

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

**REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION**

MEETING DATE: December 16, 2015

ITEM: **8**

SUBJECT: **CORRESPONDENCE**

From: Tryon, Thea@Waterboards
Sent: Thursday, October 15, 2015 9:05 AM
To: Seward, Terry@Waterboards; Whyte, Dyan@Waterboards; Wolfe, Bruce@Waterboards
Cc: Elias, David@Waterboards; Harris, Ken@Waterboards
Subject: Note of Thanks

Good Morning,

I am the Site Cleanup Program manager at the Central Coast Water Board and I just wanted to send you a note to acknowledge David Elias. Back in May, we had a terrible oil spill near Refugio Beach which resulted in a large oil release into the Pacific Ocean. This oil spill resulted in a multiple agency emergency response that was handled under the Unified Command System. I knew that R2 had the Cosco Buscan spill and I contacted David to find out if he had any advice for me. David went above and beyond what was expected and gave me advice that was invaluable. He gave me his personal cell phone number and called me in the evening to tell me some of the procedures that I needed to be aware of. This helped me tremendously and resulted in a better outcome for our region as I became immediately involved with the Environmental Unit to establish endpoints. David helped me with the terminology, process, and explained some of the politics which is not written anywhere but a real obstacle sometimes. So, big thank you to David and I wanted to send you a note so that you know how much I appreciate your staff!

Thea Tryon, P.G.
Senior Engineering Geologist
Central Coast Water Board
Site Cleanup Program Manager and
Enforcement Coordinator
895 Aerovista Place, Suite 101
San Luis Obispo, CA
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Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition

Advocates for living streams

Member Organizations

Friends of Coyote Creek

Western Waters Canoe Club

Environmentalists for Living Streams

Northern California Council Federation of Fly Fishers

November 4, 2015

Dr. Terry Young, Chair
Members of the Board
RWQCB
By email

RE: The Trouble with Trash

Dear Ms. Young and members of the Board,

I am writing primarily about the good news – the good news about what a well coordinated volunteer recruitment effort can accomplish with respect to cleaning up our creeks.

Our hope is that you will at least consider this information in the development of programs to address the creekside trash pollution that pervades the creeks of San Jose.

The Good News

The good news is that we removed 82,000 pounds of trash from the banks and bed of a 2 mile reach of Coyote Creek with the help of 1300 volunteers in monthly cleanups between Aug 2014 and Sept 2015. This is a HUGE amount of trash for such a short creek reach.

More good news is that our efforts were integrated in to the City-Water District program for homeless encampment dismantlement and that support for the volunteer efforts were provided by the City and Water District. The City provided gloves, bags and trash sticks; both the City and Water District provided trash disposal; the City provided Park Rangers on the day of the cleanups to assure no contact of volunteers with the homeless. The Environmental Services Division provide independent estimates of the trash remaining on the creek once quarter during the life of the project. This was an excellent example of inter-agency and public-private collaboration!

The Bad News

The bad news is that while we were removing 82,000 pounds of trash, the homeless generated 70,000 pounds of trash such that we only reduced the amount of trash on the creek from 35,000 pounds to 25,000 pounds. The volunteers proved they can do a yeoman's job, but volunteer efforts need to be complemented by a program focused on creating a trash free creek.

The bad news is that despite a massive, relentless and expensive eviction effort, the number of homeless tents only dropped from 57 in Jan 2015 to 55 in September 2015 in this reach of the creek. This is because the evictions just cause the homeless to move up and down the creek. This level of impact does not constitute a significant reduction in the rate of trash generation on the creek.

The reason for the limited success of the trash removal operation is that 7 out of 10 homeless encampment dismantlements remove the encampments but leave most of the trash.

Here is picture of a typical trash pile AFTER a homeless encampment dismantlement:



The Housing Department's Homeless Encampment Dismantlement Program is not reducing the overall rate of trash generation and Environmental Services is not picking up the trash after the dismantlements unless there are volunteers available.

