



Lahontan Regional Water Quality
Control Board



EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

July 2008

NORTH BASIN

1. **Squaw Creek Restoration Planning Kickoff Meeting**
-Tom Gavigan

On May 15, 2008, the Friends of Squaw Creek held a public meeting to discuss Squaw Creek restoration alternatives. A Sierra Nevada Conservancy grant and the Lahontan Water Board, through the Red Dog Diesel Spill Mitigation Fund, are funding the restoration planning work. The work builds on a January 2007 report prepared by Phillip Williams and Associates (PWA) for the Placer County Planning Department. The PWA report identified geomorphic problems with lower Squaw Creek and presented five conceptual alternatives for restoring a functional and sustainable creek in meadow reach of Squaw Creek.

Mike Liquori, Principal Hydrologist of Sound Watershed Consulting, led the May 15, 2008 public meeting. Mr. Liquori reviewed the proposed alternatives developed by PWA. These alternatives range from no action to restoring the historic channel system to pre-European conditions. There was much discussion regarding concerns about the trapezoidal channel located just upstream of the meadow reach. The trapezoidal channel concentrates flows and also transports coarse sediment much further into the meadow than natural conditions would allow. Liquori explained that the alternatives were developed under the assumption that the trapezoidal channel would remain unchanged and were

designed to work with the trapezoidal channel in place. Other public issues included West Nile Virus fears, the use of heavy equipment in the meadow, and opportunities for public access to the meadow's private land.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Liquori requested that the participants and other interested parties complete a survey as a way to rank the restoration alternatives. This survey, along with Liquori's presentation and the PWA report, can be found at Sound Watershed Consulting's website:

<http://www.soundwatershed.com/Squaw.htm>

Discussions with the meadow land owners and a focused workshop with technical experts will be the next steps in developing a restoration alternative. The technical team will evaluate existing studies and data, discuss data gaps and risks, and identify a scope of work to address additional feasibility issues. The specific tasks to be funded by the Red Dog Diesel Spill monies (i.e. data collection and analysis) will be identified at the technical workshop. It is anticipated that the technical workshop will be held in July or August, but no firm date has been set.

2. Workshop Attended by Staff – Stream Channel Naturalization within the Semi-Arid Mediterranean Climate of Highly Urbanized Southern California (May 28 And 29, 2008) – and Preparation of Similar Workshop for the Southern Part of this Region - Tobi Tyler

Several staff attended a State Water Board Training Academy workshop this May 28, 2008 that included a tour of restoration sites along the Arroyo Seco Creek and the Los Angeles River. The tour included a look at past and future efforts to restore sections of the channelized Arroyo Seco Creek. Staff also saw a section of the mostly channelized Los Angeles River that has always been vegetated and free of a concrete bottom because of high ground water. The Stream Channel Naturalization Workshop was held the following day at the Metropolitan Water District office in Los Angeles. Tom Moody, with Natural Channel Design, Inc., began the workshop with a discussion of basic geomorphic principles and the functions of streams to convey flood flows, transport sediment and dissipate energy. Presenters talked about the importance of restoring the functions of streams and rivers, as well as the importance of protecting and restoring floodplains by reconnecting channels to their floodplain. Several restoration implementers then discussed successes and issues experienced with various restoration projects in the Region. A variety of resource managers attended.

Staff (both at the Region and State levels) are planning to bring a similar type of workshop to the southern part of the Lahontan region. Plans are to hold the workshop in the January or February of 2009 in the Victorville area with the intention of attracting staff of San Bernardino and Inyo Counties, Caltrans, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, Mojave Water Agency, Resource Conservation Districts, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and the Cities of Victorville, Apple Valley, Hesperia, and Bishop. This workshop is

needed given the rapid development that has occurred in the southern portion of the Lahontan Region during the last several years that has placed pressures on ephemeral channels.

3. Aquatic Invasive Species Update and Discussion at the Interagency Shorezone Coordination Group Meeting on June 19, 2008 - Tobi Tyler

At the Interagency Shorezone Coordination Group meeting in June, staff heard from Steven Chilton, with TRPA, about efforts underway to protect Lake Tahoe from aquatic invasive species and reduce the impacts of those invasive species that are already present. There are several boat washing units that will soon be delivered to marinas and boat launching facilities around Lake Tahoe, such as Tahoe Keys Marina, Meeks Bay, and Lake Forest Boat Ramp.

