



EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT
 April 16, 2021 – May 31, 2021

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State and Regional

1. Personnel Report – *Sandra Lopez*

New Hires

- Essra Mostafavi, Board Member. Ms. Mostafavi is an environmental and urban planner. She is Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Geode Environmental Inc., which she established in 2017.

Promotions

- John Ben Letton, C.E.A. (Career Executive Assignment) to serve as the Region’s Assistant Executive Officer

Vacancies

- Water Resource Control Engineer, Regulatory and Enforcement Unit, South Lake Tahoe. The position will provide support for Wastewater and NPDES permitting work.

- Water Resource Control Engineer, Wastewater & Agricultural Operations Unit, Victorville. This position provides regulatory compliance oversight to dairies and wastewater treatment plants located in the South Lahontan Basin.
- Environmental Scientist, Land Disposal Unit, Victorville. This position will provide regulatory oversight of dredge and fill permitting and compliance of Caltrans projects regionwide.
- Scientific Aid, Wastewater & Agricultural Operations Unit, Victorville. This position supports staff primarily through review of submitted self-monitoring reports, along with other special projects.
- Supervising Engineering Geologist, South Lake Tahoe. The incumbent manages the Division consisting of the following technical programs: Basin Planning & Assessment, SWAMP, Non-point Source, Forestry/Dredge & Fill, Lake Tahoe Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), and the Regional Monitoring/Climate Change coordination.

Departures

- Don Jardine, Board Member
- Carly Nilson, Environmental Scientist, Non-Point Source Unit, South Lake Tahoe
- Cindy Wise, Water Resource Control Engineer, Planning & Assessment Unit, South Lake Tahoe
- Douglas Carey, Senior Engineering Geologist (Specialist), Leviathan Mine Unit, South Lake Tahoe
- Anne Holden, Engineering Geologist, Non-Point Source Unit, South Lake Tahoe

North Lahontan Region

2. **Water Board Response to Vehicle Accident with Petroleum Discharge to Leavitt Creek** – *Kerri O’Keefe*

On October 2, 2020, the Lahontan Water Board received notification from the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) of a 50-gallon diesel fuel release to Leavitt Creek off of Highway 108, west of the USMC Mountain Warfare Training Center in Mono County. The release was caused by a single-vehicle accident involving a Fed Ex Custom Critical freight truck that experienced brake failure at a sharp curve on a steep and winding section of the highway. The freight truck broke through the guardrail, traveled down a steep embankment, and came to rest in Leavitt Creek releasing diesel fuel and motor oil across the embankment and into the flowing creek. Thankfully, there were no fatalities.

Information obtained from Mono County personnel indicated that the creek was being diverted downstream of the spill site for use at the Leavitt Meadows Pack Station. Mono County personnel also conveyed that removing the freight truck and other large debris from the creek had destabilized the embankment leading down to the creek, threatening to further adversely impact the creek.



Photo 2.1 – A driver for Fed Ex Custom Critical was involved in a single-vehicle accident that resulted in a discharge of diesel fuel and motor oil to Leavitt Creek.



Photo 2.2 – The inlet of the water diversion system used by the downstream Leavitt Meadows Pack Station.

Water Board staff with the Cleanup and Site Investigation (CSI) Unit responded to the discharge incident by conducting a site inspection to evaluate impacts to the creek, the embankment, and the pack station water diversion system. Upon arrival, staff observed large amounts of crash-related debris still present within the creek and on its banks, a visible sheen on the creek surface, and absorbent booms that had been deployed within the creek. Staff also observed petroleum-stained soil and rocks within the creek and across the destabilized embankment above the creek and noted that a strong hydrocarbon odor was present. Additionally, creek water for use at the pack station was actively being diverted from the creek approximately 10 feet downstream from the impact point and it was unclear what the water was being used for at that time. Staff subsequently talked with the pack station operator about the potential for petroleum-contaminated water being diverted to the pack station. The pack station operator informed staff that diverted creek water was used for livestock water only, and that the operator had not detected any obvious signs of petroleum-contaminated water in his livestock water supply. Staff determined that immediate sampling of the creek and removal of contaminated soil was appropriate. Additional Water Board staff from the North Basin Regulatory (NBR) Unit was also assigned to the Water Board response effort for evaluating and overseeing temporary and permanent slope stabilization.

Water Board staff worked cooperatively with the responsible party over the following months to oversee site assessment and cleanup and stabilization of the crash site. Site assessment and restoration activities included: 1) surface water sampling at the diversion inlet and downstream of the inlet to identify and monitor impacts to the creek and water diversion system; 2) removal of contaminated soils; and 3) temporary slope stabilization until permanent soil stabilization could be implemented. Fortunately, the majority of contaminated soil was removed from the site and the embankment was temporarily stabilized prior to the first snows of the fall season.

