

East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition

February 2006

UPDATE

www.esjcoalition.org

What did the Coalition accomplish in 2005?

- Developed and implemented a monitoring and reporting plan for the Coalition region as required by the Regional Water Board;
- Sampled streams and agricultural drains in the Coalition region from April through September 2005; two storm events winter 2004-05 and 2005-2006.
- Held numerous member meetings throughout the region to report on monitoring results, described potential Best Management Practices to address water quality problems.

What did the water monitoring results show?

Overall, the results for the 2005 monitoring program were generally positive. Our most common “problem” was exceedance of state water quality standards for *E. coli* bacteria. While we have no solid information on what caused these exceedances, *E. coli* can originate from commercial animal operations (feedlots, dairies or pastures), manure applications, leaky urban septic systems or wildlife. In 2006, the coalition will be performing additional analysis to determine the sources of the *E. coli* exceedances.

How many have joined the Coalition?

1870 landowner/operators with 506,228 acres of irrigated land have signed up for the Coalition as of February 1, 2006.

How are membership dues being spent?

2005 membership dues covered the Coalition’s operating costs through winter 2004-05 and 2005 irrigation sampling. Operating costs include:

- water sampling and analysis,
- preparation of Regional Water Board reports,
- membership data base management,
- new member solicitations.

Activities were performed on contract with private firms or consultants with oversight by the Board of Directors and Executive Director.

How much are membership dues in 2006?

The Coalition is required to expand its number of monitoring sites from 13 to 19 in 2006. The

coalition must also expand the list of pesticides that will be analyzed. Adding these sites and the new analysis increases by 40% the coalitions’ operating costs for remaining in compliance with the waiver. To cover increased costs, membership dues in 2006 will be \$50 per landowner plus \$1.50 an acre for all irrigated lands. Members are being mailed renewal invoices in March 2006.

Will new members in 2006 be required to pay back membership dues?

Landowners or operators who join the Coalition in 2006 will be asked to pay the 2004 membership dues of \$100 per landowner; 2005 membership dues (\$50 per landowner plus \$1 per acre) in addition to the 2006 member dues. This is so all members are on equal footing in supporting coalition activities.

Who is managing the Coalition?

A Board of Directors manages Coalition affairs. The Board Chairman is Parry Klassen, a fruit grower and also Executive Director of the Coalition for Urban/Rural Environmental Stewardship (CURES). Board members include:

- Julia D. Berry, Madera County Farm Bureau
- Richard Gemperle, Gemperle Enterprises;
- Kent Johnson, Ag Production Co.;
- Bill McKinney, almond grower
- Kevin Olsen, S & J Ranch;
- Bruce Pace, A.L. Gilbert Co.;
- Diana Westmoreland Pedrozo, Merced County Farm Bureau;
- Alan Reynolds, Gallo Vineyards, Inc.;
- Wayne Zipser, Stanislaus Co. Farm Bureau;

Ex-officio

- Dennis Gudgel, Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner;
- David Robinson, Merced County Agricultural Commissioner.
- Bob Rolan, Madera County Agricultural Commissioner

Who is performing monitoring and analysis?

Pacific EcoRisk, Martinez, CA has been performing monitoring and reporting that is

required by the waiver. Monitoring program manager is Dr. Michael Johnson, a water quality consultant and also scientist with U.C Davis.

What work has the Coalition completed?

- Formed Board of Directors; hold Technical Committee meetings (open membership).
- Filed a notice of intent and general report with the Regional Board on October 30, 2003, documents required to fulfill the new regulations for watershed coalitions. The Regional Board responded with a “Notice of Applicability” approval.
- Held numerous meetings in the region to inform growers of the new regulations, monitoring results and BMPs.
- Completed the conditional waiver monitoring required for 2004 and 2005.
- Filed required follow-up reports with the Water Board.

What are the Coalition’s goals?

- To operate an efficient, economical program that enables members to be in compliance with the Irrigated Lands Waiver.
- File required reports with the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) to maintain conditional waiver coverage for Coalition members.
- Implement an economical and scientifically valid water monitoring program for area rivers and agricultural drains (as required by the waiver).
- Spread costs equitably among owner/operators who are Coalition members.
- Communicate to landowners where water monitoring indicates problems and work to solve those problems.

Who is responsible for making the Coalition successful?

The individual members of the Coalition. Failure of the Coalition to meet deadlines, implement the proper monitoring programs or work to correct water quality problems would mean that individual land owners would be responsible for fulfilling those requirements. While Stanislaus County Farm Bureau and CURES representatives signed the notice of intent for the Coalition, it is the Coalition participants who are ultimately responsible for participating in Coalition activities, paying their fair share of all costs to carry out the conditional waiver program and participating in efforts to solve problems identified through water monitoring.

Coalition Cooperating Entities

Cooperating entities are those local groups and organizations who are committed to assisting the Coalition in reaching its goals and includes:

- Calaveras County Agricultural Commissioner
- Coalition for Urban/Rural Environmental Stewardship
- Ducks Unlimited
- East Merced Resource Conservation District
- East Stanislaus Resource Conservation District
- Madera County Farm Bureau
- Madera County Agricultural Commissioner
- Mariposa County Agricultural Commissioner
- Mariposa County Farm Bureau
- Merced County Agricultural Commissioner
- Merced County Farm Bureau
- Natural Resources Conservation Service, Madera
- Natural Resources Conservation Service, Merced
- Natural Resources Conservation Service, Stanislaus
- Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner
- Stanislaus Co. Department of Environmental Resources
- Stanislaus County Farm Bureau
- Tuolumne County Agricultural Commissioner
- Tuolumne County Farm Bureau

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