

REGIONAL WATER BOARD ILRP MONTHLY REPORTS FOR AUGUST 2013

August 2013 ILRP Report

This month's Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) report covers through the month of August 2013 and will provide an update on the activities of the North Coast, San Francisco, Central Coast, Los Angeles, Colorado River Basin, Santa Ana, and San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board ILRPs.

Future monthly reports will alternate between the status of the ILRP from the Central Valley Regional Water Board for one month, and the status of other Regional Water Board ILRPs for the alternate month.

Current and past ILRP program monthly reports can be found on the State Water Board Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program website:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/agriculture/

For additional information on the statewide ILRP, please contact State Water Resources Control Board staff:

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ILRP contact information for each Regional Water Board is found at the end of each report below.

NORTH COAST REGION AGRICULTURAL LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM Update – August 2013

Water Quality Compliance Program for Discharges from Agricultural Lands

Update on Permit Development:

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board staff has been developing the Agricultural Lands Discharge Program since 2011. Recently, staff drafted a proposal to re-scope the program. The proposal is to develop a series of targeted permits specific to agricultural commodities or geographic areas, as opposed to a single general permit for all of the North Coast Region.

In the near term, staff proposes to focus efforts on developing either WDRs or waivers of WDRs for each of the following commodities/areas: vineyards and orchards, agriculture in the Tule Lake watershed, and outdoor lily bulb cultivation. Staff will continue to implement the Scott and Shasta River TMDL Waivers of WDRs, participate in the development of the statewide Grazing Regulatory Action Plan, and address discharges from marijuana cultivation through education, compliant response, and enforcement. Staff is also proposing to study groundwater and surface water quality in Butte Valley to help assess the risk from agricultural discharges.

Staff will present their proposal to the Stakeholder Advisory Group, which staff has been working with to develop the program, at the next meeting on September 10, 2013. Staff will receive input from the group on the proposal and present the proposal and feedback to the North Coast Regional Water Board at a workshop on the Program on September 26, 2013.

Update on Monitoring Efforts:

During the first week of August, staff collected samples from water bodies in the lower Smith River basin to assess runoff from Easter lily bulb farms. The monitoring is part of the Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP), and will be used to provide a baseline from which to assess the effectiveness of the Agricultural Lands Discharge Program and current management practices. Five more sampling events are scheduled to take place over the next year to assess seasonal water quality conditions in the basin.

For additional information on the North Coast Regional Water Board's Water Quality Compliance Program for Discharges from Agricultural Lands, please see the following Web site or contact Ben Zabinsky at (707) 576-6750 (BZabinsky@waterboards.ca.gov).

You may also click on the following

link: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/agricultural_lands/

**SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION
AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY PROGRAM
Update – August 2013**

The San Francisco Regional Water Board (Regional Water Board) is working on:

- a) Developing a general waste discharge requirements (WDRs) Order for vineyard operations in the Napa River and Sonoma Creek watersheds;
- b) Renewal of a conditional waiver of WDRs for grazing operations in the Tomales Bay watershed; and
- c) Renewal of a paired conditional waiver of WDRs Order and general WDRs Order for confined animal facilities (CAFs).

Incremental progress on the vineyard Order continues. The Regional Water Board was recently awarded contract funds for CEQA assistance to support Order development and is evaluating the most efficient contracting mechanism to encumber these funds. We have continued to coordinate with the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board agricultural program, maintain momentum on fostering additional third-party technical assistance capacity in both watersheds, and are working towards backfilling a key project staff position.

The Tomales Bay Order is the first 5-year term renewal of the Grazing Waiver and we anticipate Regional Water Board consideration of this Order in November 2013. Regional Water Board staff is developing an outreach plan that will intersect with the public review period which is expected to begin in mid-September 2013. Key elements of the draft Order remain unchanged since 2008, although reporting of residual dry matter is now a requirement of the proposed Order. Regional Water Board staff is preparing a compliance review strategy that will build upon renewed stakeholder awareness and outreach generated by the renewal of the Order, and captures the upcoming wet season.

The CAF waiver of WDRs and general WDRs are expected to be considered by the Regional Water Board in the December 2013 timeframe. These permits are renewals of two 2003 Orders that were generally applied to dairy farms in the Region. The proposed Orders fundamentally maintain previous permit requirements yet include additional requirements for grazing pastures associated with CAF operations, drinking water well testing, adjusted fees, and clarifying that

the scope of the permit, to make clear that it applies to various types of CAFs (e.g., horse facilities), not just dairy farms. Similar to the Tomales Bay Order, Regional Water Board staff are engaging in stakeholder outreach efforts prior to, and overlapping with, the public release of the draft which is anticipated for late September 2013.