Site assessment, cleanup, and slope stabilization work continued in May 2021 following snowmelt. Sampling results indicated no diesel fuel or motor oil present in surface waters. Residual soil contamination remains on the embankment, but concentrations are below conservative regulatory screening levels (San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board Tier 1 Environmental Screening Levels) and are not expected to pose risks to human health or the environment. A work plan for permanent slope stabilization was submitted to and approved by Water Board staff with jute netting and hydromulch (with native seed mix) being used to establish permanent soil stabilization above the creek. Water Board staff inspected the site on May 25, 2021 and found the permanent soil stabilization measures acceptably implemented. No further action is planned for this site.

3. Household Hazardous Waste Exacerbates Structure Fire, US EPA Assists with Cleanup – Kerri O’Keefe

On February 18, 2021, Lake Valley Fire Department and mutual aid agencies responded to a structure fire on Oneidas Street in South Lake Tahoe, El Dorado County. The fire started in the chimney.

The responsible party was a collector of many types of items that were kept within and around the house. Items noted by El Dorado County Hazardous Materials Division included fuel containers, propane cylinders, aerosols, ammunition, spent ammunition

casings, pesticides, paints, solvents, automotive parts, used oil filters, other compressed gas cylinders, E-waste, and fluorescent tubes.

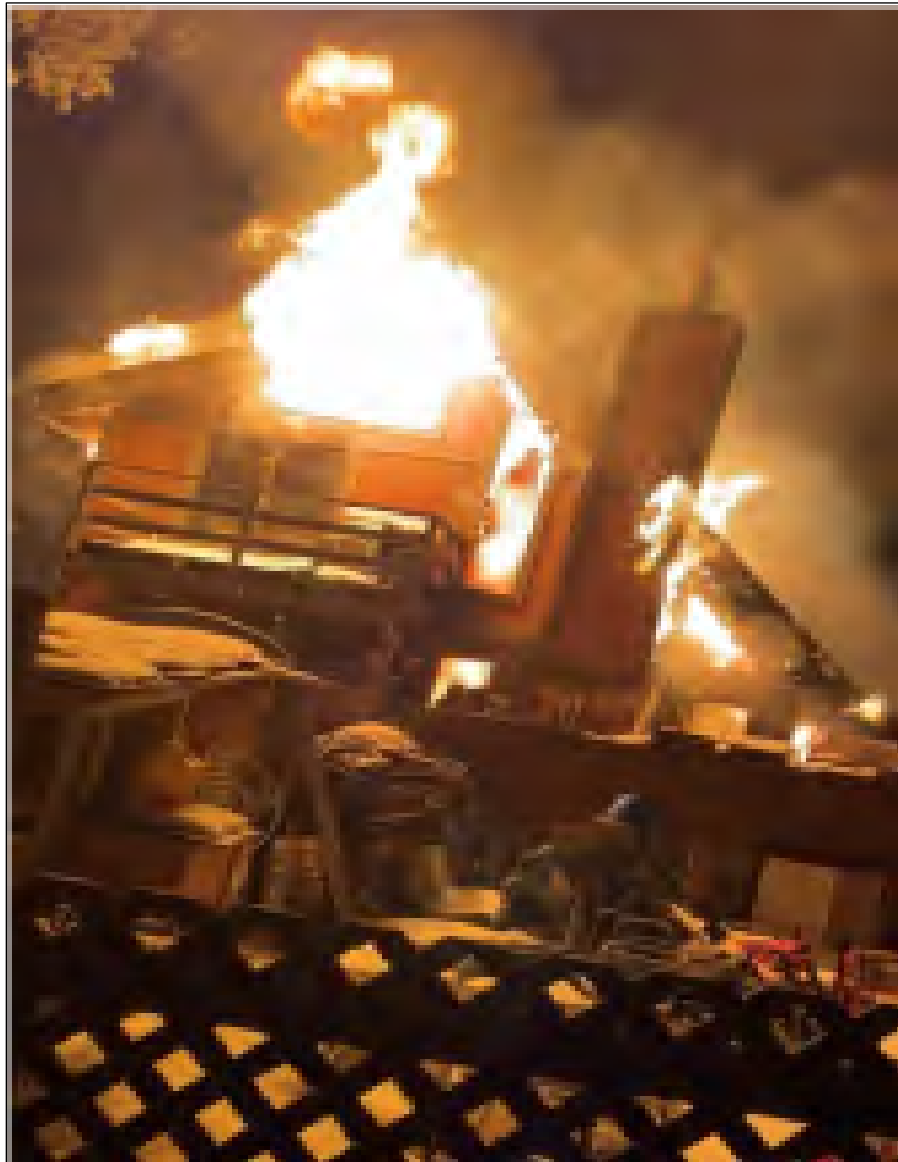


Photo 3.1 – It took approximately 48 hours and over 1,000,000 gallons of water to extinguish the structure fire.

Due to the large amount of combustible household hazardous waste items being stored in congested areas and the fact that the house's second story windows were boarded up, firefighters were unable to obtain entry to the structure. It took approximately 48 hours and over 1,000,000 gallons of water to extinguish the fire. An excavator and other heavy equipment were finally used to bring the structure to the ground to allow the fire to be extinguished.



