



EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

December 2013

STATE AND REGIONAL

1. Office of Legislative Affairs Staff Lake Tahoe Field Tour— *Robert Larsen*

The Office of Legislative Affairs (OLA) represents the Water Boards on all legislative matters, and serves as the primary spokesperson and advocate for the Water Boards before the Legislature. OLA is the primary contact point between the Water Boards and the Legislature and between the Water Boards and CalEPA and the Governor's Office on legislative matters. OLA works collaboratively with State Water Board Divisions and Regional Water Boards to achieve the Administration's legislative goals.

On October 23, 2013, Water Board staff hosted OLA Legislative Director Rob Egel and four of his staff for a field tour highlighting Lake Tahoe issues and restoration projects. Under a warm fall sun, Robert Larsen and Doug Cushman first brought the group to the Bijou Erosion Control Project to discuss the importance of reducing pollutant loading from urban stormwater discharges at Lake Tahoe. The Bijou project provides an example of uncommon coordination between local government, private entities and Caltrans and underscores the innovative approaches needed in highly developed, constrained areas. The stop also afforded the opportunity to stand on the shore of the Lake and review the recent land use policy work and talk about the challenge of aquatic invasive species.

Staff brought the group to the Upper Truckee River to view the U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit's active restoration project. Staff were able to show the OLA staff the degraded condition of the

current stream channel in direct contrast to the newly constructed restored channel. Water Board staff described the historic disturbances that led to the highly eroded banks and deep incision of the existing channel and talked about the multiple benefits associated with reconnecting the stream to the meadow floodplain.

The final portion of the tour was dedicated to forest management and fire fuel reduction efforts. During the short walk to and from the Upper Truckee River restoration site, Mr. Cushman had the tour participants take note of the dense forest and discussed the impact of fire on such overgrown systems. Water Board staff talked about the role of fire in pre-settlement ecosystems, the impact of fire suppression policies, and the challenges associated with reducing forest fuel loads to reduce the risks of uncontrollable, catastrophic fires. The group traveled to the 2007 Angora Fire area, followed by a visit to a recently thinned forest area.

Water Board staff were grateful for the opportunity to meet Mr. Egel and his staff and show them a few on-the-ground water quality challenges and solutions. It was productive to put faces to names and build our relationship with OAL staff to help further our shared goals. Mr. Egel expressed his appreciation for the tour and stressed how seeing such projects and conditions first hand helps he and his staff better understand the Water Board's work.

NORTH BASIN

2. **Fall 2013 Lake Tahoe Basin Land Disturbance Variances** – *Bud Amorfini*

The Water Board took advantage of the dry fall conditions this year by issuing variances to the Lake Tahoe basin October 15 – May 1 land disturbance prohibition for important erosion control and infrastructure projects. Caltrans and Squaw Valley Ski Area must meet similar permit requirements in the Truckee River basin. The variances allowed work to continue during the dry weather to expedite completion of projects and reduce erosion in these watersheds. The following projects were granted variances to extend the available work window prior to winter shut down.

Water Quality Improvement Projects

- Caltrans Hwy 50 Ski Run/Wildwood – project was completed
- Caltrans Hwy 50 Trout Creek to Ski Run – project was completed
- Caltrans Hwy 50 Echo Summit to Meyers – culverts were lined during dry conditions
- Bijou Erosion Control/Storm Water Treatment – significant progress made with all vaults installed at Bijou Center and pavement placed for winter

Infrastructure Projects

- Hwy 89 Caltrans Wildlife Fence/Ramp – project was completed
- Hwy 89 – SW Gas Line Relocation – second year of line work was completed (clearing the way for Caltrans erosion control work to follow)
- Aspens Housing Project – land disturbing work was completed
- USFS Angora Trails – trail system was completed minimizing impacts from unauthorized use

Winterization/Erosion Control

- Heavenly Valley Ski Area Mid Mountain Improvements – project was completed
- Caltrans I-80 Mudslide Area Rehabilitation – project was completed
- Caltrans I-80/Hwy 89 Miscellaneous Shoulder Work – project was completed
- Squaw Valley Ski Area – new erosion controls and winterization were completed
- South Tahoe High School Construction – winterization controls were completed

3. **Meyers Landfill BMP Repairs and Upgrades, El Dorado County** - John Steude

Background

Meyers Landfill was operated by El Dorado County on US Forest Service (USFS) land between 1946 and 1971. The USFS initiated lead agency actions under the Comprehensive Environmental Liability and Compensation Act (CERCLA) after groundwater contamination was discovered beneath the landfill. Remedial actions have included consolidation of the landfill waste and construction of a landfill cap.

During a severe precipitation event in December 2012, stormwater undermined a portion of the southeast drainage channel at the landfill and the channel was filled with sediment. El Dorado County removed 450 cubic yards of sediment from the channel and increased the channel capacity in January 2013. Details of this storm event and initial repairs were discussed in the March 2013 Executive Officer's Report.

Status

El Dorado County conducted major repairs and upgrades to the drainage channels and other erosion controls during the 2013 construction season. Channel rock lining was replaced and increased in size and depth in critical areas to prevent future potential undermining of the channel. Check dams along the bank of the concrete channel were installed to direct stormwater into the channel and prevent undermining along the sides of the channel.

On October 25, 2013, Water Board Staff participated in an inspection with USFS and El Dorado County staff. Overall, the BMPs in place now are more substantial than they were the previous year and only minor repairs and maintenance were needed to be ready for winter weather.

- Revegetation was achieved over 35% of the landfill cover area, although small areas of thin vegetation were still present during an October 2013 inspection. These small bare soil areas and a few slopes above rock lined channel were in need of the application of tackifier or an equivalent erosion prevention measure.
- An extensive network of straw waddles was installed to prevent concentrated flows and associated rills and gullies. The straw waddles were functional for the most part, although minor repairs were needed in a few areas before the onset of winter weather.
- A short reach of rock-lined channel required sediments to be removed to prevent them from being flushed downstream over the winter.

El Dorado County representatives have informed Water Board staff on November 12, 2013 the required repairs and maintenance noted during the October 2013 inspection have been completed.

Time lapse photos of southeast channel conditions are provided below.



Previous condition of channel in mid-2012



Condition after December 2012 storm event



Condition in October 2013 after repairs



Rock-armored base of slope above channel, tackifier, straw waddles and revegetation

Additional photos showing site conditions in October 2013 are provided below.



Revegetation, straw waddles, & tackifier



Area with bare soil & flattened straw waddle