

## IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM UPDATE REPORT MARCH 2010

This month's Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) monthly report will provide an update on activities of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) ILRP, as reported in the Central Valley Water Board's March 18, 2010 Executive Officer's report. English and Spanish translations of current and past ILRP program monthly reports can be found on the State Water Boards Irrigated Agricultural Waiver Program website: [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/agriculture/](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/agriculture/)

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### CENTRAL VALLEY WATER BOARD IRRIGATED LANDS REGULATORY PROGRAM

#### **Long-term Program / Environmental Impact Report (EIR)**

Central Valley Water Board staff has invited stakeholders to form small workgroups as part of the stakeholder participation process for the long-term program. The goal for the small workgroups is to provide staff input in developing the EIR, economics analysis, and staff recommendation for the long-term program. Four small workgroups were established during January and February 2010. The workgroups represented include environmental and environmental justice, agricultural industry and coalition groups, State agencies, and organic farmers. Upon formation of each workgroup, staff circulated a draft economics analysis plan and EIR assumptions.

On 27 January and 2 February 2010 staff met with the environmental/environmental justice and agricultural small workgroups, respectively. At these meetings the small workgroups discussed the draft economics plan and EIR assumptions.

On 18 February staff held a long-term program general stakeholder meeting to present ILRP process updates and to review and discuss the proposed procedures and major assumptions for developing the economics analysis and EIR.

#### **Compliance Outreach – Postcards**

In January 2010, Central Valley Water Board staff issued 103 outreach postcards to potential owners of irrigated lands in Colusa County, which is within the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition area. The postcard recipients were identified using county tax assessor rolls, and state and federal agricultural land use databases. The postcards advise qualifying owners of irrigated lands to obtain the proper regulatory coverage.

#### **Compliance Outreach - Exemption Claim Inspections**

In January and February 2010, Central Valley Water Board staff completed eight inspections to verify landowner claims of exemptions to the ILRP. Landowners can respond to ILRP staff's postcards or 13267 Orders by claiming their land is not used for agriculture, not irrigated, or that

it has no irrigation tail water or storm water runoff. These claims create a need for verification inspections, which staff regularly conducts.

### **Enforcement**

#### **California Water Code section 13267 Orders**

In February 2010, the Executive Officer issued 166 CWC §13267 Orders to potential owners of irrigated lands in the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition area. These Orders were issued to landowners in Placer County who first received an outreach postcard on either 30 October or 11 November 2009 and subsequently did not respond.

In February 2010, 34 NOVs were mailed for failure to submit a technical report under CWC §13267. The NOVs were mailed to landowners in El Dorado and Sacramento Counties.

#### **Unauthorized Discharges and Complaints**

Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program staff responded to a fish kill on the Blakeley Canal in Kings County on 16 February 2010. Staff collected samples to be analyzed for toxicity and pesticides.

#### **Coalition Groups**

On 26 January, staff sent a letter reminding the Coalitions that analysis of sediment toxicity must be performed by a laboratory that has NELAP accreditation or appropriate certification. Using a laboratory with the appropriate accreditation/certification for the analysis being conducted is a general requirement in the Coalition Group MRP Order. Currently, some Coalitions may not be using a NELAP accredited laboratory for sediment testing. Staff requested that the Coalitions submit a letter by 15 February 2010, describing their plans to ensure the results are from a laboratory that will have the necessary accreditation. Staff will work with the Coalitions to address any difficulties encountered in meeting this requirement.

#### **California Rice Commission (CRC)**

A multi-year Monitoring and Reporting Program (MRP) is being reviewed by management. The MRP will be in effect until 31 December 2012. The CRC 2009 Annual Monitoring Report and the draft Propanil Management Plan are being reviewed by staff.

On 19 January 2010 a draft resolution for the Rice Pesticides Program (which primarily addresses Thiobencarb) was sent by email to the CRC and stakeholders for review and comment. On 9 February 2010 Central Valley Water Board staff met with the CRC and interested water utilities to discuss the comments received. The resolution was revised based on comments from the CRC and the water utilities and received their concurrence, as well as concurrence from the Department of Pesticide Regulation.

#### **East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition (ESJWQC)**

On 10 February 2010, staff held the sixth quarterly meeting with the ESJWQC to discuss progress of implementing the Coalition's Management Plan. The ESJWQC indicated that they are meeting performance goals and time frames for the high priority areas as per agreement and description in the 16 December 2009 Staff letter sent to the ESJWQC. TMDL requirements and Staff expectations will be discussed in a meeting at the Regional Board office on 3 March 2010. The ESJWQC has invested resources in an audience response technology that allows growers to use response pads during meetings to provide instant responses to the ESJWQC inquiries on monitoring results as well as management plan implementation. The information provided by growers is recorded in a computer and analyzed by the ESJWQC. The ESJWQC is expecting that incorporation of the audience response technology will improve the process for following up with growers on management practices implementation in the high priority areas.

On 19 February 2010, the ESJWQC held a follow-up Management Plan meeting with growers from the Duck Slough/Mariposa Creek sub-watershed. Duck Slough at Gurr Rd. is one of the first three high priority areas where the management plan focused-approach strategy was implemented. Meeting results will be provided in the 1 April 2010 Annual Management Plan Update Report, including a summary of the management practices that growers were encouraged to implement and the actual management practices implemented. The ESJWQC used the audience response technology for this meeting. The ESJWQC has scheduled a follow-up meeting on 26 February 2010 in Modesto for the Dry Creek at Wellsford sub-watershed.