Photo 3.2 – Large amounts of household hazardous waste being kept on the property exacerbated the fire.

Local, state, and federal agencies coordinated regarding initial cleanup and site assessment activities. Funding for debris and shallow contaminated soil removal with characterization and confirmation sampling and analysis was obtained from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), Emergency Response Section. Activities implemented include: 1) sorting and proper disposal of household hazardous waste; 2), sorting and proper disposal of ash and debris with asbestos-containing material; 3) air monitoring; 4) installation of stormwater BMPs; 5) excavation and disposal of the upper six (6) inches of soil; and 6) confirmation soil sampling. According to US EPA staff, the cleanup activities identified above were completed on May 20, 2021. A final report is pending laboratory analytical results of confirmation soil sampling.

4. Restoration Grant Awarded to Truckee River Watershed Council – Anne Holden and Carly Nilson

The State Water Board's Nonpoint Source Grant Program is supported by funds from the U.S. EPA provided under Clean Water Act (CWA) section 319(h). Annually, funding to reduce nonpoint source pollution is awarded in a competitive statewide grant solicitation and review process of which NPS unit staff are active participants. During the 2021 CWA 319(h) grant cycle, the Truckee River Watershed Council (TRWC) submitted a successful proposal to restore instream and floodplain habitat on Cold Creek in the Coldstream Canyon. The project is located on State Parks lands south of Donner Lake, on a degraded reach of Cold Creek just downstream of a large railroad culvert known as the "Chute." The total project cost is \$1,057,000; the 319h grant award is \$792,000. Matching funds and

services totaling 25 percent of the total project cost were contributed by the TRWC, California Department of Parks and Recreation, and adjacent owners.



Photo 4.1 – The "Chute" railroad culvert, Cold Creek. Photo is at the upstream end of the project area.

The Coldstream Canyon Upper Valley restoration project will create floodplain terraces, address channel incision, and stabilize actively eroding streambanks to reduce sediment loading to Cold Creek, a major tributary to the middle Truckee River. In 2008, the Lahontan Water Board established a Total Maximum Daily Load for sediment for the middle Truckee River watershed. This project will result in 2.9 acres of re-established or enhanced riparian habitat and will lower and re-grade 1,300 linear feet of eroding streambanks to promote floodplain connectivity. It also complements a 2019 319(h) restoration grant awarded to the TRWC for the Coldstream Canyon roads and wetland rehabilitation project located downstream of this project.

Lahontan Water Board staff strongly advocated for the project during the 2021 CWA 319(h) grant review and selection process. Staff will continue to support the project by processing grant invoices and work products, reviewing final design plans, and issuing CWA section 401 water quality certification and Basin Plan prohibition exemptions to ensure project success.

5. Cannabis Program Update – Kathleen Bindl

This is an update on the Eastern California Cannabis Program which supports both The Lahontan Region and The Colorado River Basin Region. The Eastern California Cannabis Program underwent a staff reduction in September 2020. This reduction occurred across all regions and state board cannabis units and resulted in a 50 percent reduction of

Cannabis Program staff statewide. In the Eastern California Region, Eric Taxer the unit supervisor, retired, and his position has not been backfilled. Additionally, three staff were redirected to work in other units. Kathleen Bindl and Alex Spencer are the remaining Eastern California Cannabis Program staff, now under the supervision of Catherine Pool, Unit Supervisor of the Leviathan Mine Unit. Alex Spencer was subsequently redirected to contact tracing duties with the Department of Public Health in March 2020 and is expected to return to the Cannabis Program beginning July 2021.

After the staff reduction, the Executive Oversight Committee developed recommendations for prioritizing work within the program moving forward. Two key areas of focus were identified: 1) increasing enrollment at potential legal cultivation sites, and 2) addressing water quality and water supply impacts from illegal cultivation through enforcement. To address the first recommendation, if an unpermitted site is discovered in an area where cultivation is allowed, assistance is provided to the cultivator to come into compliance and enroll under the Cannabis General Order. Within the Lahontan Region, many counties have banned cultivation making enrollment in the Cannabis General Order impractical. There is a massive need to address the second recommendation—to protect water resources throughout the region. This has been the recent focus of cannabis staff.

Illegal cannabis grows are widespread and rampant in the many rural areas within the Lahontan Region and Colorado River Basin Region. There are at least 500 known illegal cultivation sites, which is likely a severe underestimate. A key to success in this effort is strengthening our relationships and collaboration with outside agencies to maximize our efforts. This includes collaborating with California Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), County Law Enforcement, County Environmental Health Departments, local governments, and any other agencies with an interest in illegal cannabis cultivation. Additionally, due to the size of the regions and limited resources, staff have been working to identify priority areas to focus enforcement based on the greatest threat to water quality. Priority areas have been identified based on density of known illegal cultivation sites, areas with 303 (d) listings, adjudicated groundwater basins, or surface water impacts. The areas identified include the Antelope Valley and Mojave River (Lahontan Region), and Anza and Banning (Colorado River Basin Region). Staff plans to focus inspections and enforcement in these high priority areas, in conjunction with law enforcement and CDFW. These priority areas can change as new information emerges or new priorities are identified. Due to the inherent danger associated with illegal grow sites, it is necessary to work with CDFW law enforcement or county law enforcement to perform site inspections. This adds to the complexity when planning site inspections.

