



EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT • October 2019

Covers August 16, 2019 – September 15, 2019

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State and Regional

1. Personnel Report – *Eric Shay*

New Hires – None

Vacancies – We are currently recruiting for the following positions:

- Seasonal Clerk, Victorville. This position provides basic administrative support, such as typing and reception.
- Scientific Aid, Planning & Assessment Unit, South Lake Tahoe. This position assists with the collection, preparation, and chemical analysis of water samples; creates maps to display and analyze data; updates TMDL reporting products; and assists staff with data management and analysis tasks.
- Scientific Aid, Cleanup/Site Investigation & Enforcement Unit, South Lake Tahoe. This position assists staff with administering the site cleanup, underground storage tank, land disposal, and enforcement programs.
- Water Resource Control Engineer, Wastewater and Agricultural Operations 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, Non-Point Source Unit, South Lake Tahoe. This position will be part of the Non-Point Source Unit’s forest activities program and will be focused on implementing the Water Board’s elements of recent legislation (Senate Bill 901, Chapter 626 Statutes of 2018) related to increasing the pace and scale of forest fuels treatments.

- Engineering Geologist, Non-Point Source Unit, South Lake Tahoe. This position will be part of the Non-Point Source Unit's forest activities program and will be focused on implementing the Water Board's elements of recent legislation (SB 901) related to increasing the pace and scale of forest fuels treatments.
- Environmental Scientist, Non-Point Source Unit, South Lake Tahoe. This position will be part of the Non-Point Source Unit's forest activities program and will be focused on implementing the Water Board's elements of recent legislation (SB 901) related to increasing the pace and scale of forest fuels treatments.

Departures

- Dr. Woonhoe Kim, Water Resource Control Engineer, Wastewater and Agricultural Operations Unit, Victorville. Dr. Kim has transferred to the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board.

North Lahontan Region

2. **Beaver Restoration Assessment Tool (BRAT)** – *Jennifer Watts, Elizabeth vanDiepen, Cindy Wise*

Staff participated in meetings on August 12 and 14, 2019, convened by The Nature Conservancy, the Occidental Arts and Ecology Center, the Institute for Bird Populations, Point Blue Conservation Science, and the US Forest Service (Region 5) to share information and solicit feedback on their beaver restoration and management project. The meetings were held in Woodfords and Truckee, respectively. The audience included land managers, agency staff, conservation groups, tribal members, and other stakeholders and interested public. Both meetings focused on beaver restoration, its relevance to riparian/meadow restoration and focal species recovery, and how the Beaver Restoration Assessment Tool (BRAT) model can aid in restoration prioritization processes. The BRAT model, developed by Utah State University, predicts where and what kinds of beaver restoration would be most effective based on reliable water sources, stream bank vegetation, flow, and typical flood data. More information about the BRAT model is available at the [BRAT model website](#). As part of this effort, the BRAT model was used to map suitable beaver habitat in the Carson River, Walker River, Lake Tahoe, and Truckee River watersheds.

During the meeting, the speakers described the multiple benefits of beaver dams in a watershed, which include increased resiliency to fire and flood events, water quality improvement, and increased groundwater recharge, among others. The agencies and organizations involved with this are particularly interested in how beaver dams may aid in the recovery of Willow flycatcher and other focal species in the Desert Terminal Lakes geography. Several projects in the north Lahontan Region use beaver dams for stream and meadow restoration efforts. The Truckee River Watershed Council has used beavers and beaver biomimicry (i.e. humans building structures that mimic beaver dams, otherwise known as beaver dam analogs) in its Perazzo Meadows Restoration Project in the Little Truckee River watershed. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife successfully installed beaver dam analogs on By-Day Creek above the Bridgeport Valley in 2018. Caltrans funded this low-impact restoration as a compensatory mitigation project, with the purpose of extending the duration of dry season flows in the only known creek of the East Walker watershed containing Lahontan Cutthroat Trout. Additionally, the planned restoration work by American Rivers and the Alpine Watershed Group in Hope Valley, located within the West Fork Carson River watershed, includes beaver

dams as part of their project. The West Fork Carson River is the focus of one of two Lahontan Water Board USEPA Vision Projects to address impaired waters.

3. The Federal Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) Trust Fund – *Kerri O’Keefe*

In 1986, Congress created the Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) Trust Fund to address petroleum releases from federally regulated underground storage tanks (UST) by amending Subtitle I of the Solid Waste Disposal Act. In 2005, the Energy Policy Act expanded eligible uses of the LUST Trust Fund to include certain leak prevention activities and allowed states and tribes to enter into an assistance agreement with the federal government. The LUST Trust Fund provides money to 1) oversee corrective actions by responsible parties, and 2) cleanup sites that require prompt action to protect human health and the environment and/or where the responsible party is unknown, unwilling or unable to perform the cleanup. A 0.1 cent tax on each gallon of motor fuel sold nationwide provides funds for the LUST Trust Fund.

