

California Regional Water Quality Control Board
San Francisco Bay Region
EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT
A Monthly Report to the Board and Public
February 11, 2004

Golden Eagle Refinery, Still in the News (David Elias)

Recent newspaper articles about the Tesoro Golden Eagle Refinery in Martinez have highlighted environmental cleanup responsibility disputes between the present and past refinery owners and the potential historical concealment of waste disposal sites within the facility.

Water Board staff, along with representatives from Department of Toxic Substances Control, are participating in a Fact Finding Task Force led by the Contra Costa Health Services Agency to assist with the investigation of the alleged waste disposal concealment and the potential for adverse environmental impacts.

The Board's existing Waste Discharge and Site Cleanup Permit Requirements for the facility already recognize the presence of ubiquitous contamination within the refinery and require a robust monitoring program and significant cleanup efforts to ensure that offsite migration does not occur. These activities would detect and cleanup any significant contamination due to the alleged discharges. Therefore, it is unlikely that the historical disposal activities pose an imminent unidentified threat to human health or the environment.

The existing Waste Discharge Requirements are already scheduled for revision in early summer. Any new issues identified by the Fact Finding Task Force can be addressed in that revision.

Hookston Station Update (George Leyva)

At last month's meeting the Board requested monthly updates on this Pleasant Hill site cleanup.

On February 4th, staff met with representatives of the Hookston Station neighborhood group and the dischargers to discuss the status of the site investigation and indoor-air sampling protocols. The dischargers are currently sampling indoor air at selected homes. Results from this sampling will be included in the final risk assessment, which will be completed in April. In response to resident concerns, the dischargers will prepare a technical document explaining and justifying their indoor-air sampling protocol. The dischargers further agreed to several changes in sampling protocol requested by the residents. The meeting participants also agreed to a new procedure for notification to ensure that no one is inadvertently left out of meetings or does not receive reports. We will be circulating a fact sheet to residents and other interested persons shortly; the fact sheet will summarize progress on site investigation and next steps. We expect to conduct a public meeting near the site in late spring.

Board Staff Elected to Groundwater Resources Association Directorship

(Sarah Raker)

Board staff geologist Sarah Raker has been elected as one of fifteen directors on the Board of the Groundwater Resources Association of California (GRA). She has been an active member of the GRA since 1996. The vision of the GRA is to be the leading statewide groundwater resources advocate and educator of members and the public on resource management to protect and

improve groundwater. Other Board members include representatives from the Department of Water Resources, Department of Toxic Substance Control, Santa Clara Valley Water District, and private consulting and legal firms. Her first meeting as director on January 17 and 18 was to formulate the strategic plan for GRA for 2004. As an element of its educational effort, GRA will present several significant seminars and workshops across the State in 2004, including:

- Investigation and Remediation of Dry Cleaner Release Sites
- Low Yield Aquifer Testing
- Model Calibration and Predictive Uncertainty Analysis
- Calculating Aquifer Storage
- Characterization and Remediation of DNAPL Sources
- Perchlorate 2004
- Arsenic in Groundwater

Additional information on the GRA can be found on its website at www.grac.org.

Genuine Progress Indicator for the Bay Area (Bruce Wolfe)

On February 6, I attended the quarterly meeting of the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Communities, a broad-based stakeholder organization focused on the economic and environmental sustainability of the Bay Area. The Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI), a new economic analysis aimed at evaluating more than twenty factors of the Bay Area's economy, was released at the meeting. GPI attempts to evaluate economic factors not considered in the more common economic indicator, Gross Domestic Product (GDP). GPI starts with GDP, adds the value of volunteer work and positive non-cash activities, and subtracts the costs of such factors as pollution and its health effects, lengthy commutes due to job and affordable housing imbalances, crime, and use of non-renewable resources. The study determined, that, while the Bay Area's GDP was over \$31,000 per capita in 2000, additional economic costs outweighed additional values such that the resultant GPI was under \$17,000.

GPI can become a useful tool for decision makers to consider all economic impacts of their decisions. Since GPI considers the economic costs of factors that we are directly responsible for, such as water pollution and the loss of wetlands, the Board and its activities can both be shown to have a positive impact on the Bay Area's GPI and be recognized for that positive impact. I will continue to report on this and other activities undertaken by the Bay Area Alliance.

In-house Training

Our January in-house training was on environmental risk assessments, including human health and ecological risk. Our February training will be on conducting inspections. Recent brown-bag topics include a February 4th session on DNAPL (heavy free product) investigations in bedrock beneath San Francisco International Airport and a February 11th session on Contra Costa County's new watershed atlas.

Staff Presentations

On January 22nd, Wil Bruhns addressed the Port of San Francisco's Cruise Terminal Environmental Advisory Committee. He discussed the Board's concerns and authorities with regard to cruise ships and terminal facilities. Also, on January 16th, he did a brown bag

presentation at a local environmental consulting firm, where he reviewed the general history of the Board and Bay Area water quality issues over the last 50 years.

On January 23rd, I was a speaker on a panel at the California Association of Sanitation Agencies' conference entitled, "How to Build a Better Relationship with Your Regulators." I observed that overall, our Region's relationship with the regulated community is strong, and shared some of our experiences in building partnerships with the regulated community, such as development and implementation of the Regional Monitoring Program and the Clean Estuary Partnership. I also noted that, in working with the regulated community on their NPDES permits, we try to recognize both that permitting is an evolving and incremental process, which allows us to update and improve permits every five years, and that all agencies, including us, are becoming more limited in their available resources and their ability to implement new initiatives in short periods of time.

On January 27th, Mike Napolitano, Peter Krottje, and Tom Mumley gave presentations on the status of the development of TMDLs for Napa River sediment, pathogens, and nutrients to the Napa County Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission.

On February 2nd, Richard Looker gave a presentation on the development of the San Francisco Bay Mercury TMDL to an undergraduate level environmental engineering class at UC Berkeley.

On February 3rd, Chuck Headlee was a panel member at the 6th annual California Certified Unified Program Agencies (CUPA) conference in Santa Clara. The panel consisted of members of two water boards and two local agencies. Chuck gave a short presentation on prioritizing our workload in light of budget realities. There was a lively interaction with members of the audience, and everyone came away with a greater appreciation of how we are coping with the hiring freeze and budget cuts so far and the hurdles that still face us all.

Dorothy Dickey presented a lecture on the water boards' regulation of wetlands to the California Environmental Law class at the University of San Francisco's Law School on February 12th.