Prior to the staff reduction, cannabis staff inspected five (5) illegal grow sites in Los Angeles County in summer 2019. The landowners at the cultivation sites were issued notices of violation. As a result, three of the sites were cleaned up, and two of the sites did not respond to the notice of violation and were issued clean up and abatement orders. One site complied with the cleanup and abatement order while the remaining site has not yet responded. The sites that have complied and cleaned up remain unoccupied. This is crucial to prevent cultivators from immediately moving back in and starting the operation again, a common occurrence. County law enforcement does not have the authority to issue clean up orders, which highlights our role in protecting water quality and ending recurring operations. Staff recently attended two illegal cultivation site inspections in Inyo County and will be issuing a Notice of Violation to both sites.

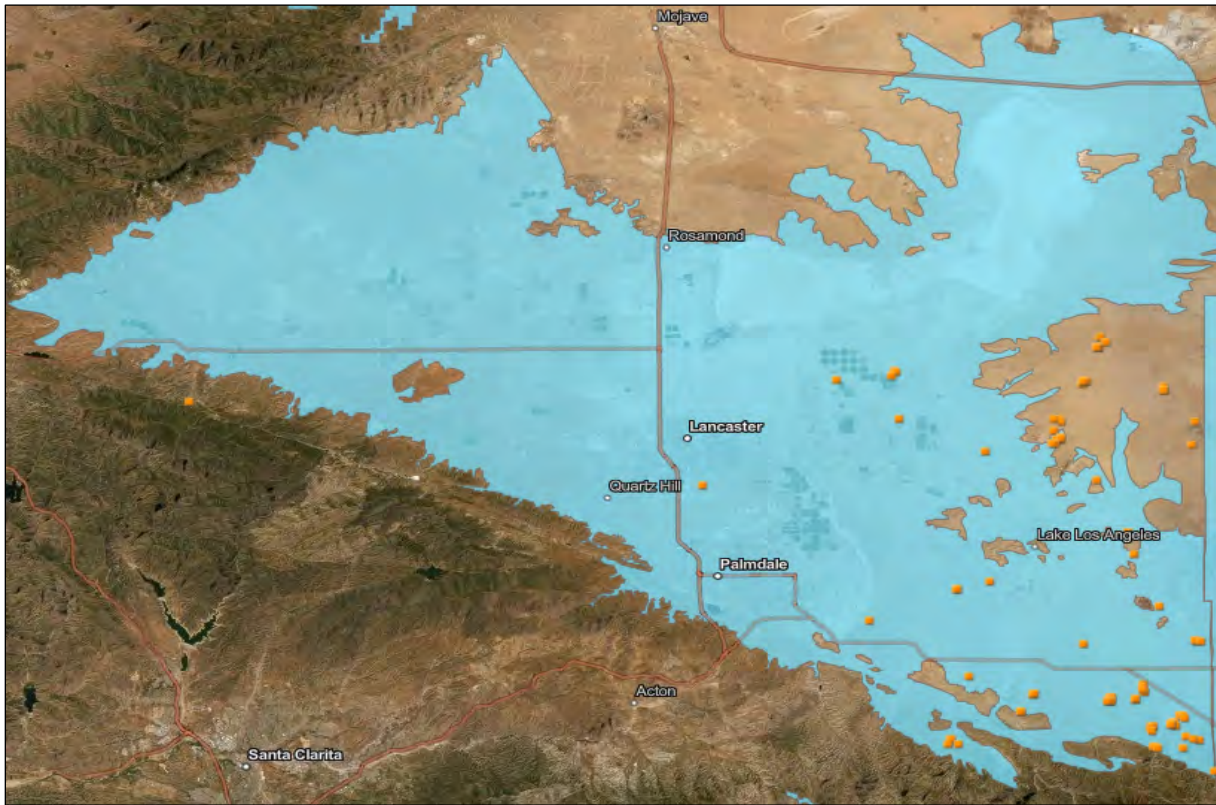


Photo 5.1 Antelope Valley Groundwater. Orange points represent known illicit sites.

Staff continues to strategize to maximize resources to cleanup as many illegal cannabis sites as possible. By identifying the sites with the highest threat to water quality, staff can then prioritize our inspections and enforcement efforts. Recently, a statewide contract was executed to obtain high resolution aerial imagery throughout the state. This will be beneficial for remotely reviewing sites, prioritizing inspections, and evaluating whether a site remains cleaned up and unoccupied. Known illegal grow sites are located on the aerial imagery as shown, above, to help staff prioritize and plan inspections. With the past success of sites responding to notices of violation, we hope that this strategy of informal enforcement will continue to prove successful. In cases where it does not, formal enforcement may be needed.

