

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

**STAFF REPORT FOR REGULAR MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 19-20,
2019**

Prepared on August 12, 2019

ITEM NUMBER: 14

SUBJECT: Executive Officer's Report to the Board

STAFF CONTACT:

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ACTION: Information / Discussion

KEY INFORMATION

This item presents a brief discussion of issues that may interest the Board. Upon request, staff can provide more detailed information about any item.

GRANTS PROGRAM -

[Katie McNeill (805) 549-3336]

This report provides an update on grant funding in the region.

319(h) Nonpoint Source Grant Program

New 319(h) Grant Awards

The Review Committee, made up of one representative from each region, State Board and US EPA, recommended full funding for two grant awards totaling \$1,345,844 under the Clean Water Act (CWA) 319(h) Nonpoint Source (NPS) Grant Program. Central Coast Water Board staff assisted with the development of the priorities, solicitation, development and selection of this grant as part of a competitive state-wide process. The funding for these grants comes from 2020 319(h) funding cycle and is pending final approval by State Board. Approximately four million dollars is available annually for state-wide Clean Water Act (CWA) 319(h) grants.

These grants will be managed by Central Coast Water Board staff. For a list of current and recently completed grants managed by staff, see the Central Coast Water Board's grants page.

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/water_issues/programs/grants/open_and_completed_grants#319h.html

Project Title	Grantee	Project Description	CWA 319(h) Total Project Amount
San Lorenzo River Watershed Targeted Sediment Reduction Project	Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County	This project implements rural road erosion control and home drainage best management practices (BMPs) to address water quality impairments and impacts to anadromous fish habitat in the San Lorenzo River due to sediment derived from historic logging roads and increased development in the watershed.	\$1,220,759 (\$799,913 grant award and \$420,846 local cost share match)
Remediation of Pesticides in Oso Flaco Creek	Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District	This project implements agricultural sediment control BMPs in collaboration with the local landowner, including a sediment basin, vegetated ditches, culvert resizing, filter strips, and integrated pest management; and excavates contaminated sediment to address the watershed-wide objective of removing and reducing sediment-bound pesticides to surface water quality in Oso Flaco Creek and Oso Flaco Lake.	\$776,131 (\$545,931 grant award and \$230,200 local cost share match)

For more information on the CWA 319(h) NPS Grant Program, visit the following website: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/nps/319grants.shtml

California Strawberry Certification Program Grant Termination

On April 26, 2016, the California Strawberry Commission was awarded a Clean Water Act section 319(h) grant in the amount of \$613,244 to create an industry-led sustainability certification program for strawberry operations. The project included developing a set of specific required farming practices, auditing, verification, water quality monitoring protocols, and performance metrics to reduce discharges from approximately 10,000 acres of strawberry fields in the Pajaro River, Lower Salinas, and Santa Maria/Oso Flaco watersheds.

On July 26, 2019, the Grantee submitted a letter to State Water Resources Control Board formally requesting termination of the grant agreement. The Grantee stated that since the conceptualization of the project in May of 2015 and the development of the scope of work for the project in 2016, there have been significant changes made in the direction of the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) in the central coast region. The Grantee further stated that these changes have created uncertainty regarding the expectations for the certification program and the new regulations that we anticipate will be adopted under the next version of the Agricultural Order (Ag Order 4.0). Due to uncertainty associated with the forthcoming Ag Order 4.0 requirements, Central Coast Water Board staff and the Grantee have been unable to come to a shared understanding and agreement for quantifiable metrics tied to water quality improvements to include in the certification program and will be unable to reach agreement before the funds expire. The remaining funds will revert back to State Water Resources Control Board for other competitive NPS projects.

The Grantee and Central Coast Water Board staff expended a great deal of time and effort on the project. ILRP and Grants Program staff are working with State Water Resources Control Board to terminate the project. Language related to expectations for third party sustainability certifications will likely be specified in Ag Order 4.0. Lessons learned from the need to discontinue this project will be transferred to the development of Ag Order 4.0. It is anticipated that similar grant projects will be pursued in the future.

Avila Beach Water Quality Trust

In June 2019, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) notified Central Coast Water Board staff that they will not use Avila Beach Water Quality Trust grant funds (\$11,000) previously allocated to them for rangeland improvements at the Andre Ranch.

UC Davis is currently conducting a neonicotinoid pesticide threshold evaluation for two neonicotinoid insecticides - clothianidin and thiamethoxam. Central Coast Water Board staff has identified additional assessment tasks that UC Davis can conduct as part of their existing Avila Beach Water Quality Trust grant agreement, including developing numeric thresholds for an additional pesticide, methomyl. Central Coast Water Board staff is amending the existing agreement to allocate TNC's unused funds (\$11,000) to Coastal Conservation and Research (CCR) for UC Davis researchers to conduct the additional pesticide assessment work. This effort is in line with the intent of the settlement funds and is high priority work in our region.

These actions are consistent with the Central Coast Water Board's previous direction. Allocating the remaining funds to UC Davis will close out the Avila Beach Water Quality Restoration funds.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Table 1 - 401 Water Quality Certification Applications Received
2. Table 2 - 401 Water Quality Certifications Issued
3. Table 3 - Groundwater Section, Case Closure Performance Scoreboard
4. Table 4 - Groundwater Case Closures
5. Table 5 - Enrollments In General Orders/Waivers