



## EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

April 2003

### NORTH BASIN

1. ***Reorganization in the Lake Tahoe Office-***  
*Alan Miller*

Beginning March 1, 2003, the North Lahontan Watersheds Division has reorganized. Within each watershed Unit, the organizing principle continues to be that the Unit will provide regulatory oversight for all activities (except USTs, DOD and SLIC) that may affect water quality in that geographic area. Prior to the reorganization, the three Units of the Division were organized as follows:

*Unit Chief: Scott Ferguson*  
*Unit Name: Northern Watersheds*  
*Area: North of Lake Tahoe*

*Unit Chief: Doug Smith*  
*Unit Name: Lake Tahoe Watershed*  
*Area: Lake Tahoe*

*Unit Chief: Alan Miller*  
*Unit Name: Carson/Walker Watersheds*  
*Area: South of Lake Tahoe*  
*(to Conway Summit)*

The Lake Tahoe Watershed Unit is unchanged, but the remainder of the Division is now organized as follows:

*Unit Chief: Scott Ferguson*  
*Unit Name: Truckee River Watershed*  
*Area: Counties: Nevada, Placer, Sierra*

*Unit Chief: Alan Miller*  
*Unit Name: North Lahontan Rural Watersheds*  
*Area: Counties: Modoc, Lassen, Plumas, Alpine, No. Mono*  
*(to Conway summit)*

The purpose of the reorganization was primarily to balance workload among the Units. It also provides a focus for regulatory activity in the rapidly-urbanizing Truckee River watershed. The watershed Units work closely with staff in the Planning and Toxics Division on activities such as TMDL development.

2. ***Lake Tahoe in the News - Cindy Wise***

The Regional Board is one of 30 partners comprising the Lake Tahoe Environmental Education Coalition (LTEEC) whose mission is to support and facilitate the overall effectiveness of environmental education at Lake Tahoe. LTEEC staff recently forged an agreement with KOLO-TV News Channel 8, Reno's ABC affiliate, to present 90-second environmental news segments once each week during the evening news. Dubbed the "The Lake Tahoe Report", each segment will focus on environmental issues at Lake Tahoe, particularly erosion control and other nonpoint source pollution management. Following each segment, the Tahoe Daily Tribune will publish an accompanying article as part of its series titled "The Enviro Report." KOLO-TV staff was recently at the Regional Board office to film the tabletop watershed model as demonstrated by about 15 elementary school age children and to interview two Regional Board staff about nonpoint source pollution in the Lake Tahoe basin. This segment aired on April 1, 2003. Upon completion of the series, LTEEC will provide a video copy to the Regional Board.

3. **Swiss Mart Gas Station, El Dorado County - Lisa Dernbach**

On January 30, Board staff and the Deputy Attorney General representing the Regional Board, met with the responsible parties of the site to discuss resuming cleanup actions. Soil vapor and groundwater extraction systems had been turned off two weeks. Shutting off the remediation systems put the parties in violation of an El Dorado County Superior Court injunction that requires compliance with a cleanup and abatement order. Furthermore, the parties had not submitted final plans for expanding off-site MTBE plume capture and installing additional monitoring wells. Following the meeting, the parties hired a new consultant and restarted the remediation system on February 25.

On a related matter, the Regional Board received a complaint in early March from a resident of a domestic well two blocks from the site regarding wellhead treatment. A recent water sample from the domestic well showed MTBE concentrations at 45 parts per billion, exceeding the state standard of 5 parts per billion. At Board staff's request, the responsible parties investigated the matter and determined that the valves had been improperly set to bypass the carbon filter when it was last changed out. The valves were immediately corrected but after four months of untreated water had been piped to the residence. Board staff followed up the incident with a letter stating the parties were not meeting the standard of care necessary at the site and could be subject to enforcement actions if another incident occurred.

4. **Beacon Gas Station, El Dorado County - Lisa Dernbach**

The groundwater extraction and treatment system at the site was re-started in January. Groundwater is being pumped at a combined rate of 40 gallons per minutes from two extraction wells at the leading edge of a MTBE plume, one-half mile from the site. Extraction is containing the plume from threatening the Upper Truckee River. These were the only wells where MTBE was detected above the drinking water standard of 5 parts per billion during the fourth quarter 2002 monitoring event.