Something needs to change.

The reason for this situation is a structural problem with the program itself. The goal of the Homeless Encampment Dismantlement Program is not to remove the trash, nor to provide housing for the homeless so as to get them off of the creek. Instead, the goal of the program is to prevent homeless encampment entrenchment – i.e. prevent that from staying in one place too long and encouraging growth in homeless encampment numbers. This is a reasonable goal for the Housing Department that is the lead for the program because they are focused on responding to complaints about homeless occupancy. However, this is not an appropriate environmental goal for Environmental Services Division nor should it be acceptable to the Regional Board who is responsible for preventing waste discharge to the creeks.

What is needed is to modify the program to include a pollution management goal. This would mean that whenever there was no volunteer support for trash cleanup during a dismantlement, that the City-

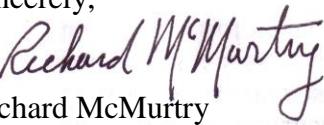
Water District would use contractors to pick up the trash. This would cost an estimated \$120,000 per year compared to the \$1 million being spent on homeless encampment dismantlement. So failure to pick up the trash is not a financial constraint; it's a prioritization problem and a balance problem.

It has been inspiring to see the enthusiasm of volunteers in cleaning up our creeks. It has been very discouraging to see the fruits of our efforts undermined by the lack of a effective trash focus on the part of the City-Water District homeless encampment dismantlement program.

The most significant action that the Regional Board can take at this time is to require surveys of homeless occupation and trash along the creeks every 6 months. In this manner, you will get an objective measure of the effectiveness of the trash removal programs. Without such requirements, you are likely to get tabulations of the amount of trash removed which doesn't address the amount left behind or being generated.

Thank you for any attention you give to this information!

Sincerely,


Richard McMurtry

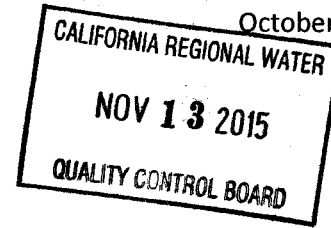


**ALAMEDA COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**
... Making Conservation Happen in Alameda County

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LIVERMORE, CA 94550

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October 19, 2015



SF Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board
ATTN: Dr. Terry Young
1515 Clay Street, Suite 1400
Oakland, CA 94612

Re: Order No. R2-2015-0020, Projects under the Voluntary Habitat Restoration Program Administered by Alameda County Resource Conservation District, Alameda County

Dear Dr. Young,

The Alameda County Conservation Partnership (Alameda County Resource Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service) would like to extend our appreciation to the Board and staff for your support and work on development and adoption of Order No. R2-2015-0020. This order, created specifically for voluntary restoration projects in Alameda County is a programmatic, forward-thinking approach to permitting, allowing ranchers and land managers that implement projects under our programs to meet Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) in a thorough, yet timely manner.

In particular, we would like to thank you, Bruce Wolfe, and Dyan White for taking the time to listen to our permitting challenges regarding projects needing to meet WDRs that fall under the Clean Water Act 404 (f) exemption and for coming up with a solution that is practical and efficient.

Further, we would especially like to express our gratitude to Elizabeth Morrison of your staff for her work on developing this Order. Liz's approach and collaboration made the process straightforward and easy. Our staff found it a pleasure to work with Liz and look forward to working with her in the future. Once the order was adopted, six Notice of Intents (NOIs) for voluntary restoration projects were immediately submitted for coverage under the Order. Liz processed these NOI's instantly, allowing for implementation of these projects this year.

This collaboration has helped ease the process for ranchers and land managers in Alameda County to implement voluntary restoration projects. We thank you for your efforts in helping to make this happen and look forward to continuing to work with you to improve the natural resources in Alameda County.

Sincerely,

Becky Dennis
President, Board of Directors
Alameda County Resource Conservation District

Alyson Aquino
District Conservationist
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Cc: Elizabeth Morrison