STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD SAN
FRANCISCO BAY REGION

MEETING DATE: November 18, 2020

ITEM: **4**

SUBJECT: **Executive Officer's Report**

Executive Officer's Report November 18, 2020

Items in this Report (Author[s])

Lower Walnut Creek Restoration Project (Agnes Farres)..... 3

General Permit for Vineyard Properties in the Napa River and Sonoma Creek watersheds: Approval of Group Water Quality Monitoring Plan (Mike Napolitano) 5

Investigations Completed at Two Former Dry Cleaners in Pleasant Hill (Kevin Brown)..... 6

November 2020 Enforcement Actions (Brian Thompson and Jessica Watkins)..... 8

401 Water Quality Certification Applications Received (Abigail Smith)..... 9

Lower Walnut Creek Restoration Project (Agnes Farres)

In October, we issued Certification for the Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District's (Flood Control District's) Lower Walnut Creek Restoration Project, Phase 1. The project will enhance and restore tidal wetlands and adjacent habitats along the southern shoreline of Suisun Bay and from the mouth of Walnut Creek upstream along Walnut and Pacheco creeks, covering about four miles and over 300 acres to improve habitat quality, diversity, and connectivity, benefit native and special status species, and provide sustainable flood management.

The lower Walnut Creek watershed was historically dominated by extensive wetlands, meandering creeks, and grassy plains. The marshes, sloughs, and meadows provided habitat and food for many wildlife species including grizzly bear, elk, clapper rail, and steelhead. Over the past 150 years, urban development, diking and filling of wetlands, and channelization of streams has changed the watershed dramatically and much of the historical habitat has been lost. In the 1940s and 1950s, Walnut Creek was channelized by neighboring landowners to improve stormwater conveyance. In the 1960s, the Corps widened the channelized creek and constructed levees for flood control. The Flood Control District was formed to own and maintain the channel in perpetuity. At the time, calculations showed the channel would need minimal maintenance. Soon it became clear that more frequent, impactful, and costly dredging was required to maintain the channel.

Beginning in 2004, the Flood Control District partnered with the Corps to reevaluate the channel's operation. Eventually, the District requested relief from Congress and the downstream-most four miles of Pacheco and Walnut creeks was deauthorized from the 1960s federal project. The result is that this part of the creek is now under local control and no longer under federal requirements to maintain the form of the federal project and complete certain operation and maintenance activities associated with that project.

The restoration project design has been informed by historical ecology as a key tool. Using archival data sources such as maps, photographs, and written documents, San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) staff developed the Lower Walnut Creek Historical Ecology Study to reconstruct the landscape of lower Walnut Creek as it existed during the mid-1800s to guide the District's efforts to restore habitat, reduce flood risk, and enhance resilience to sea level rise.

The project will lower and breach the existing flood protection levees along Walnut and Pacheco creeks to restore tidal wetlands, excavate new tidal channel networks, construct seasonal ponds, construct a new setback levee for flood protection, remove invasive species, and plant native vegetation. Construction is expected to begin in 2021 and take up to two construction seasons depending on seasonal work restrictions and timing and sequencing related to new levee construction and existing levee removal.

Future project phases are in the planning stages. Phase 2, restoration of the Middle Reach, is pending agreements with neighboring landowners. Phase 3 is expected to be completed by other entities, such as the John Muir Land Trust and East Bay Regional Park District, and will include public access amenities such as trails, bridges, and an interpretive center. For more details, see the May 2020 Estuary News or go to the Contra Costa Flood Control District's website.

The project was reviewed through the Bay Restoration Regulatory Integration Team (BRRIT), the multi-agency team designed to facilitate review and authorization of Bay margin wetland restoration projects receiving Measure AA funding. The project's permit application development pre-dated the BRRIT's formation; as a result, it was unable to take advantage of the BRRIT's pre-application consultation and coordination that is a significant tool to speed project review. However, it allowed coordinated consideration of significant issues, including how to address potential short-term impacts to special status species associated with a restoration project that is expected to provide a long-term benefit to those species, and identifying tools to facilitate such reviews for future projects. Water Board staff is continuing to participate in the BRRIT and we expect to periodically update the Board regarding the group's progress.

