

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARD

October 2025

EMPLOYEE: Jeff Tierney

UNIT: Federal and Private Sites Cleanup

TITLE: Water Resource Control Engineer

SUPERVISOR/TITLE: Nathan Casebeer, Senior Engineering Geologist

Jeff Tierney, a Water Resource Control Engineer in the Federal and Private Sites Cleanup Unit, is being recognized today for his initiative, leadership, and dedication to digitizing our office's microfilm files into searchable PDF files.

Around the early 1990's, our office transferred many of its paper files to microfilm, discarding the paper versions in the process. Approximately two million document pages were shrunk down to fit on tens of thousands of microfiche cards residing in one file cabinet. Until recently, the only way to locate a document within this collection was to manually search through 5 physical binders of index pages, find the numbered microfiche jackets, and then visually search through the magnified microfiche pages on a backlit projector, with no way to make a copy once a document was located.

After personally experiencing the difficulty of locating a specific document dating to the 1950's for a PRA request, Jeff set out to find a better way, exploring the possibilities of digitization services or purchasing equipment. Working with Administrative and IT staff, a microfilm scanner was found sitting idle in the San Diego Regional Board office. As found, the film scanner would not be able to effectively digitize our microfiche inventory in any reasonable timeframe or hours of staff labor. However, Jeff researched further, finding that the microfiche sheets had corresponding film rolls sitting in a State archive vault and that the scanner could be cost-effectively upgraded with software and hardware additions to more quickly scan the film on the rolls. Even with the equipment upgrades, obtaining the film roll versions of the microfiche sheets, help from Scientific Aids and many others, the process began at the start of 2025 took many months. Jeff personally spent many of his workdays in the file review room switching out film rolls while working on his day-to-day project work. With the impending office construction that would shut down this work, Jeff pushed to expedite the effort and managed to complete the scanning of the entire inventory in June 2025.

Now, thanks to Jeff's vision and hard work, documents that were historically difficult to access can be located in the searchable PDF versions of the index and microfilm files from the comfort of your office computer network connection. Already this work has resulted in faster responses to specific PRA requests, identifying potential sources of emerging contaminants of concern, improving site conceptual model understanding at older cleanup sites and identifying sites that

had been forgotten about and still needing attention that were apparently lost in the transition. The benefits of this work to our organization will undoubtedly continue to unfold with time. For all this, Jeff is well deserving of this employee recognition award.