



Enforcement News

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
<http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/>

Tuolumne County Agrees to Settlement for Stormwater Violations at Jail Access Road project

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 6, 2017

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SACRAMENTO – The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board has reached a settlement with Tuolumne County for alleged stormwater permit violations at its Jail Access Road construction project in Sonora.

The county enrolled the project in the statewide General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities, but failed to comply with the requirements to protect local water quality and the environment. Tuolumne County agreed to pay \$131,464 and to comply with the permit requirements to ensure that additional environmental damage is halted.

The settlement was reached using a streamlined process that provided the county an opportunity to quickly resolve the alleged violations that threatened Sullivan Creek, a tributary of Don Pedro Reservoir.

“We take these violations very seriously and we want construction sites across the Central Valley to know we are investigating complaints and taking action to stop further environmental damage,” said Andrew Altevoigt, assistant executive officer for the Regional Water Board. “We initiated this fast track approach after Tuolumne County, or its contractors, made a conscious decision not to comply with the basic requirements for the protection of surface waters from their construction activities.”

Water Board staff inspected the site on Dec. 8, 2016, during a rain event and found that the 5-acre site was not prepared for precipitation as there were no erosion control measures installed. Staff witnessed sediment-laden runoff flowing directly into Sutter Creek. Staff re-inspected the site on Dec. 15, 2016, during another rain event and again found a lack of sediment and erosion control, and sediment-laden water was again flowing into Sullivan Creek.

Discharges of sediment can cloud the receiving water, which reduces the amount of sunlight reaching aquatic plants. These discharges can also clog fish gills, smother aquatic habitat and spawning areas, and transport other materials such as nutrients, metals, and oil and grease, which can negatively impact aquatic life and habitat.

The owners of any construction site greater than 1 acre in size must enroll in the General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities. Among other items, this permit requires that the owner hire a “storm water professional” to design and install an effective combination of erosion and sediment controls to prevent discharges of sediment-laden stormwater.

The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board is a California state agency responsible for the preservation and enhancement of water quality. For more information, visit the Central Valley Water Board's [website](#).

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