For additional information on the Vineyard Order, please contact Jim Ponton at (510) 622-2492 or jponton@waterboards.ca.gov.

CENTRAL COAST REGION AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY PROGRAM Update – August 2013

STATUS OF COOPERATIVE GROUNDWATER MONITORING PROGRAMS

Agricultural Order R3-2012-0011 and the associated Monitoring and Reporting Program provide landowners and operators the option to comply with groundwater monitoring requirements by either sampling groundwater wells individually on their agricultural operations, or by joining a groundwater cooperative monitoring program approved by the Executive Officer. There are advantages and disadvantages to both the individual and cooperative groundwater monitoring options (including cost and responsibilities). Individual landowners and operators are encouraged to evaluate the options carefully and choose the option that best fits their specific situation.

In July 2013, the Executive Officer approved the following cooperative groundwater monitoring programs:

- Central Coast Cooperative Groundwater Program (Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Benito Counties)
- Santa Rosa Creek Valley Cooperative Groundwater Monitoring Program (San Luis Obispo County)

Growers who would like to participate in an approved cooperative groundwater monitoring program must convey this election to the administrator of the approved cooperative monitoring program within 60 days of the program approval. The cooperative program administrator(s) are responsible for providing a list of all program participants to the Central Coast Water Board. Growers who do not wish to participate in an approved cooperative groundwater monitoring program may conduct individual groundwater monitoring (which requires sampling of the primary irrigation well and any drinking water wells on the property).

For additional information on the Central Coast Region Conditional Waiver for agricultural lands, please contact Angela Schroeter at (805) 542- 4644 or aschroeter@waterboards.ca.gov.

Or click on the following link:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/water_issues/programs/ag_waivers/index.shtml

**LOS ANGELES REGION CONDITIONAL WAIVER FOR IRRIGATED LANDS
STAFF UPDATE TO THE SWRCB
August 2013**

Compliance with the Renewed Conditional Waiver

The Nursery Growers Association Los Angeles County Irrigated Lands Group (NGA-ILG) and the Ventura County Agriculture Irrigated Lands Group (VCAILG) are the two discharger groups in the Los Angeles Region that have formed to comply with the Conditional Waiver. Regional Water Board staff has reviewed several documents submitted by VCAILG, including their 2012 Water Quality Monitoring Plan (WQMP), their Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) for 2012, and their Bacteria Special Study (BSS) updated Workplan. Regional Water Board staff had comments on the WQMP and is awaiting a response from VCAILG. Regional Water Board staff approved changes recommended by VCAILG in their AMR on August 9, 2013 and conditionally approved the BSS Workplan with incorporation of comments made by the Executive Officer. NGA-ILG submitted their WQMP on July 26, 2013. Regional Water Board staff is currently reviewing the document.

Enrollment

Regional Water Board staff sent out Notices of Violation to 32 growers in Los Angeles County and 13 growers in Ventura County during July and August 2013. Several growers have contacted Regional Water Board staff to confirm that they will be enrolling in the Conditional Waiver. Regional Water Board staff will continue to conduct enforcement, as necessary.

Regional Water Board staff is currently involved in talks with the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) and Southern California Edison (SCE) to enroll the nursery growers leasing DWP and SCE property. In December 2012, DWP staff sent a letter to growers to gather information on the nature of their operations to determine whether or not they should be enrolled in the Conditional Waiver program. Regional Water Board staff is continuing to coordinate with DWP to enroll these growers. SCE staff are in the process of drafting a similar notice to inform growers that they must enroll in the Conditional Waiver program in order to have good standing as tenants.

GIS Database

Regional Water Board staff has been creating a geographically referenced database of data relevant to the Irrigated Lands Program in Region 4. Data includes water quality monitoring results and mailing addresses of Conditional Waiver program members and growers that are targeted for outreach/enforcement actions. This database is consistently being updated as staff receives more information on enrollment and BMP implementation.

Education Workshops and Outreach

VCAILG provided 3 classes from July to August 2013. One of the classes is being offered online to allow growers flexibility in attaining their 8 required hours of education. The class takes approximately 2 hours to complete and has a quiz at the end to ensure that participants have absorbed the material. Since renewal of the waiver, both VCAILG and NGA-ILG have provided numerous opportunities for their members to receive all eight hours of education credit required by the Conditional Waiver.

Grant Management

Regional Water Board staff is overseeing a Proposition 84 grant for a mobile irrigation laboratory to improve irrigation efficiency on farms in Ventura County (Grant Agreement No. 10-417-554). The grantee is the Ventura County Resource Conservation District (RCD). Under the grant, RCD staff travels to farms, evaluates irrigation efficiency, recommends improvements, and provides cost share funding to implement the recommended improvements. The goal of the grant is to reduce dry-weather loading of agriculture-related pollutants.