South Lahontan Region

6. Mono County Collaborative Planning Team Quarterly Meeting, April 29, 2021 – Ed Hancock and Jeff Fitzsimmons

On Thursday, April 29th, 2021 the Mono County Collaborative Planning Team (CPT) convened for their quarterly meeting. Such meetings provide an opportunity for agencies and organizations working in the county to share updates on project work, provide information on recent developments, and highlight emerging issues with colleagues and interested parties. Water Board staff provided an update about the Boards' continued operations through the COVID-19 pandemic, that the Board continues to carry out water

quality work in Mono County, and that staff remain available to respond to any external requests or water quality-related emergencies, should they arise.

Updates from other meeting participants were also given. Mr. Justin Nalder, director of the Mono Co. Emergency Operation Center (EOC), provided an update on operations surrounding the Mountain View Fire which burned portions of the town of Walker in November 2020. Between seven and nine fire recovery teams continue to work in the area and are expected to finish working by the end of May 2021. Work includes soils stabilization, removal of hazardous trees, and soil sampling. The Los Angeles Dept. of Water and Power (LADWP) is providing approximately thirty travel trailers to house families who lost their homes during the fire. Families will be able to live rent free in the trailers for up to three years. Mr. Nalder highlighted that fire recovery work is a coordinated effort between the State, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the community.

Mr. Gordon Martin of the USFS Inyo National Forest, provided an update that all wildfire crews and engines are staffed for the fire season. Mr. Martin explained that work continues at the Casa Diablo facility to install the #4 well. Such work includes tree removal and road widening, and that a new drinking water monitoring well is being installed upgradient of the Casa Diablo facility in Shady Rest Park in the town of Mammoth Lakes. The USFS is also preparing recreational areas for the summer season and provided information that all campfires are banned outside of established campgrounds. Inyo National Forest and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) continue their work on the Burro/Wild horse program and estimates that there are 600 animals across the forest, with 300-400 present in the Mono Basin. Mr. Martin also updated that the thermal geology at Hot Creek has changed over time, and as such the USFS is looking at expanding the no camping or recreation access perimeter.

Ms. Jan Cutts, the district ranger of the Bridgeport Ranger District on the USFS Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, explained that district restrooms are now being cleaned by a contractor for the season, and the walk-up window at the ranger office will remain open for the 2021 field season. The walk-up window was installed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The ranger office is not open to the public otherwise. Ms. Cutts also provided an update of the Buckeye Hot Springs Enhancement Project, which includes installation of vault toilets, grading and graveling the parking area, trail work, and installation of interpretive signage. Work is expected to begin during the summer of 2021. Ms. Cutts also informed the group that she would be leaving the Bridgeport District by the end of April as she has accepted a new position in New Mexico.

Ms. Heidi Calvert of the California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) explained that the agency expects a full field season following the curtailed operations of 2020. Fish hatcheries in Eastern California are stocked with eggs for next year following the issues these hatcheries experienced in 2020.

The CPT also heard from the Town of Mammoth Lakes that the towns' development plan had been approved. The plan includes construction of 81 units of affordable housing during the summer of 2021. Mammoth Mountain is also making a \$1 billion investment in new lodging, which is timely given the community's continued requests for investment in hotel services. Mammoth Council also approved \$400,000 for tourist visitation services in summer 2021.

LADWP representatives updated the group that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Mono Basin Restoration Project had been approved by their Board. The Department is also moving forward with more work for the Whitmore Recreation Project in the Town of Mammoth Lakes.

Ms. Gayle Rosander of the California Dept. Of Transportation (CalTrans), updated that most mountain roads were either open already or would be opening for the summer season by the end of April 2021.

Mono County updated that the Tioga Inn Project, which planned to build 100 units of affordable housing in the Mono Basin, had been denied by the Board of Supervisors because of unavoidable environmental impacts that would occur should the project go ahead.

At the end of the meeting, the CPT heard a presentation from Mr. George Martin of USFS Inyo Nation Forest about the Long Valley Exploration Drilling Project proposed by Kore Mining. The project aims to investigate the mining possibilities north of Hot Creek and east of Highway 395 in Long Valley. The area had been previously explored by another group in the 1990's. Mr. Martin updated that the project may be approved by USFS and that crews are surveying the area. The project is expected to be categorically exempt (Cat. Ex.) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) because the proposal includes less than one acre of land disturbance and less than one mile of road building. Mr. Martin explained that this is only an exploration project and, should actual mining be proposed, a new NEPA document would be prepared. Scoping for the exploration project ends May 16th, although comments will be accepted throughout the process. USFS explained that the agency is looking for extraordinary circumstances for why the project should not go ahead. Extraordinary circumstances include the presence of endangered plants and wildlife, or geologic or hydrologic features. Water Board staff asked whether existing water quality issues could be considered as extraordinary circumstances and explained that several surface waters in the surrounding area were presently 303(d) listed because of metals contamination that Board staff are investigating. Mr. Martin responded that he was unsure about water quality issues and extraordinary circumstances. So far more than 500 comments have been received, and Water Board staff are coordinating between Divisions about this project.

