EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARD

November 2026

EMPLOYEE: Laura Surges
UNIT: Industrial Stormwater Compliance and Enforcement
TITLE: Environmental Scientist
SUPERVISOR/TITLE: Lowell Cottle Senior Environmental Scientist Stormwater/Cannabis Compliance and Enforcement

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Laura quickly became an invaluable addition to our unit after joining in July 2024. She brought a strong, practical foundation from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), where she served for four seasons as a Scientific Aid and Fish and Wildlife Technician—alongside a year of specialized experience at the State Water Board's SMARTS help desk. Her deep familiarity with the SMARTS database, permit analysis, and monitoring data allowed her to hit the ground running, assisting dischargers and staff alike with exceptional technical insight.

Since joining the team, Laura has continuously expanded her expertise in the Industrial Stormwater program. She stands out for her ability to take on complex, high-stakes cases and drive them through to resolution. Notably, Laura played a critical role in compiling and synthesizing key data for multi-unit cross-program cases, including some high-profile facilities. She has also stepped up to take a leading role in a complex, ongoing IGP formal enforcement case.

Laura's technical report writing is exceptional, distinguished by a level of detail, clarity, and precision that consistently elevates the quality of our unit's work products. The Stormwater unit continues to carry a heavy workload, and she remains a dependable asset both in the field during inspections and in the office. Laura's unwavering reliability, meticulous attention to detail, and proactive willingness to take on added responsibilities make her an indispensable member of our Stormwater team.