

State Water Resources Control Board

3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

(June 19, 2007)

Division of Water Quality

Uniform Site Assessment Tools – Regional Board Training

Webcast training is scheduled on June 27 for Regional Water Board cleanup programs' staff regarding implementation of the draft Uniform Site Assessment Tools. Water Board and Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) staff jointly developed the Tools as part of the implementation of the 2005 Brownfields Memorandum of Agreement for both agencies to use in assessing environmental and health related issues at Brownfield sites. The Tools are a compilation of existing published reference materials on site investigation and are intended to standardize requirements across the Cal/EPA organizations.

Groundwater Ambient Monitoring and Assessment (GAMA) Program

GAMA recently held two successful "sampling wrap-up" meetings. The first meeting was June 6 in Fresno for the Central Sierra study unit which encompasses the Upper Fresno River watershed and the upper north fork of the San Joaquin River which is outside DWR-defined groundwater basins. Fresno's KFSN ABC television affiliate aired a piece on the study results. The second wrap-up meeting was June 12 in Tehachapi for the Southern Sierra study unit that includes the Tehachapi, Cummings and Kern River Valleys. The weekly Tehachapi News will publish an article this week.

The next public meeting for GAMA is June 20 in South Lake Tahoe for the Tahoe/Martis study unit that includes the groundwater basins of Tahoe Valley and Martis Valley (Truckee) and adjacent areas outside of groundwater basins.

Understanding Algal Blooms Training

On June 13 and 14, 2007, State Water Board staff, in conjunction with the Water Board's Training Academy, coordinated a two-day training class about algal blooms at U.C. Santa Cruz. In attendance were representatives from local health departments, state health departments, and other agencies. This training class introduced the general topic of algal blooms, how they occur in nature, how different kinds of blooms generally function, how the blooms may be affected by human activities, how researchers and regulators monitor blooms and/or the toxins they produce, and how algal blooms can affect water quality concerns, including impairments and impacts to beneficial uses. This was a "hands-on" training with field trips to see visible algal blooms first hand, viewing various algae under microscopes and demonstrations of various "rapid indicator" tests for detection of several toxins.

Blue Green Algae Guidance

Earlier this month, the Blue Green Algae Work Group of the State Water Board and the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment posted a guidance document on the Water Board's web site for providing voluntary guidance about harmful algal blooms, their monitoring and public notification procedures. The purpose of the document (Cyanobacteria in California Recreational Water Bodies) is to provide guidance to local, state, and tribal regulators to protect people, pets, and livestock from the effects on toxic cyanobacteria in non-marine waters. The guidance document was prepared with the input of a diverse stakeholder group that included counties, tribal representatives and others.

Low Impact Development Training

Division of Water Quality staff, in conjunction with the Training Academy, held the first of three Low Impact Development (LID) training sessions for Water Board staff and members of the development community on June 13-15, 2007 in Sacramento. LID is a general term used to describe a comprehensive array of site planning and design techniques that, when combined, create a more economically sustainable and ecologically functional urban landscape. The training offers an in-depth look at the ecological goals, planning techniques, design principles, analytical methodologies, implementation strategies and monitoring results of LID. The training taught the concepts of LID through interactive discussions, lectures, a field trip, short design exercises, and case studies.

Future sessions are scheduled for June 27–29, 2007 in Marina Del Rey and July 18–20, 2007 in Rohnert Park.

SWAMP Statewide Bioaccumulation Monitoring Program

The Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP) has begun implementation of a statewide bioaccumulation monitoring program involving human health risk assessment from eating fish. The goal of the study is to assess fish tissue contamination in lakes and reservoirs throughout the state. A recent review of bioaccumulation studies performed over the last 30 years revealed a serious lack of tissue data for most lakes and reservoirs. The study will address beneficial uses associated with aquatic life and human health. The initial implementation will focus primarily on human health. This screening-level survey is being coordinated with the state's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment.

Public Workshop on Suction Dredge Mining

The workshop on potential water quality impacts associated with suction dredge mining was held on June 12th. The workshop was attended by approximately 60 individuals. Several individuals stated that suction dredge mining has negative impacts on water quality because of sediment and mercury impacts. Several others stated that the impacts were negligible. The formal comment

period closes on June 22nd. After that time, staff will prepare a summary of comments for Board members.

Public Scoping Meeting on Amendments to the California Ocean Plan

On June 26, 2007, Division staff will be conducting a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) scoping meeting to seek input on proposed amendments to the California Ocean Plan. The proposed amendments include revisions to the ocean discharge monitoring requirements; control of commercial vessel discharges; desalination facilities and brine disposal; regulation of suspended solids; and plastic debris regulation. The issues that are being addressed were identified as high priority issues in the "California Ocean Plan Triennial Review and Work-plan 2005-2008" that was adopted by the State Water Board in Resolution No. 2005-0080. The scoping meeting will take place in the offices of the Port of San Francisco, located at Pier 1 San Francisco.

Office of Research, Planning and Performance

The Water Boards' strategic plan update regional outreach sessions concluded on June 13th with the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Board session. All of the regional sessions have attracted good attendance and participation, generated helpful input, and they have been very well received by the participants.