Based upon the promising water results, staff will re-evaluate the need to conduct additional soil remediation at the underground storage tank basin that was scheduled to occur next summer.

5. **Proposal to Relocate U.S. Forest Guard Station Out of Markleeville Creek Floodplain, Alpine County - Jason Churchill**

The Markleeville Guard Station is a complex of buildings on less than three acres situated in the floodplain of Markleeville Creek (tributary to the East Fork Carson River). The property was deeded some years ago by Alpine County to its current owner, the U.S. Forest Service. The Guard Station is used by the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest primarily as a fire prevention and suppression facility and includes a vehicle maintenance facility for fire trucks, etc. The facility was developed in the 1930's by filling in a high water channel within the creek. The creek adjacent to the facility is channelized, and confined behind a stone wall. Because of its location in an historic floodplain, the facility is subject to flooding and drainage problems. The most recent problems occurred during the 1997 flood, resulted in extensive damage, and threatened to dislodge an above-ground fuel storage tank from its foundation.

Based on the recurrent flooding, the age and condition of the facility, and the potential environmental benefits, the Forest Service and Alpine County Board of Supervisors mutually support transferring the property back to the County and relocating the facility to a better location nearby. The existing facility would be demolished and the historic floodplain restored. The County could additionally benefit by eventually expanding government facilities and parking into upland portions of the property. The County sent a February 6, 2003 letter to the office of Senator Barbara Boxer, requesting assistance to legally transfer the property and seek federal funding appropriations for construction of a new facility (estimated cost \$2.8 million, not including demolition costs associated with restoring the watershed.)

In addition to providing significant water quality benefits, this proposal would provide for a conveniently located and modernized facility for the Forest Service's fire prevention and suppression activities. I have sent a letter to

Senator Boxer, expressing strong support for this proposal.

6. ***Martis Valley Development-Eric Taxer***

An updated Martis Valley Community Plan and associated environmental impact report are being prepared by Placer County to address new environmental and land use issues in the area and to provide consistency with the 1994 Placer County General Plan. The project area is the Placer County portion of Martis Valley. The draft plan identifies substantial development of approximately 4,300 acres of the project area, which would increase impervious surfaces and would alter drainage conditions.

In the meantime, the Martis Valley area is experiencing an extraordinary amount of growth. Some of the projects currently being planned and/or constructed include:

- Northstar-at-Tahoe development projects [Northstar Village Improvements (includes new residential, commercial, and recreational facilities),
- Highlands Project (includes new residential, entertainment, hotel, and recreational facilities),
- Retreat Subdivision,

- Summit Subdivision Unit 7A,
- Sawmill Employee Housing Project,
- Schaeffer Camp Restaurant, new road construction and upgrades to existing roads, ski area expansion and improvements], and
- several medium and large-scale housing subdivisions [Hopkins Ranch, Eaglewood Subdivision, Siller Ranch, Arbor Meadows II Townhomes, Ponderosa Pines Subdivision, Martis Creek Estates, Lahontan I and II Subdivisions (completed)]. Several of the residential projects also include new golf courses.

Staff's primary focus related to the proposed Martis Valley development will be concentrated on reviewing and commenting on the draft environmental impact report (recently received second draft) for the Martis Valley Community Plan, and commenting on individual CEQA documents associated with new projects. Staff anticipates that many of these projects will be regulated under the State's NPDES Construction Storm Water Permit, which requires developing and implementing a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). We intend to review these SWPPPs, and will be inspecting the sites to ensure that they are adequately implemented.

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## SOUTH BASIN

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7. ***Molycorp Cleanup and Abatement Order Compliance Status Update - Curt Shifrer***

Waste Discharge Requirements include a schedule for closure of the North Tailings Pond (P-16). In accordance with the WDRs, Molycorp shutdown its Mill on November 5, 2002, stopped the Mill discharge to P-16, and began dewatering of ponded wastewater in P-16. Molycorp continues to operate mechanical evaporators located on P-16 for evaporation of wastewater, which consists of extracted groundwater and P-16 leakage generated by Corrective Action Systems (CASs). WDRs require that Molycorp: (1) file a Report of Waste Discharge (RWD) for closure of P-16 by June 10, 2003, (2) begin construction for closure by January 1, 2004, and (3) complete construction by October 1, 2004.

