

California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
San Francisco Bay Region  
**EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT**

A Monthly Report to the Board and Public

**July 2011**

The next regular scheduled Board meeting is July 13, 2011.

See <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/> for latest details and agenda

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**Invasive Seaweed Removed from Marinas (Barbara Baginska)**

*Undaria pinnatifida* is brown seaweed native to Asia that poses a threat to San Francisco Bay and coastal waters in our Region. This seaweed, also known as wakame – an essential ingredient in miso soup, is a fast-growing opportunistic species that thrives in cold temperate coastal areas and can quickly carpet the seafloor and smother native species in sheltered areas. It may have been introduced to the Bay from recreational boat hulls traveling from Southern California and Monterey Harbor, where it has already laid claim.

2009 sightings of *Undaria* in two San Francisco marinas and the docks at Pillar Point Harbor (Half Moon Bay) triggered a response action plan led by the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC) and a group of resource agencies. We supported this effort using funds from the Water Boards' Cleanup and Abatement Account. Unfortunately, no separate funding exists to support early detection and rapid response activities to address new exotic species invasions. Funds provided by the Water Boards were used to support removal, a more comprehensive survey of waterfront sites, and outreach efforts to recreational boaters, marina employees and harbor masters regarding proper handling and reporting of *Undaria*.

Initial removal actions conducted at Pillar Point Harbor, San Francisco Marina, and South Beach Harbor were staffed by agency personnel, volunteer boaters, kayakers, students, and members of environmental groups. The waterfront survey identified an additional 10 out of 60 sites with *Undaria*. Over the course of the project, nearly 6,000 individual plants, or 440 kg of *Undaria*, were removed. At one location in the Bay, South

Beach Harbor, *Undaria* is proving to be particularly difficult to control. Conditions appear to favor the establishment of *Undaria*, and complete eradication may not be possible. SERC plans on continuing abatement efforts by relying on volunteer resources through the end of the summer. We are in the process of evaluating long term risks, alternative control measures, and funding options.

The upcoming America's Cup will bring many recreational boats into the Bay, and our hope is that continued eradication efforts combined with outreach will lessen the risk of *Undaria* spreading. The San Francisco Estuary Partnership is developing recreational boat hull cleaning recommendations for boats coming to view the America's Cup. We will keep you posted on this and other related efforts.



Figure 1. *Undaria* attached to recreational boat



Figure 2. *Mature Undaria*

### **Cleanup Order for Five Star Cleaners** (Barbara Sieminski)

I administratively issued a Site Cleanup Requirements Order (Order) to a dry cleaning business in San Pablo. Up until 2009 various dry cleaning businesses operating at this site used chlorinated solvents. Leaks and spills from their dry cleaning operations have contaminated soil, soil gas, and groundwater. In addition, contaminated groundwater has migrated beneath an adjacent apartment building, causing human health concerns due to the potential for vapors to migrate to indoor air.

The current landowner, RMB Management Co., conducted a site investigation and prepared a cleanup plan. Lacking sufficient funds to complete the cleanup, RMB requested that the Board name additional dischargers. Board staff successfully worked with former operators and other interested parties to resolve discharger naming and site cleanup issues. I issued the Order administratively so that the dischargers could move forward with implementation as quickly as possible. The Order names RMB and three

former dry cleaner operators as dischargers. It requires the dischargers to complete the site investigation, sets cleanup standards, approves RMB's proposed cleanup plan, and sets a schedule for implementation. A system to cleanup the site and mitigate vapor intrusion is scheduled to begin operation by December 2011.

### **Skaggs Island Transfer Ceremony (Agnes Farres)**

On June 28, I attended a ceremony with Board staff Terry Seward and Agnes Farres to celebrate the "clean transfer" of 3,310 acres of Skaggs Island to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for inclusion in the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Other attendees included Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey, Board member Steve Moore, and representatives from the Navy, USFWS, and the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture.

In October 2001, the Water Board required Caltrans to contribute \$8 million to cleanup and restore Skaggs Island to partially mitigate for the Bay Bridge East Span Seismic Safety Project's impacts to wetlands, eel-grass beds, and other waters. Since then, the Board and the Department of Toxic Substances Control have overseen cleanup of contamination at Skaggs Island such that, in November 2010, the Navy was able to finalize a No Further Action Record of Decision (ROD).

Skaggs Island is an historic tidal marsh that was diked for farming over 100 years ago and became a Navy communication center during World War II, operating until 1993. It provides habitat for over 20 threatened and endangered species and is critical for migratory birds traveling along the Pacific flyway. USFWS will conduct wetland restoration activities under a future Water Board permit.



Figure 1. *Representatives from USFWS and the Navy raise the USFWS Blue Goose flag at the end of the transfer ceremony.*



Figure 2. *Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey was honored for her vital support during the ceremony.*

### **In-house Training**

We had no in-house training in June and we have none scheduled for July or August; training will resume in September.

### **Staff Presentations**

On May 6, Anne Riley conducted a field tour and stream restoration and protection workshop for the East Bay State University Department of Geography/Environmental Studies class with Professor Dr. David Larson. This class session was conducted on the banks of Codornices Creek, in west Albany-Berkeley, and addressed contemporary issues in water quality, fish habitat needs, stormwater management, and flooding problems in urban settings. Recent creek restoration projects provided an ideal setting for the class presentation and discussion.

On June 16, a joint meeting sponsored by the Bay Area Floodplain Management Agencies Association (BAFPAA) and Bay Area Watershed Network (BAWN) was held here in the State Building. Over 100 people attended, representing flood management districts, State and local agencies, watershed groups, and consultants, to discuss developing multi-objective flood management and restoration projects, particularly targeted toward future Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) funding. Topics included: how to bridge the communication gap and develop a common understanding between the languages of "agencese" and "NGOsian"; the ins and outs of funding; and examples of integrated flood control projects around the Region.

Board staff Dale Hopkins and Anne Riley spoke about their experiences working with the many watershed groups in the Bay Area and on lessons learned from past projects. Participants broke up into smaller, facilitated groups to discuss issues and priorities at the sub-regional level (North, East, South, and West Bay Area counties) and implementing sub-regional approaches to collaborative project development and funding. The meeting was lively and interactive, and, overall, there was very positive feedback from the attendees, including the Bay Area's Regional Coordinator from the Department of Water Resources.

We are excited to be fostering collaboration between the natural allies of flood management agencies and the watershed community, as we move forward into a new era of multi-objective projects around the Region. The agenda and presentations from the meeting are available on the Bay Area IRWMP website at <http://bairwmp.org/ba-irwmp-fp-wr-joint-workshop-june-16-2011/>

On June 29, I was one of the opening speakers at a Regional Monitoring Program-sponsored workshop on Nutrient Science and Management in the SF Estuary and Delta. The goal of the workshop was to raise awareness among stakeholders on nutrient issues in the Bay; to obtain input on the relative priority of information needs related to management of nutrients; and to enhance coordination among programs that will be needed to address nutrient issues. My opening statements focused on the history of nutrient issues in the Bay and the need to broaden our understanding of nutrient dynamics, in order to answer emerging questions regarding the health of the Estuary. As a follow up to this workshop, Naomi Feger and Karen Taberski are working with key workshop participants to develop a nutrient monitoring and assessment framework.