Regional Water Board staff continues to manage a Clean Water Act section 319(h) grant which was executed for the purpose of identifying the contribution of and reducing metal loadings from nurseries and other irrigated agricultural lands in the San Gabriel River Watershed (Grant Agreement No. 11-098-554). The grantee is the Council for Watershed Health (CWH). The CWH has reported the status of their project in bi-monthly meetings with Regional Water Board staff and other stakeholders, and has identified priority locations for BMP implementation along the San Gabriel River. The drought has negatively affected the project however, preventing collection of baseline copper data imperative to assess the effectiveness of implemented BMPs. CWH recently requested an extension of one year to wait for rain to create sufficient runoff to collect samples. The request was approved on August 23, 2013.

For additional information on the Los Angeles Region Conditional Waiver for Irrigated Lands, please contact Jenny Newman at (213) 576-6691 jnewman@waterboards.ca.gov or Barbara Barry at (213) 576-6681 bbarry@waterboards.ca.gov.

COLORADO RIVER BASIN CONDITIONAL WAIVER FOR AGRICULTURAL DISCHARGES August 2013

Colorado River Basin Regional Water Board staff has started implementing Board Order R7-2012-0047, a Conditional Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) for agricultural wastewater discharges and discharges of wastes from drain operation and maintenance activities within the Palo Verde Valley and Mesa areas in Riverside and Imperial Counties. This Conditional Waiver affects about 120,000 acres of farmland along the Colorado River. In May 2013, Palo Verde Irrigation District (PVID) began enrolling its Coalition Group's members farming over 6 acres in the compliance program. PVID held workshops for farmers on May 28 and 30, 2013 attended by Regional Water Board staff. The deadline for enrolling in the program is June 30, 2013. The water quality monitoring program will begin later this summer.

Board Order R7-2013-0002 for the Bard Unit of Reservation Division (Imperial County) Conditional Waiver was adopted on January 17, 2013. This Conditional Waiver affects about 7,000 acres of farmland along the Colorado River near Yuma, Arizona. Implementation will not begin until 2014.

Staff is working with interested parties in the Coachella Valley to develop a Conditional Waiver of WDRs for consideration for adoption in late 2013. This Conditional Waiver affects about 60,000 acres of farmland in central Riverside County north of the Salton Sea. A CEQA scoping meeting was held April 29, 2013 in Palm Desert to seek public input on the appropriate scope and content of the environmental documents to be prepared pursuant to CEQA. Regional Water Board staff toured the Coachella Valley Water District service area with CVWD board members and staff on May 22, 2013 to view the CVWD drainage system serving over 37,000 acres of farmland.

Staff is also beginning to work with interested parties in the Imperial Valley (over 450,000 acres of irrigated lands) to develop a Conditional Waiver of WDRs for consideration for adoption in 2014. Staff presented information on the compliance program at the Imperial County Farm Bureau's seven Drainshed meetings in May and June at various locations throughout the valley. AEO Jose Angel provided an informational update to the IID Board of Directors at its June 25,

2013 meeting on policy changes regarding the control of agricultural discharges, including the proposed Conditional Waiver program.

Grant Management

Staff is overseeing a \$900,000 Proposition 50/84 Agricultural Water Quality Grant Program project (Grant Agreement 09-351-557) titled the Precision Drain Cleaning BMP Plan. The grantee is the Imperial Irrigation District. The goal of the grant project is to reduce impacts of IID's dredging and maintenance operations throughout the over 1,300 mile drainage system by implementing a drain improvement program.

Under the grant, IID staff will:

- Develop a protocol to classify, prioritize, and rectify substandard earthen drainage segments,
- Implement drain improvements as determined necessary,
- Implement a program to utilize vegetation (i.e., salt grass) as a drain erosion inhibitor, and
- Implement a GPS-guided drain cleaning program.

Staff has begun to manage a \$340,000 Clean Water Act section 319(h) grant which was executed for the purpose of completing the construction of treatment wetlands for diverted flow from the Alamo River in Imperial County where suspended solids, nitrogen, phosphate, and fecal coliform originating from agricultural lands will be removed through organic activities prior to being released back to the Alamo River on its journey to the Salton Sea (Grant Agreement 12-411-257). The grantee is the Desert Wildlife Unlimited.

For additional information on the Colorado River Basin Conditional Waivers for agricultural discharges, please contact Doug Wylie at (760) 776-8960, or at dwylic@waterboards.ca.gov.