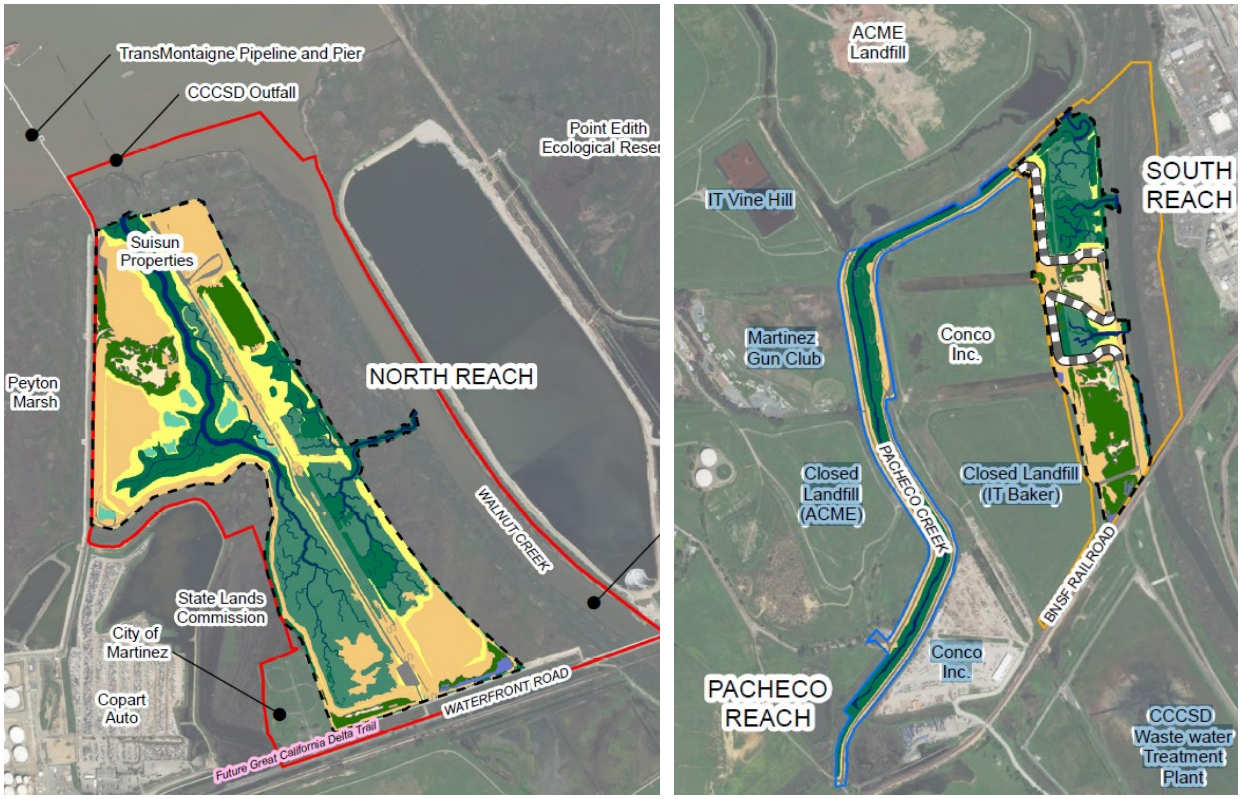

Figure 1. Phase 1 of the Lower Walnut Creek Restoration Project will include lowering existing berms and levees and excavating tidal channels in the North Reach, lowering and breaching levees along Walnut and Pacheco creeks, and constructing a new setback levee in the South Reach.

General Permit for Vineyard Properties in the Napa River and Sonoma Creek watersheds: Approval of Group Water Quality Monitoring Plan (Mike Napolitano)

Adopted in July 2017, the General Permit for Vineyard Properties in the Napa River and Sonoma Creek watersheds (General Permit) regulates those parcels where a 5 acre-or-larger vineyard is planted. Its primary focus is to ensure that best management practices (BMPs) are implemented and maintained to effectively control land-use related sediment delivery to channels. The General Permit also requires implementation and maintenance of BMPs to control pesticide and nutrient discharge.

Approximately 1,400 vineyard properties are enrolled in the General Permit. Almost all these properties (1,370) have joined compliance assistance groups being administered by the Napa and Sonoma County Farm Bureaus to satisfy submittal of annual permit fees and a water quality monitoring plan.

Under the authority specified by the General Permit, earlier this month the Executive Officer approved the water quality monitoring plan submitted by the Farm Bureaus on behalf of the property owners who joined their compliance assistance groups (Group Plan). The Group Plan has two primary elements: 1) monitoring the concentration of fine sediment in the streambed in channel reaches that provide spawning habitat for steelhead and/or salmon in both the Napa River and Sonoma Creek watersheds; and 2) monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of BMPs implemented to control soil erosion in farming areas and sediment discharge from unpaved roads. About one-eighth of the land within these watersheds is planted in grapevines and enrolled vineyard properties include about 600 miles of unpaved roads.

In response to the impacts created by the recent wildfires and pandemic, the start of monitoring under the Group Plan has been delayed by one year to allow growers an opportunity to recover. Similarly, the schedule for the submittal of a monitoring report, which will present and analyze monitoring results, has been extended from July 2023 to January 2024.

For more information, please review the approval letter and Group Plan that are posted on our website. Staff contacts: James Ponton james.ponton@waterboards.ca.gov and Mike Napolitano michael.napolitano@waterboards.ca.gov.

Investigations Completed at Two Former Dry Cleaners in Pleasant Hill (Kevin Brown)

Releases of Tetrachloroethene, (PCE) a dry-cleaning solvent and automotive parts degreaser that is considered a chlorinated volatile organic compound (CVOC), occurred in the Gregory Village district of Pleasant Hill, Contra Costa County. This commercial zone and the adjacent residential subdivision were developed in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Two former dry cleaners and a former automotive repair facility operated for decades in this area along Contra Costa Boulevard, well before State Highway 680 was constructed in the 1960s. PCE was released to the environment at the Former P&K Cleaners located in the Gregory Village Shopping Center and at a former unnamed dry cleaner located 400 feet upgradient. The parcel where this second dry cleaner was located was eventually merged with an existing Chevron gas station parcel in the late 1980s.