### **Goose Lake Coalition**

On 26 January 2010, Goose Lake Coalition held a quarterly sub-coalition meeting in New Pine Creek. Central Valley Water Board staff was unable to attend the meeting due to a combination of poor road conditions and scheduling conflicts. The meeting was well attended by coalition members. One of the primary agenda items was the upcoming Management Plan for *E. coli*. Completion of the draft Management Plan for review by Irrigated Lands Program management staff is expected by the end of February 2010.

### **Pleasant Valley Coalition**

Westlands Storm water Coalition and Pleasant Valley Coalition have approved an MOU that allows Pleasant Valley growers into Westlands Coalition. The Pleasant Valley Coalition is currently gathering landowner agreements from its members who wish to join Westlands. Once Pleasant Valley growers have signed and submitted the agreements, regulatory coverage for Pleasant Valley Coalition will be terminated.

### **Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition (SVWQC)**

The SVWQC MRP Order No. R5-2009-0875 was approved by the Executive Officer on 21 December 2009. Implementation began on 1 January 2010. The full MRP Order is available on the Central Valley Water Board website. Follow the links to the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program and Monitoring Activity.

On 19 January 2010, staff met with representatives of the Fish Friendly Certification Program (FFCP) and the El Dorado Subwatershed Group to discuss how requirements of the ILRP and the FFCP might be met through coordinated efforts. The two groups plan to coordinate further as details of the FFCP are developed for El Dorado County.

On 22 January, staff received the draft Pilot Watershed Management Practices Plan Proposal from the El Dorado Subwatershed Group. Staff conducted a detailed review of the proposal and provided comments to the Coalition and Subwatershed representatives on 8 February. The revised proposal is due on 1 March 2010.

On 27 January, staff attended the Sacramento-Amador Water Quality Alliance Annual Growers' Meeting. Agenda items included an overview of the Coalition's structure, Long-term Irrigated Lands Program update, water quality monitoring results summary, Management Plan requirements, and Best Management Practices information.

On 10 February 2010, staff attended the Placer-Nevada-South Sutter-North Sacramento (PNSSNS) Subwatershed's Annual Grower's Meeting. Agenda items included financial report, Best Management Practices, update on the ILRP's enforcement activities and the Long-term Program, 2009 water quality monitoring results, and a Proposed Low Impact Monitoring Plan from the subwatershed group's representatives.

On 22 February 2010, staff received the Pilot Watershed Management Practices Plan Proposal from the Napa County Putah Creek Watershed Group. The proposal is the first of two requirements that must be approved by the Executive Officer before the Pilot Plan can begin in the subwatershed's area. This proposal incorporates changes requested by staff after review of the first draft. Staff will conduct a second review of the proposal to verify that requirements of the Pilot Plan are met, as defined in the SVWQC MRP Order, and prepare a response letter.

#### **San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition (SJCDWQC)**

On 10 February 2010, staff held the sixth quarterly meeting with the San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition (Coalition) to discuss progress of implementing the Coalition's Management Plan. The Coalition indicated that obtaining Pesticide Use Reports from San Joaquin County in a timely manner is getting more difficult due to budget cuts. The Coalition's annual monitoring report is due 1 March 2010.

#### **Southern San Joaquin Valley Water Quality Coalition (SSJVWQC)**

Staff prepared a draft conditional approval of the Southern San Joaquin Valley Water Quality Coalition's revised Monitoring and Reporting Program Plan. The draft is currently being reviewed by the Coalition.

#### **Westlands Coalition**

Westlands Storm Water Coalition reported that a recent series of storms provided enough precipitation to create flow in each of the Coalition's three monitored ephemeral streams. Westlands responded quickly to the detections of flow and collected samples.

#### **Data Management**

The ILRP Participant Monitoring Data web site currently has data available through the end of 2009 for six out of seven Coalitions and the CRC who have submitted quarterly or annual monitoring reports through 31 December 2009. All reports received through this time frame that arrived in an electronic SWAMP comparable format are currently being loaded into the ILRP SWAMP comparable master database. These reports and future data sets will eventually be sent to the UC Davis Data Center to be uploaded onto the California Environmental Data Exchange Network. The next updates to the ILRP web site are scheduled to occur in spring and early summer and will add the remaining Coalition data submitted on 31 Dec 2009. Irrigation District annual reports and Coalition quarterly data submissions are due on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010.

With the assistance of the San Joaquin Watershed SWAMP unit, staff has begun a project to create a consolidated ILRP data warehouse. This data warehouse will allow for the older formatted data to be combined with the newer SWAMP formatted data being received. This warehouse will allow rapid and large scale data analysis to be performed for the program on a time line is much shorter than waiting for all the historical data to be SWAMP formatted. Staff has also met with the State Water Board Office of Information and Management and Analysis to discuss the possibility of developing a query reporting tool that will analyze the ILRP data within the new warehouse. OIMA has asked staff to provide examples of the types of outputs the assessment data base needs to perform. Staff will be holding follow up meetings with OIMA in the near future.

#### **MOU Pilot Program**

Contract requests to amend and extend the contracts with Butte and Glenn Counties have been submitted. The request will extend the contracts to 31 March 2011. The Quarterly Report for October-December 2009 has been submitted for review to the Chair of the State Water Board and posted on the ILRP website.