The Quagga and Zebra mussels, both Dreissenid mussels introduced into North America through ballast water, have spread through many major river systems in the US. These filter feeders alter the water quality and food web, thereby altering entire ecosystems, clog water intake pipes, and pose a major threat to native freshwater mussels. The small invasive mussels can be easily transported by recreational boats that have traveled from infested lakes. The survivability of these invasive mussels under a wide range of conditions continues to surprise and confound biologists. Although Lake Tahoe has been considered an unlikely location for the mussels to thrive because of the low calcium levels in the lake, past limiting factor studies have been conflicting. Studies and tests of mussel survival under various calcium concentrations are currently underway. One concern noted by Mr. Chilton at the meeting is the presence of the Asian clam, *Corbicula*, in the lake because the presence of this invasive species could provide the needed source of calcium for the growth of the invasive mussels. There is currently funding for locating and removing Asian clams at Ski Run Marina and Zephyr Cove

Marinas. In addition to recreational motor boats that enter the lake at boat ramps, kayaks can also be a carrier of the invasive mussels if they have not been completely cleaned with water at temperatures of 140 degrees Fahrenheit after being exposed to water where the mussels have been found.

4. Status Update on the Former Shell Service Station in Meyers, El Dorado County - Tammy Lundquist

Approximately tens ago, a gasoline product line failed during a pressure test, resulting in the release of approximately 640 gallons of gasoline into the soil and underlying groundwater at the Former Shell Service Station in Meyers, El Dorado County.

A Cleanup and Abatement Order (Order) was issued in October 1998 requiring Shell, in part, to define the vertical and lateral extent of the contamination and to submit a corrective action plan to clean up the contamination. To comply with the Order, Shell's consultant immediately installed an interim groundwater extraction system (a permanent one was installed in July 1999) and installed 55 wells (monitoring and extraction) both on- and offsite. These wells monitor groundwater in eight zones ranging in depths from 40 to 200 feet below ground surface.

From October 1998 through February 2006, the interim and permanent groundwater extraction systems removed almost 50 million gallons of petroleum hydrocarbon contaminated groundwater.

The only remaining constituent of concern is MTBE. Based on the Second Quarter 2008 Groundwater Monitoring Report, concentrations of MTBE within the plume have decreased overall to a current maximum of 30 micrograms per liter. The extent of the plume with concentrations above the MTBE water quality objective of 5 micrograms per liter is approximately 600 feet by 600 feet and is confined to two water-bearing zones, the 60-foot deep zone and the 80-foot deep zone.

Two years after cessation of groundwater extraction, the plume appears stable and Shell is monitoring groundwater quality to assess whether the remaining MTBE will continue to naturally attenuate.

5. Lake Tahoe Municipal NPDES Permit Update – Robert Larsen

In 2005 the Regional Board adopted an Order that regulates storm water discharges from the municipal districts within the Lake Tahoe Basin. The Order also serves as a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Phase I Storm Water Permit (NPDES Permit) as required by Clean Water Act section 402(p). The City of South Lake Tahoe, El Dorado County, and Placer County are co-permittees under the NPDES Permit.

As required by the NPDES Permit the permittees submitted annual program reports on March 15, 2008. Water Board staff noted all three jurisdictions significantly improved in storm water program development during calendar year 2007. For instance, the permittees have enhanced storm water facility inspection tracking measures, improved construction site inspection programs, and made progress in identifying storm water outfalls.

Though all co-permittees improved program performance, the City of South Lake Tahoe is struggling to meet all permit requirements. Board staff issued a Notice of Violation to the City for its insufficient Annual Report. Water Board and City staff met to discuss program deficiencies and the City was able to provide additional information not included in the report to address noted violations. Water Board staff made a presentation to the City of South Lake Tahoe City Council on July 1, 2008 to discuss the importance of storm water pollution control, particularly with respect to meeting upcoming Lake Tahoe Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements.

Considering our improved understanding of Lake Tahoe's clarity loss and the importance of reducing fine sediment particle loads, Water Board staff plan to amend the NPDES Permit in October 2008 to shift compliance focus away from meeting numeric storm water effluent limits and toward more comprehensive, targeted fine sediment particle reduction strategies. The amendment will highlight recent Lake Tahoe TMDL research and emphasize permittee actions to prioritize treatment and maintenance activities in areas generating the largest pollutant loads.