The next steps are to analyze and summarize the input received, and to conduct additional outreach to confirm and augment the input obtained during the two statewide summit meetings and the Regional Board outreach meetings. State and Regional Water Board Members and staff made significant contributions to the planning and execution of the stakeholder sessions.

Division of Administrative Services

State Budget Update:

Both houses of the Legislature have finished their budget hearings and the majority of the Water Boards' budget has been closed out. The Budget Conference Committee has been meeting and the following actions have been adopted in Conference:

- 2.0 PY and funding were approved for the North Coast Regional Water Board TMDL Program.
- \$7.5 million in funds from the Environmental Protection Trust Fund (EPTF) for the Above Ground Storage Tank Program was approved. This is the money to transfer the Above Ground Tank program (AB 1130) to the Certified Unified Program Agencies.

- Language related to future California Integrated Water Quality System (CIWQS) expenditures and language to extend the sunset date for the Petroleum Underground Storage Tank Program (funding for Orphan Sites) for an additional two years was approved.
- The Proposition 84 Budget Change Proposal (BCP) for Basin Planning was approved as the Senate recommended; this included 10.9 Personnel Years (PY) and \$4 million in reimbursement authority for the Water Boards (the Department of Water Resources will receive the Proposition 84 funds and the State Water Board will then enter into an interagency agreement with them for receipt of these funds).

Based on the Conference Committee items described above, the Water Boards' only open budget item at this time is the Proposition 84 Bond BCP. This open item remains in conference.

All of the Water Boards' other budget items were approved as budgeted, with the exception of our National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) BCP, which both houses approved 100 percent (\$4 million) from the Waste Discharge Permit Fund.

Division of Financial Assistance (DFA)

Division of Financial Assistance to hold PAEP Training

On June 21, DFA staff, in conjunction with the Water Board Training Academy and Dr. Rainer Hoenicke of the San Francisco Estuary Institute, will conduct a Project Assessment and Evaluation Plan (PAEP) training class in Santa Rosa. The purpose of the training is to provide grantees and grant managers with the necessary tools to:

- Develop effective performance plans, which produce site-specific and cumulative project outcomes;
- Utilize performance plans during project implementation and reporting; and,
- Identify the most up-to-date data formatting and reporting guidance.

As part of the training, two grantees will share their experiences with implementing performance plans for grant-funded projects. Additional training sessions will be held in San Luis Obispo on July 10 and in Riverside on July 12.

Beach Water Quality Workgroup

On May 17 and 23, DFA staff participated in the northern and southern Beach Water Quality Workgroup meetings. The Beach Water Quality Workgroup (a coalition of federal, state and local governmental agencies, environmental advocacy groups, environmental consultants, and scientific researchers) is a

driving force for the improvement of health protection at California's public beaches. The workgroup is coordinating the development of research tools and consistent monitoring & reporting protocols throughout California.

Clean Beaches Initiative Grant Program

State Water Board DFA staff, along with members of the Clean Beaches Task Force (a group representing the breadth and diversity of California's coastal communities) and Regional Board staff, conducted a number of outreach meetings and site visits to assist applicants with their Proposition 50 Clean Beaches Initiative project applications.

The meetings included:

- A June 6 meeting and boat tour with Heal the Ocean, a nonprofit organization. Heal the Ocean is proposing to conduct a research project at the Montecito Sanitary District wastewater outfall that will provide a new methodology for sewage plume studies at shallow outfalls, as well as make recommendations for similar plume studies that may be considered for other shallow California sewer outfalls in areas where impaired beaches are near the outfall.
- A June 7 meeting with grant staff of the Central Coast Regional Water Board. There are a total of 21 Clean Beaches Projects in Region 3, totaling \$16.1 million. Of these, six are completed and closed out, seven are in progress, and 8 are in the process of preparing detailed applications for Proposition 50 funds.
- A June 8 meeting and tour of potential contamination sources in the watershed with the City of Pismo Beach and their researcher. The City is preparing to conduct a source identification project at Pismo Beach.

NOAA Workshop

On June 12 DFA staff participated in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) sponsored "Envisioning the Future of Coastal Management" workshop in San Francisco. NOAA held the workshop at five locations around the country to solicit input as they prepare to update their Coastal Zone Management Act.

Small Community Technical Help Meeting

On June 13 DFA staff had a conference call with Self-Help Enterprises, and the Rural Community Assistance Corporation to discuss issues faced by small communities. Staff wanted to better understand the services these groups offer; the problems that they see small communities are facing, and the funding sources they have available to them. Staff discussed mechanisms to leverage wastewater and drinking water funds with these groups. Next, staff will meet with Great Northern Corporation, another small community technical support group operating in California. Staff requested that both groups continue to provide staff

with suggestions for improving the Water Board's Small Community Program. Staff also committed to meet regularly with these groups.

Southern San Joaquin Valley Water Roundtable

State and Regional Water Board staff, including the Deputy Director for Financial Assistance and the Executive Officer of the Central Valley Regional Board, participated in a Southern San Joaquin Valley Water Roundtable at the request of Assemblywoman Nicole Parra on June 12, 2007. At the Roundtable, the Water Boards' representatives, Department of Health Services and Department of Water Resources met with 30 water supply representatives of small and disadvantaged communities in the San Joaquin Valley. The group shared information and a commitment to work together to solve the critical water quality issues facing San Joaquin Valley communities.