Figure 1. Location map of the two dry cleaners.

In November 2014, the Regional Water Board issued two Site Cleanup Requirements (SCRs) for the two dry cleaner source properties. The SCRs required investigations to define the lateral and vertical extent of CVOC pollution in soil and groundwater. Over the past six years, numerous borings were advanced and hundreds of soil, soil vapor, and groundwater samples were collected as part of a high-resolution site investigation to characterize the magnitude and extent of the contamination.

Figure 2. Plume map from the 2014 Orders.

Sub-slab soil vapor samples and indoor air samples were collected from beneath the floors of commercial buildings and several homes to determine potential threats to building occupants from vapor intrusion from the CVOCs. Based on the findings, mitigation systems were implemented, including sub-slab depressurization systems beneath the Former P&K Cleaners building and two homes. Regular monitoring is conducted to ensure the systems are operating effectively. A protective floor covering within a commercial building adjacent to the Chevron property was also installed.

The relatively flat and man-modified topography of the Gregory Village area masks an underlying and complex hydrogeologic setting. Coarse buried stream channels in the subsurface act as preferential migration pathways for the dissolved CVOCs. The shallow groundwater impacts (first-encountered water is about 8 feet below the ground surface) from the two release source properties have commingled to form an approximate 1,200-foot long plume (see Figure 2). Groundwater is not a current source of drinking water, and investigations have demonstrated deeper groundwater is minimally impacted with CVOCs.

The Dischargers have cooperated and complied with the tasks outlined in the SCRs. The Discharger associated with the former P&K Cleaners is receiving a grant from the State Water Board's Site Cleanup Subaccount Program (SCAP), which is for high-threat sites with a substantiated inability to pay for cleanup. Upcoming pilot testing includes soil vapor extraction for the vadose zone and in-situ chemical or biological injections for the saturated zone. We anticipate cleanup activities to start during the summer of 2021.

These former dry cleaner release areas are considered higher priority sites due primarily to the vapor intrusion threats to building occupants. Region 2 staff will continue to conduct site inspections during implementation of interim and final remedial actions. We will consider the need to update SCRs to ensure compliance with cleanup plans and mitigation system operation, maintenance, and monitoring based on ongoing data collection.

November 2020 Enforcement Actions (Brian Thompson and Jessica Watkins)

The following table shows the proposed enforcement actions since October's report. In addition, enforcement actions are available on our website at http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/public_notices/pending_enforcement.shtml

Proposed Settlement
The following is noticed for a 30-day public comment period. If no significant comment is received by the deadline, the Executive Officer will sign an order implementing the settlement.

Discharger	Violation(s)	Proposed Penalty	Comment Deadline
Cities of South San Francisco and San Bruno and North Bayside System Unit	Discharge limit violation.	$3,000	November 2, 2020
Rodeo Sanitary District	Discharge limit violations.	$12,000	November 6, 2020
C&H Sugar Company, Inc. and Crockett Community Services District	Discharge limit violations.	$6,000	November 6, 2020
Hanson Aggregates, Mid-Pacific Inc., Oakland Tidewater Sand Yard	Discharge limit violation.	$3,000	November 9, 2020
Hanson Aggregates, Mid-Pacific Inc., San Francisco Pier 92 Sand Yard	Discharge limit violations.	$3,000	November 9, 2020
Sewerage Agency of Southern Marin	Discharge limit violation.	$3,000	November 9, 2020
City of Petaluma	Discharge limit violation.	$3,000	November 12, 2020
City of Pinole	Discharge limit violation.	$3,000	November 23, 2020

401 Water Quality Certification Applications Received (Abigail Smith)

The table below lists those applications received for Clean Water Act section 401 water quality certification from September 11 through October 12, 2020. A check mark in the right-hand column indicates a project with work that may be in BCDC jurisdiction.

Project Name	City/Location	County	May have BCDC Jurisdiction
Miller Sweeney Bridge Fender System Repair and Replacement	Oakland	Alameda	✓
Bank Stabilization at 21 Playa Court	San Ramon	Contra Costa	
Roberson Kayak Lift	Belvedere	Marin	✓
Pile Repair-Replacement Loch Lomond Marina	San Rafael	Marin	✓
Pipe Repairs at Mountain Lake, Presidio of San Francisco	San Francisco	San Francisco	✓
PG&E Ravenswood Tower 001/007 Emergency Tower Replacement	Redwood City	San Mateo	✓
Stevens Canyon Road Emergency Culvert Repair	Unincorporated	Santa Clara	
PG&E Ignacio Mare Island Emergency Tower Replacement	Vallejo	Solano	✓
Creek Crossing at 20930 Burndale Rd	Sonoma	Sonoma	