The January 2003 EO's Report discussed Molycorp's plans for filing a RWD for a new

tailings disposal facility. Molycorp hopes to complete construction of a new facility and restart the Mill and the Mill discharge by the first quarter of 2004. San Bernardino County, the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act, has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that addresses the new facility. Board staff received the Draft EIR on April 14, 2003 and is currently preparing comments. Completion of the Final EIR is tentatively scheduled for 2003.

Molycorp has still not obtained necessary approvals for the proposed Offsite Investigation required by the above-referenced Amended CAO. The Offsite Investigation includes drilling of monitoring wells to delineate the extent of Mine Site groundwater plumes. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has not granted Molycorp a Right-of-Way Permit (ROW Permit) to conduct the Investigation. As discussed in previous EO Reports, Molycorp initially sent a

ROW Application (including a Biological Evaluation) to BLM on August 1, 1998 (more than four years ago). Delays to obtaining the ROW Permit involve federal agency concerns about the impacts to biological resources (Desert Tortoise, an endangered species). The federal agencies are the BLM, National Park Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

After several amendments to the Biological Evaluation, the BLM staff (on December 31, 2001) considered it complete and sent it to the USFWS for review and issuance of a Biological Opinion. BLM staff has indicated there is not a projected date for completion of the Biological Opinion. The reason is discussed in detail in the January 2003 EO's Report.

8. **China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station (CLNAWS), Cleanup Agreement – Elizabeth Lafferty**

The Department of Toxic Substances Control and Board staff are working together to develop an agreement between the State and the Navy directing site investigation and cleanup actions at CLNAWS. The Federal Facility Site Remediation Agreement (FFSRA) describes the procedure the parties will follow for document preparation and review. It will also describe procedures to elevate and resolve disputes, if necessary. The FFSRA binds together cleanup plans for 80 sites and 240 additional potential sites called Areas of Concern (AOC). The AOCs will be investigated using Preliminary Assessment and Site Investigation methods to determine if they contain soil or groundwater pollution or are a threat to water quality. The nature and extent of the contaminants present in soil, surface and groundwater at each site will be elevated and the sites will be prioritized for cleanup as has been the case at the previously identified 80 sites.

9. **Town of Mammoth Lakes – Cindi Mitton**

The two outreach workshops held last year to provide training and information regarding erosion control Best Management Practices (BMPs) were well received and staff has observed much improvement regarding BMP implementation at sites within the Town. Town staff continues to work to inspect sites and take

enforcement action where appropriate. Periodic inspections by Board staff have shown that BMPs are being implemented. Board staff has plans to inspect high priority sites this spring to ensure that stormwater runoff is not allowing sediment transport offsite and threatening surface waters. Additionally, staff is continuing to work with southern Mono County Planning staff to improve BMP implementations within all sensitive areas of the County.

10. **Mojave River/El Mirage Dairy Issues – Greg Cash**

Desert View Dairy (Hinkley) has recently submitted laboratory analysis of the three newly installed groundwater-monitoring wells. Initial groundwater sampling data revealed concentrations of Nitrate as N at concentrations of 12.5, 39 and 40 mg/L. Background nitrate concentrations are 12.5 mg/L and California Primary Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) for nitrate as N is 10 mg/L. From an initial review of this data, Board staff will request the installation of additional groundwater monitoring wells. The dairy operator has recently proposed to install an anaerobic digester system. The anaerobic digester will biodegrade the organics, improve dewatering of the solids and reduce solids loading to the irrigated fields. The anaerobic digester will also produce methane thus providing some of the power requirements for the dairy's operation.