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) entered into an assistance agreement with the United States Environmental Protection Agency, authorizing the State Water Board to administer the California grant, which is approximately \$3 million per year. The grant money is helpful because it provides additional funding for UST sites that have expended all of their State Water Board UST Fund Program funding and still have limited work to complete before closing the site, or in cases where a responsible party is unknown, unwilling, or unable to perform limited work to close the site.

The process for obtaining funds from the LUST Trust Fund involves Lahontan Water Board staff consulting with State Water Board staff regarding site-specific information. State Water Board staff then either determines the site is eligible or works with Lahontan Water Board staff to develop an alternative pathway to closure. Water Board staff currently has four cases in the process of obtaining funding from the LUST Trust Fund for either destroying groundwater monitoring wells or refurbish the existing monitoring network.

South Lahontan Region

4. Water Reuse Planning – Water Reuse Symposium 2019 – *Sergio Alonso*

From September 8 -11, 2019, Sergio Alonso, Water Resources Control Engineer from the Victorville office, attended the 2019 WaterReuse Symposium, held by the WaterReuse Association and Water Research Foundation in San Diego. Among the topics discussed were various aspects of water reuse planning including 1) planning challenges, 2) applications for recycled water, and 3) addressing emerging issues.

Water is a scarce commodity where between 0.25 to 0.3% of the world’s available water is usable for consumption, agricultural, or industrial use. Communities have adopted water conservation methods as water resources become scarcer. As communities reach the limits of water use through conservation, water reuse has become a necessity. The occurrence of droughts has strained the limits of water conservation. Different communities across the US have begun to use recycled water as an alternative water source. Droughts and population growth have increased the demand for water, in some cases exceeding available water resources. Thus, planning for recycled water use takes on a more critical role.

As communities plan to incorporate the use of recycled water, it is important to inform the public of the benefits of reusing water. Water reuse may reduce demand for potable

water and, in turn, conserve groundwater resources. Recycled water may also be used for landscape irrigation, agricultural irrigation for both edible and non-edible crops, and environmental uses such as park irrigation. Locally controlled recycled water may develop into a dependable water source and could augment the existing water supply and potentially lower capital costs.

Planning processes should address emerging issues. These issues may range from dealing with the public's perception or acceptance of recycled water to the understanding of constituents of concern in the recycled water supply. The effects of climate change upon the current water supply should be assessed and compared to the added benefit of recycled water availability. To address these issues, studies of new technologies and constituent analyses should be continuous along with public outreach and involvement.

For all the reasons discussed herein, recycled water may need to be treated as a water source that can augment traditional water supplies. Recycled water use will become more sustainable with increased public education and acceptance, and regulatory requirements for recycled water uses must maintain the same level of public health protection as traditional potable water requirements.

Lahontan Region Enforcement

5. Standing Item - Quarterly Violations Report – 2nd Quarter 2019 – Scott Ferguson and Jeff Brooks

The Quarterly Violations Report for April 1, 2019 to June 30, 2019 includes (1) a brief summary of violations that occurred during the reporting period, and (2) the enforcement action status table.

Synopsis of 2nd Quarter 2019 Violations

Sixty-seven (67) violations have been recorded for the second quarter 2019 reporting period (Attachment A), a little less than the 89 violations recorded for the same quarter a year ago. The violations were distributed across a wide variety of facilities throughout El Dorado, Inyo, Kern, Lassen, Los Angeles, Mono, Nevada, Placer, and San Bernardino Counties. The most common violations reported were order condition violations (20) and water quality effluent violations (16). The order condition violations were largely split between those related to inadequate Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan implementation at the Tahoe Keys Marina (six violations) and those related to unauthorized waste discharges at multiple cannabis cultivation facilities (ten violations), which are discussed in greater detail, below. The water quality effluent violations were largely split between those related to nitrate and flow conditions at the Hot Creek Fish Hatchery (11 violations) and those related to total coliform counts at the Fort Irwin Wastewater Treatment Facility (four violations). The Hot Creek Fish Hatchery violations continue being addressed through a Time Schedule Order.

The number of violations for the second quarter were also down from the 108 violations recorded for the previous quarter. Violations during the first quarter were dominated by water quality effluent violations (85), mostly related to flow limitation violations at Crestline Sanitation District Wastewater Treatment Facility. These violations were caused by increased influent rates due to heavy precipitation events.

One set of violations that stands out for the second quarter are the 10 Cannabis Program-related violations. The violations are all related to unauthorized/improper disposal of cannabis cultivation wastewater and/or process water. Water Board staff discovered these violations by inspecting cannabis cultivation facilities. These violations

are the first related to improper waste disposal at regulated facilities under the new Cannabis Program and reflect the value of having an inspection program.

Table of Pending Formal Enforcement Cases

Please see Attachment B.

Attachments:

Attachment A – 2nd Quarter 2019 Violations Table

Attachment B – Pending Enforcement Cases – 2nd Quarter 2019