**SANTA ANA REGION
CONDITIONAL WAIVER OF WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS FOR AGRICULTURAL
DISCHARGES (CWAD PROGRAM)
An update to the SWRCB-ILRP Coordinator**

August 26, 2013

Regional Water Board staff has developed a "CWAD Program Advisory Group" which consists of about 20 members including agricultural farmers, local growers, industry groups, NGOs, and major stake-holders. The last CWAD advisory group meeting was held on Thursday, July 25, 2013. The following were the major topic of discussion during this meeting:

1. CWAD Program updated status and discussions on the revised CWAD Program schedule;
2. Discussion and presentation of Eastern Municipal Water District's (EMWD) Data which was sent to the Regional Board by the EMWD, inviting feedback from the advisory group members;
3. Discussions on setting up and streamlining administrative process by Western Riverside County Ag. Coalition (WRCAC) on the CWAD program;

4. A brief presentation on CWAD Program cost estimates and CWAD Notice of Intent (NOI) to the advisory group and soliciting the group members comments and feedback;
5. Internal draft agricultural waiver and draft CEQA Neg. Dec. is currently circulating in-house for edits, comments and revisions. First round of in-house comments has been completed. Regional Water Board staff is presently working in incorporating these comments in the agricultural waiver order and staff report. Regional Water Board staff will provide the review opportunity to the CWAD Advisory Group members and stakeholders for their feedback and comments, sometimes in near future.;
6. Any other related issues/discussions.

Regional Water Board staff have been attending Western Riverside County Agricultural Coalition (WRCAC) monthly technical committee meeting. WRCAC is a major stakeholder in CWAD program. Regional Water Board staff has been coordinating with WRCAC to identify a proposed CWAD program sampling station in the San Jacinto River Watershed area where this program is being developed.

Next scheduled CWAD advisory group meeting will be scheduled on third week of September 2013 at 09:00 a.m. at the Riverside County Farm Bureau Office, located in Moreno Valley, CA. A specific date in this regards will soon be selected with mutual consensus from advisory group members. Regional Water Board staff will draft the agenda, presentations, and action items to be presented at the next meeting.

For more information, please contact:

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**SAN DIEGO WATER BOARD IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM
(AG WAIVER)
Updated – August 2013**

The San Diego Water Board staff (Regional Water Board staff) has continued to progress on several fronts related our current conditional waiver of waste discharge requirements for discharges from Agricultural and Nursery operations (Ag Waiver).¹ General tasks currently include: conducting inspections at randomly selected facilities to assess the level of discharger familiarity with the waiver conditions; developing the informal enforcement processes for noncompliance; and working through processes associated with renewing the Ag Waiver in 2014.

Activities in the San Diego Region include:

1. Regional Water Board staff is working through an additional list of 135 agricultural operations that have reportedly left the existing agricultural monitoring groups/coalitions, and failed to file an individual notice of intent (NOI) for coverage under the Ag-Waiver. The identified operations are being investigated by the Compliance and Enforcement

¹ http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego/water_issues/programs/irrigated_land/irrigated_ag.shtml

Assurance Unit to evaluate enforcement alternatives and prioritize further actions according to available resources.

2. Regional Water Board staff continue to research and develop a list of potential operations that may be classified as “non-filers” (e.g., failed to enroll in a monitoring group or file a notice of intent (NOI) to enroll as an individual operation).
3. Regional Water Board staff provided information via emails and held teleconferences with two Board members (Messers. Griffiths and Sanford) from the Rainbow Municipal Water District to discuss their desire to form a monitoring group for their Ag-customers.
4. As a follow-up to a previous meeting and written communication with the Rainbow Municipal Water District General Manager, the District sent a letter to the San Diego Water Board to confirm their decision on forming a monitoring group for the agricultural operations located within the District located in Rainbow Valley.
5. Regional Water Board staff sent out over 100 letters to notify Agricultural operators, which are eligible for enrollment or enrolled in the Ag Waiver, of our intent to conduct site visits/inspections during the week of September 20 through 27, 2013.
6. Regional Water Board staff are developing a schedule and conducting confirmatory phone calls/contacts to schedule inspections/site visits at Agricultural facilities during the timeframe of September 18th through 30th, 2013, while the San Diego Region’s office is moved to a new location.
7. Regional Water Board staff continue to receive and respond to numerous phone calls and emails from owners/operators of agricultural operations regarding implementation of the Ag Waiver.
8. Regional Water Board staff continues to develop draft revisions to the Ag-Waiver; draft Monitoring and Reporting requirements; and associated CEQA documents for regional management review and comment prior to release for public review.

For additional information on the San Diego Regional Water Boards Irrigated Lands Program, please contact Roger Mitchell at (858-467-2724) rmitchell@waterboards.ca.gov