7. Guest Speaker for Engineering Geology Course at California State University, San Bernardino – *Jeff Fitzsimmons*

Jeff Fitzsimmons, Engineering Geologist from our Victorville office, participated as a guest speaker for an interactive web-based class as part of an Engineering Geology course with California State University, San Bernardino, on May 7, 2021. Students in attendance were pursuing their Bachelor of Sciences in Geology with an Environmental Geology Concentration. Topics discussed included stormwater management, geologic hazards of fault rupture and liquefaction associated hazards, geologic structure and hydrological characteristics of a site, and associated potential for individual or collective impacts to water quality, as well as sources of information to consider when assessing a project site.

Current measures in place as response to COVID-19 has limited the amount of interaction students would typically have with industry professionals at societal meetings, conferences, or job fairs. Water Board staff participation as guest speakers provide students with the opportunity to interact with professionals practicing in the field of

geology. In addition, Water Board staff participation in these types of web-based panel discussions serves to increase public awareness of water quality, encourage and recruit new talent to the Water Boards, and help build and maintain relationships with the communities that we serve.

8. Rosamond Community Services District and Water Board Staff Collaboration on Incidental Recharge – Sergio Alonso

Water Board staff, Sergio Alonso, Water Resource Control Engineer, participated in the California Water Environment Association and the California Association of Sanitation Agencies' May 5, 2021, webinar event called "*Partnering for Impact in California*," as a panelist along with Rosamond Community Service District's (District) General Manager Steve Perez and the District's Board Member, Greg Wood. The panel discussion was titled "*Rosamond: Collaborative Permitting Achieves Beneficial Incidental Recharge in an Adjudicated Groundwater Basin*," (Photo 8.1). The panel discussed collaborative efforts between the District and Water Board staff over the years to improve the effluent and receiving groundwater quality associated with the District's wastewater treatment plant.

The panelists introduced themselves and discussed their role in the path towards improved wastewater treatment. This discussion was followed by a question and answer period. The presentation covered the history of the Water Board's involvement with the District that began with the adoption of waste discharge requirements (permit) in 1966 and subsequent revisions to the permit over the years culminating in the most recent revision in 2019. Effluent was originally discharged to soil-lined, facultative ponds that over time began to leak, resulting in increased concentrations of total dissolved solids (TDS) and nitrates in groundwater below the facility.

To address this issue, the Water Board adopted a revised permit in 2015, that included a time schedule requiring the District to explore methods of improved treatment or to construct lined evaporative ponds meeting the criteria of California Code of Regulations, title 27. After exploring all available options, the District opted to improve effluent quality by expanding a small, existing, unused wastewater treatment plant to discharge denitrified, undisinfectated, secondary effluent to onsite percolation ponds thereby replenishing the Antelope Valley groundwater aquifer.

The Water Board revised the permit in 2019, slightly extending the 2015-time schedule for completing plant upgrades by 2021. As part of the upgrade, the District will discharge the treated effluent into three percolation ponds and cease all use of the existing leaking facultative ponds. Photo 8.2 is an aerial photograph showing the upgrade project in process with the older facultative ponds in the background. These upgrades will allow the District to eliminate the source of increased TDS and nitrate concentrations in groundwater. These changes will also allow the District to meet its commitments of the Antelope Valley Groundwater Adjudication Agreement. Construction completion of the improved plant is on schedule for later this year.

The steps taken by the District may be followed by other smaller agencies in the state to return higher quality effluent to groundwater making it available for future use. The biggest challenge for smaller agencies is obtaining funds to improve treatment. Although it may not be financially feasible to construct a wastewater treatment plant satisfying the tertiary recycled water criteria of California Code of Regulations, title 22, the incidental recharge from the Rosamond wastewater treatment plant will provide an overall benefit to the

Antelope Valley groundwater basin users. Additionally, the District avoided costs associated with California Code of Regulations, title 27 requirements and still obtained the benefit of improved effluent quality. The District, at some future date, may still modify the new wastewater treatment plant to produce recycled water if there is a demand for such use.



Photo 8.1 – Title slide for the presentation given by Rosamond CSD and Water Board representatives.

