify areas needing additional regulatory attention, ensuring cleanup cases in disadvantaged communities with limited progress are nominated for or encouraged to apply for funding through the State Water Board's SB170 or SCAP funding programs, and a review public outreach procedures.

Priority Cleanup Cases

The Site Cleanup Program includes several sites identified as priority sites due to the threat they pose to groundwater and human health. Projects expected to require

significant staff oversight time include the UPRR Dusmuir case, the Aerojet-Rocketdyne case, the Sacramento Railyards case, and the Modern Cleaners case.

Develop Expertise on Emerging Contaminants

Program staff will work to evaluate and analyze the extent and severity of emerging contaminant (1,2,3-TCP and PFAS) impact to groundwater. Staff will also assess the presence of these contaminants and their proximity to disadvantaged communities.

UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK PROGRAM

Incorporate Environmental Justice Metrics into Case Prioritization in Stalled Case Initiative

The Stalled Case Program members include staff from State Board, EPA, Redhorse (EPA consultant), and our UST/AST Program units from our three Central Valley Water Board Regional offices (Redding Sacramento, and Fresno). The UST Program currently has 48 stalled cases within the Stalled Case Program, of which a significant number are located within disadvantaged communities. Cases with higher scores from CalEnviroScreen may be given priority attention, including triggering additional outreach as the Board develops closure plans or considers approving remedial actions.

Modify Public Outreach Process to Increase Engagement with Environmental Justice Communities

UST/AST Program staff will work with State Water Board and Office of Public Participation staff to develop, revise, or supplement current public outreach guidelines to incorporate “equitable, culturally relevant community outreach to promote meaningful civil engagement” from those communities where remedial action plans and site closures are going to be considered by the Board, consistent with the requirements of AB 2108. Outreach efforts shall acknowledge that a large percentage of UST gas station sites are owned and operated by the South Asian community, and therefore “culturally relevant community outreach” will include language assistance will be provided in languages spoken by this community.