

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
CENTRAL COAST REGION**

STAFF REPORT FOR REGULAR MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2004

Prepared August 17, 2004

ITEM: 4

SUBJECT: WATER QUALITY AWARDS

SUMMARY

The Central Coast Regional Board intends to periodically recognize people and/or their respective organizations for exemplary efforts to protect and/or enhance water quality. Today's item recognizes four people and organizations for their efforts and achievements.

DISCUSSION

The Regional Board's mission is to preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources. The Board can achieve its mission by relying on both traditional permit and enforcement tools, and also by recognizing exemplary efforts that benefit water quality. The Regional Board established the Water Quality Award to recognize entities that have demonstrated remarkable initiative or inventiveness and have exceeded the usual expectations while implementing a pollution control or pollution prevention project. The Board hopes this recognition will encourage others to act similarly.

At the direction of the Regional Board, staff developed selection criteria, solicited candidates for the awards, and evaluated candidates.

Today, the Central Coast Regional Board recognizes the following four people and their respective organizations for their outstanding efforts to protect or improve water quality.

James Sandoval, and José Gamboa, Dimeo Lane Landfill, City of Santa Cruz

During rain events, the City of Santa Cruz's Dimeo Lane Landfill had always suffered from excessive erosion and flooding. To address these problems, Mr. Sandoval of the City's engineering staff developed a comprehensive site management

plan which required many site-specific erosion control and slope stabilization measures. The plan calls for the application of jute netting mulch, and planting native plants to side slopes, in addition to stabilization of storm drain channels and rebuilding of problem areas. To implement the detailed measures, Mr. Sandoval and Mr. Gamboa, the landfill's superintendent, worked closely together. The measures greatly reduced flooding and erosion compared to past years. Staff recognized the effort achieved two major milestones. First, in working successfully together the candidates reversed a longstanding inability of City engineering and landfill operations staff to work cooperatively together. Second, the site stabilization plan's measures exhibit a substantially greater level of detail and breadth of application than normally seen applied to landfills by Regional Board staff.

Anna May Hackwood, Susan and Thomas Thwaites, and Sally Martinus; 120 San Miguel Canyon Road, Watsonville

Mrs. Hackwood and Mr. Thwaites (now deceased) own(ed) land onto which others, allowed to reside there by a tenant, dumped toxic wastes resulting from illegal methamphetamine synthesis. As the property's owners, Mrs. Hackwood and Mr. Thwaites became responsible for cleaning up the contaminated soil and groundwater. Although unaware of the illegal activity and ensuing pollution, they responsibly complied with County requirements to remove contaminated soil and Regional Board requirements to investigate and monitor groundwater. After Mr. Thwaites's death, Susan Thwaites and Sally Martinus continued to cooperate with the Board. Although innocent victims of illegal acts by others, the four nominees financed soil excavation and groundwater

monitoring as required. Furthermore, they appear to have done so unaided by other funding sources. They have thereby gone beyond staff's usual expectations while also setting an example of cooperative compliance most helpful to the Board in achieving its mission.

Jerry Vincent, United States Army Corps of Engineers

The Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) has installed two groundwater remediation systems at the Monterey Peninsula airport. In less than a year, these systems have significantly reduced contaminant concentrations. As ACE manager of the Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) program, Mr. Vincent has excelled at obtaining federal funding and using this funding in the most cost-effective manner to restore the environment. He has worked diligently to ensure Regional Board and public involvement, and the project's success.

At a time when FUDS program funding has been directed away from our state to neighboring states, Jerry has increased FUDS activities within the Central Coast Region. Funds have been budgeted for four new FUDS investigations in our Region over the next two fiscal years, and approximately eight other sites will be visited for initial screening.

In the fall of 2000, some Monterey Peninsula residents were alarmed by front-page publicity of TCE contamination at the airport and surrounding community. Jerry Vincent took a personal level of interest in the project and used the community's outrage and political connections to help secure site cleanup funding for a FUDS program that has historically been grossly under-funded. Jerry then made the extra effort to work openly with community leaders in the assessment and cleanup process. In two and a half years, this process converted previous community detractors into project advocates. As a result, community meetings where angry residents occupied all available seating in 2000 were sparsely attended in 2003.

Agricultural Advisory Panel, Coalition of Central Coast County Farm Bureaus

The Agricultural Advisory Panel is a group of 20 representatives of irrigated agricultural and

environmental groups. The Panel met for a year to develop recommendations on the conditional waiver for irrigated agriculture. Recommendations included conditions that all farmers attend 15 hours of training on measures to protect water quality and that they develop farm water quality protection plans. The panel worked productively together as a group, setting aside differences and working on the practicalities of how to develop a program. To do so, they adopted mutually agreed-upon ground rules and a mission statement. They listened to each other's interests and concerns, and worked respectfully on a difficult and sometimes contentious issue. They gave generously of their time and ideas and provided a valuable framework for the program.

Irrigated agriculture is a major land use in the Central Coast Region and has been shown to discharge pollutants to approximately 75 of the Region's impaired waterbodies. Although as yet unknown, the group's contribution to the control of wastewater discharges from irrigated agriculture will likely result in substantially better quality in the future for waters affected by irrigated agriculture.

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