The current NPDES Permit expires in October 2010. At that time, Water Board staff expects to update the NPDES Permit to include specific fine sediment particle and nutrient waste load allocations as prescribed by the anticipated adoption of the Lake Tahoe TMDL. Staff will continue to work with the Permittees in the interim to ensure municipal storm water management programs are adequately prepared for the treatment challenges ahead.

SOUTH BASIN

6. **Former George Air Force Base - Finding of Suitability for Early Transfer, Main Flightline Parcel – Jehiel Cass**

The Air Force proposes to complete an “early transfer” of about 964 acres of former George Air Force Base, including the main flightline, to the City of Victorville. The term “early transfer” means the parcel will be deeded before the Air Force completes the Record of Decision (ROD) for cleanup of hazardous waste. An early transfer requires the Governor’s concurrence. Water Board staff are preparing a Governor’s Office Action Request and supporting information recommending the governor concur with the early transfer. A Finding of Suitability for Early Transfer was prepared by the Air Force and reviewed by the Water Board US EPA staff and Department of Fish and Game. Comments were provided to the Air Force.

Most of the former George Air Force Base property has already been transferred to date. Because those previous parcels had a ROD in place or contained only petroleum waste or pesticides, which are not considered a hazardous waste, the Governor’s concurrence was not needed. The main flightline cleanup sites however, contain both hazardous waste (e.g. chlorinated solvents), and petroleum waste.

State law requires the Water Board to ensure that land use restrictions are in place for any parcel that does not meet unrestricted use. The Air Force is implementing cleanup at the former Base and remains responsible to complete cleanup of all waste, which will take decades at least. Land use restrictions will be needed during this time and certain restrictions may be permanent.

The current land use restrictions preclude installing drinking water wells, digging in areas where contaminated soil remains, and development with residential use. These

restrictions will be incorporated into the deed granted to the City of Victorville. Some mechanism will need to be developed to provide assurance to the State that the land use restrictions are properly maintained.

The City of Victorville and Air Force are currently negotiating liability indemnification language for the deed. Timing to complete the Governor’s Office Action Request for signature is dependent on resolving this issue. Provided these issues are resolved in time to complete the land transfer by the end of this federal fiscal year, Water Board staff will recommend the Governor concur with the early transfer.

7. **Antelope Valley Integrated Regional Water Management Plan – Patrice Copeland**

Over the past two years, member agencies of the Antelope Valley Regional Water Management Group have met and developed an Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP). The purpose of the IRWMP is to develop a watershed-based approach for addressing water supply, water quality, flood control, land use, and environmental resource management as related to the Antelope Valley. To date, member agencies that have adopted the final IRWMP include the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (12/4/07), the City of Lancaster City Council (12/11/07), and the Rosamond Community Services District Board of Directors (1/9/08). Water Board staff received a copy of the final Antelope Valley IRWMP on January 29, 2008.

Water Board staff attended an evening meeting of the Antelope Valley Regional Water Management Group in May. During this meeting, member agency representatives and interested stakeholders discussed the group’s application for Proposition 50 grant projects. The Leadership Team announced that the State

Board did not award any Proposition 50 grant monies for the Antelope Valley Regional Water Management Group's projects during this round of funding because the grant application did not contain a strong economic basis for the funding. However, the group intends to apply for Proposition 84 funding as well as the Department of Water Resources funding for water-related projects in the Antelope Valley. Water recycling, water supply, and long range term of governance sub-committees also reported to the group. The date of the next Antelope Valley Regional Water Management Group meeting has yet to be determined

8. *Low Impact Development - Cindi Mitton*

San Bernardino County is developing a Low Impact Development Guidance Manual for use in new development. The manual was prompted by the County's Phase I Stormwater Permit that applies to the southern portion of the County, however the manual will apply to all of the County. The manual is still being drafted and will be circulated for public comment prior to adoption by the Board of Supervisors. The County has hired a consultant with expertise in the field and formed a technical advisory committee to meet and discuss the manuals development. Water Board staff attended the last Technical Advisory Committee meeting held on June 3, which was also attended by staff from local cities, and the Santa Ana Water Board. The County expects to circulate its draft manual later this year.