11. **Los Angeles County Sanitation District No. 14 (Lancaster) Board Meeting Follow-up – Hisam A. Baqai**

At the March 12, 2003 Regional Board meeting, the Board asked that I review the time schedules in the Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) for the District regarding groundwater monitoring. The WDRs require development and submittal of a Work Plan for groundwater monitoring system improvements by August 1, 2003. The implementation of the Work Plan and installation of the appropriate groundwater monitoring wells and other features is required by August 1, 2004.

In response to questions regarding the one year implementation period, I intend to request the District and to provide specifics regarding the

tasks that will be completed by the District and the appropriateness of the adopted time schedules for the necessary efforts. The request will specify that this supplemental information be submitted as a part of its groundwater monitoring Work Plan which is due by August 1, 2003.

I will have a recommendation for the Regional Board at your September 2003 meeting whether the existing time schedule for implementation of the groundwater monitoring program needs to be modified.

12. **IMC Chemicals Inc., (IMCC) – Kai Dunn**

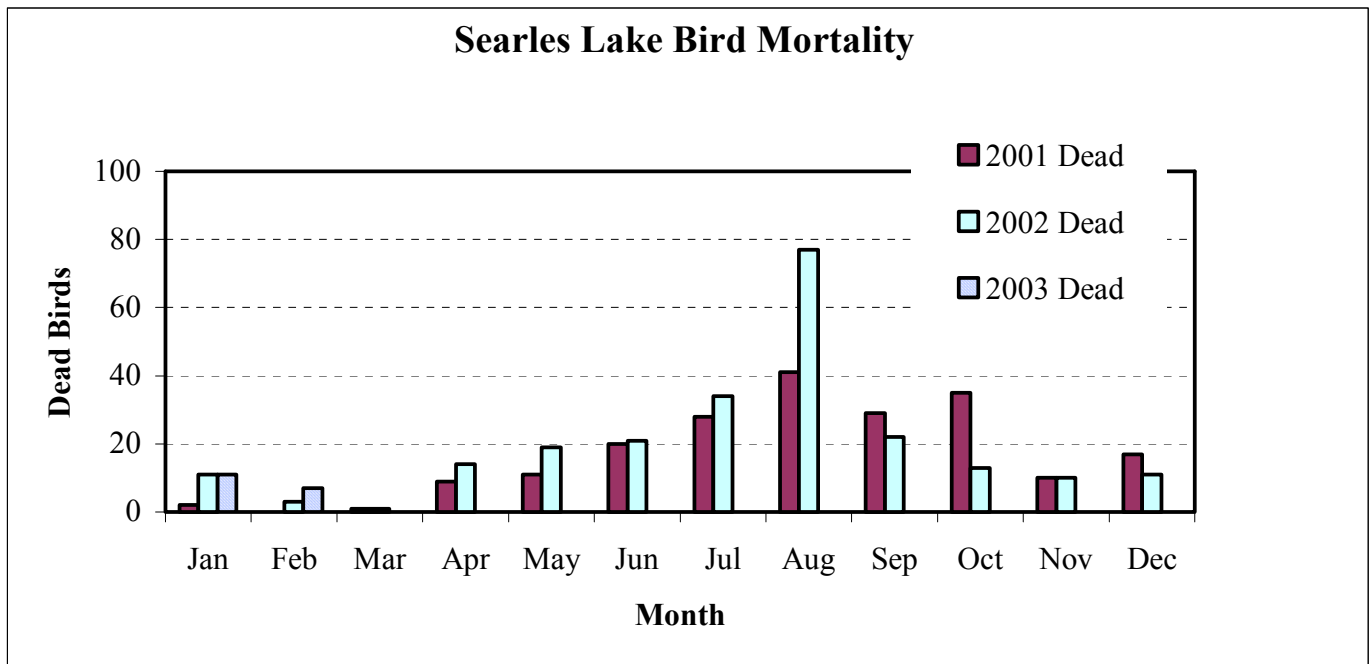
**Compliance Status**

Daily reporting data from IMCC shows that the Argus plant injection brine exceeded the interim effluent limit for a total recoverable petroleum hydrocarbons (TRPH) once during the month of February 2003. Seven bird deaths were reported during the same period and most of them are waterfowl and perching birds. Since January 1, 2003, 27 birds (18 dead and 9 alive) have been recovered at Searles Lake. The dead birds reported in the years 2001, 2002 and 2003 are shown in the figure below.