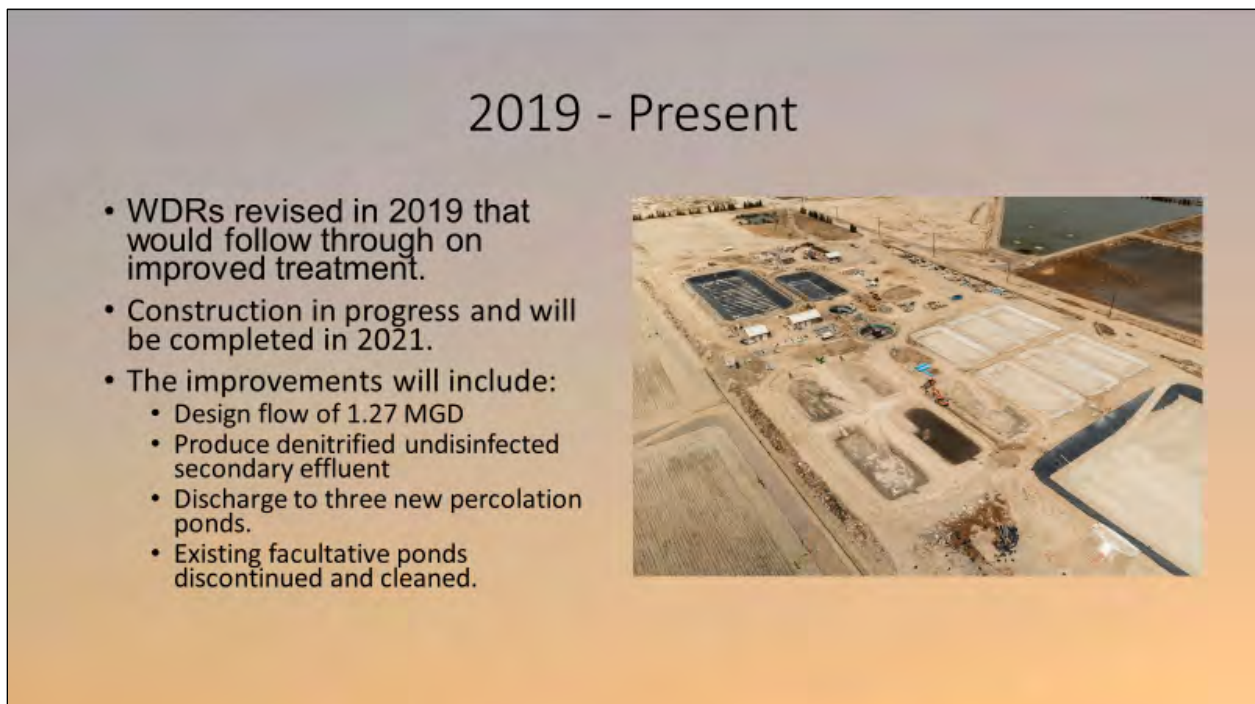


Photo 8.2 – Slide showing the main goals of the recently adopted WDR for the Rosamond wastewater treatment plant.

The question and answer period were open to all participants and covered various topics aimed at small and large agencies. One of the topics was the discussion of the barriers impacting the ability to implement potable reuse projects. Funding has been a major obstacle in implementing potable reuse projects, especially when it comes to small communities. Rosamond faced funding challenges to improve their level of treatment, as discussed above. The public's perception of potable reuse is still an ongoing discussion where agencies have used various techniques to address the topic.

9. Inyo-Mono Regional Water Management Group – *Jeff Fitzsimmons*

Lahontan Water Board staff attended the Inyo-Mono Regional Water Management Group (Inyo-Mono RWMG) stakeholder meeting on May 24, 2021. The meeting was conducted as a web-based meeting in response to COVID-19 mitigation measures and allowed participants to attend by internet or telephone. Attendees of the meetings not only include representatives of the signatory agencies (Signatories¹) to the Inyo-Mono RWMG's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), but also non-Signatory members, members of the public, representatives of California Native American tribes, private organizations, local municipal governments, service districts, state and federal agencies. It should be noted that the largest water manager in the Inyo-Mono region, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), is not a Signatory to the Inyo-Mono RWMG MOU, nor is LADWP an active stakeholder despite Water Board staff's repeated requests for LADWP to participate in the Inyo-Mono RWMG process.

At the meeting, an overview of current Proposition 1 (Round 1) Implementation Grant funded projects and updates on Proposition 1 (Round 1 and Round 2) Implementation Grants were provided. Additionally, updates were provided on the Disadvantaged Communities Involvement Grant and the future funding of the Inyo-Mono RWMG. The Inyo-Mono RWMG has been mainly funded through the Disadvantaged Community Involvement (DACI) Program, a component of the California Department of Water Resources' Integrated Regional Water Management Program. Funding for the DACI program is scheduled to end in December 2021. The Inyo-Mono RWMG has held successful fund-raising efforts and received donations from Signatories to help cover the costs to maintain the group. Funds received by the Signatories and donations received from the public have supplemented the DACI Program funding, but it's just not enough to maintain the costs of the group. With the December 2021 end date of DACI Program funding approaching, the Inyo-Mono RWMG is researching paths forward and potential additional funding sources. Among the paths being considered are instituting membership fees, establishing project-based fees, minimalizing administrative costs, or merging with other groups with similar interests such as the California Department of Conservation, Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program.