Staff continues to work with IMCC personnel regarding the cleanup approach and objectives for the remaining contaminated sites on Searles Lake. Based on site investigation data collected, staff and IMCC have agreed to focus on cleanup of the old “Serpentine Channel” lakebed oil skimmer site. IMCC and its consultants are preparing a work plan for the Serpentine Channel site cleanup.

**Improving Technology**

IMCC submitted a report on pre-heating the Trona brine as a part of improving the Wemco Process. The treatment system utilizes a closed-loop water system to heat the partially depleted brine and collect the condensate for re-use. It appears that heating the brine could be a reliable method of removing hydrocarbon from the partially depleted brine from the Trona plant and recycling the condensate can reduce plant water consumption.



**CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY  
CONTROL BOARD  
LAHONTAN REGION**

**REPORT ON STATUS OF STANDING ITEMS  
April 2003**

The Regional Board has requested that it be kept informed of the status of a number of issues. The following table lists the items, the reporting frequency and where the report can be found.

ISSUE	REPORT FREQUENCY	STATUS/COMMENT
IMC Chemicals - Compliance Status	Monthly	Item No. 12 of April 2003 EO's Report
Meyers Beacon UST Site	Quarterly	Item No. 4 of April 2003 EO's Report
Mojave River/El Mirage Dairy Issues	Quarterly	Item No. 10 of April 2003 EO's Report
Progress of Cleanup at Molycorp	Quarterly	Item No. 7 of April 2003 EO's Report
Town of Mammoth Lakes	Quarterly	Item No. 9 of April 2003 EO's Report
Caltrans-General Permit	Annually	Due September 2003 Board Meeting
Eagle Lake Spalding	Semi-Annual	Due September 2003 Board Meeting
Los Angeles CSD #14	Semi-Annual	Due September 2003 Board Meeting
Vulnerability of Wells in Squaw Valley to Contamination from USTs	Semi-Annual	Due September 2003 Board Meeting
Caltrans-Tahoe Basin	Annually	Due November 2003 Board Meeting
Tahoe Municipal Permit	Annually	Due November 2003 Board Meeting
Wetland Restoration Progress in Mono County	Annually	Due November 2003 Board Meeting

<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Board Meeting Month</u>
<i>Quarterly</i>	July, October, January & April.
<i>Semi-Annual</i>	September & March
<i>Annually</i>	Varied

# UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK CLOSURE REPORT

State of California

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

Date "No Further Action Required" Letter Issued	Site Name	Site Address	Case Number	Case Type	Remaining Groundwater Concentrations above Water Quality Objectives (in micrograms per liter)	Remaining Soil Concentrations (in milligrams per kilogram)	Distance from Site to Nearest Receptor	Remedial Methods Used
Mar. 10, 2003	Truckee Donner Public Utility District	11570 Donner Pass Road, Truckee	6T0066A	UST (Gasoline and Diesel)	TPHg: 70	TPHg: 82, TPHd: 110 MTBE: 2.9 Xylene: 7.1	Supply well 1 mile	Excavate and dispose of 200 cubic yards of soil
Mar. 10, 2003	South Tahoe Public Utility District Lower Shop Area	1275 Meadow Crest Drive, South Lake Tahoe	6T0159A	UST (Gasoline)	none	TPHg: <1.0	Supply well 1,800 feet	Excavate and dispose of 170 cubic yards of soil
Mar. 19, 2003	Eastern Sierra Tri-County Fairgrounds	PO Box 98, Bishop	6B1400697T	UST (Gasoline)	TPHg: 140 Benzene: 3.5	TPHg: 1,900 MTBE: 0.13 Benzene: 5.4	Supply well 400 feet	Excavate and dispose of 900 cubic yards of soil

**Notes:**

WQOs = water quality objectives

UST = underground storage tank program

TPHg = total petroleum hydrocarbons as gasoline

TPHd = total petroleum hydrocarbons as diesel

MTBE = Methyl tert-Butyl Ether