To date, successes of the Inyo-Mono RWMG include the completion of thirteen Proposition 84 Implementation grant funded projects, with three Proposition 1 Implementation grant funded projects currently in progress. Since its inception in 2008, the Inyo-Mono RWMG has provided opportunity for Signatories of the Inyo-Mono RWMG's MOU, members of the public, and other regional stakeholders to effectively voice their concerns, have discussions, collaborate thoughts, coordinate their efforts with management for regional water issues, give consideration to social and economic concerns of the area, and is exploring paths forward to continue serving the communities of the Inyo-Mono RWMG.

The next Inyo-Mono RWMG meeting has not been scheduled but is anticipated to occur in July 2021.

¹Note: Signatories to the Inyo-Mono RWMG's MOU include: Amargosa Conservancy, Amargosa Opera House and Hotel, Big Pine Community Services District, Big Pine Paiute Tribe, Bishop Paiute Tribe, Bridgeport Indian Colony, Bridgeport Public Utilities District, California Trout, City of Bishop, Crowley Lake Mutual Water Company, Eastern Kern County Conservancy, Eastern Sierra Audubon Society, Eastern Sierra Community Services District, Eastern Sierra Land Trust, Fort Independence – Amalgamated Reservation, Indian Wells Valley Cooperative Groundwater Management Group, Inyo County, June Lake Public Utilities District, Keeler Community Services District, Lone Pine – Paiute Shoshone Reservation, Lundy Mutual Water Company, Mammoth Community Water District, Mojave Desert Mountain Resource Conservation and Development, Mono County, Mono County Resource Conservation District, Mono Lake Committee, Owens Valley Groundwater Authority, Owens Valley Indian Water Commission, Sierra Club - Toiyabe Chapter - Range of Light Group, Town of Mammoth Lakes, Wheeler Crest Community Services District, and WRAMP Foundation.

10. City of Victorville Staff and Work Release Program Clean up Homeless Camp Debris in the Oro Grande Wash – Tom Browne

On Saturday May 22, 2021 the City of Victorville's departments of code enforcement, environmental programs, and public works arranged for about 20 men from the San Bernardino County's work release program (WRP; convictions requiring community service) to haul tons of trash, abandoned clothing, and eight buried shopping carts out of the Oro Grande Wash (Wash) downstream from the Interstate 15 freeway at the Nisqualli exit (Photo 10.1). This location is one of the most popular spots for Victorville's unhoused population to reside, and code enforcement staff routinely receive complaints regarding this encampment from nearby residents located approximately 1/3 of a mile downstream. Water Board staff Tom Browne, Water Resource Control Engineer, went to observe the efforts.

Code enforcement staff visited all the tenants of the Wash on the Wednesday preceding this operation to inform them that they would have to clear all their belongings by Saturday morning. Only four unrelated adults were displaced before the clean-up crew began their work on the selected day.

In April, well ahead of the planned cleanup day, Jorge Duran, chief of code enforcement, approached Water Board staff and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) staff (Ashley Rosales) with a plan to use manual labor only within the Wash, and roll-off bins, light trucks, and heavy equipment on the banks of the Wash. Normally, Water Board and CDFW staff would require individual permits for disturbance or alteration of the stream bed or bank of a tributary to a water of the U.S. In a Teams meeting, code enforcement staff wearing vest cameras walked the work location to show Water Board and CDFW staff the extent and magnitude of the trash problem in the Wash. Based on the City's details of the proposed clean-up actions, it was determined that no permits from either agency would be required for the May 22 clean-up effort provided that no heavy equipment (or trucks) were allowed into the Wash.

Due to the success of this clean-up, City staff are now requesting permission to clean this location more often, but they want to use a specialized truck (Photo 2) in the Wash. In their

words, “the more frequently the homeless see us, the less they consider this location open for business [implying *residence*].” Coordination with the WRP is time-consuming and costly; John Garcia, environmental programs coordinator for the City, said the prior attempts to coordinate with the WRP broke down due to the cost for workman’s compensation insurance (that the City would have to pay), and that was a deal-breaker.

The specialized truck (Photo 10.2) is new and regularly maintained. Water Board staff observed no dripping oil or hydraulic fluid during this operation. John Garcia stated, “if we were able to drive this machine right up to the piles of trash in the Wash, we could collect what we collected today in one workday, using only City staff.” City personnel said they would forward Water Board staff the final weight of trash collected from the May 22 operation. Water board staff intend to coordinate with CDFW staff regarding the City’s request to police this area more regularly and in a more cost-effective fashion.



Photo 10.1 – WRP personnel collecting debris from abandoned homeless camps in the Oro Grande Wash.



Photo 10.2 – Clam-shell crane scooping up debris found in Oro Grande Wash and placing debris new city-owned truck to haul offsite for disposal.