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## Letter from the President

*By Tom Aguilar*

**Our mission** is to pay for water testing, educate members on better management practices to keep our waters clean, inform our members of troubled waters, and work with environmental and government organizations to maintain clean waters.

The PNSSNS Subwatershed Group is one of ten subwatersheds in the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition authorized to provide a discharge waiver as required by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board. Our diverse membership represents both large and small farmers, organic farmers, rural property owners, nature and hunting preserves, animal rescue groups, country clubs, water districts and some who simply support self-monitoring to keep our waters clean.

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I reported in our previous newsletter (Winter 2010) that last year was like a roller coaster ride with your volunteer board of directors scrambling to keep up with the evolving new Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP). Six months into 2011, it appears the roller coaster won't be coasting for the foreseeable future. On April 7<sup>th</sup>, the Central Valley Region Water Quality Control Board (RWB) conducted a public hearing. (See page 2) I want to thank the following members for staying throughout this all day meeting to tell the RWB what we think about this program. Jim Gates, 4<sup>th</sup> generation rancher; Gaynell Gleason, 5<sup>th</sup> generation rancher; Roger Ingram, Farm Advisor, Placer/Nevada Co. Members who had to leave before they could give their comments included Jim Salisbury, Sutter Co. orchard; Jeff Pylman, Nevada Co. Ag Comm. Members in the audience included Elaine and Frank Correia, Bonnie Ferreira, Josh Huntsinger, Placer Co. Ag Comm.; Nicolaus Nicoli and Jim Gleason.

On June 7<sup>th</sup>, the RWB held another public hearing and approved a 24 month extension of the current program to give RWB staff time to write the individual coalition Orders. Their Framework guideline included a low threat/Tier 1 and require water testing only once every 5 years. However, despite 7 years of clean water test results, PNSSNS was not included in Tier 1. We will continue the pressure to be included in a low threat program.

Each of the ten subwatersheds under the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition (SVWQC) umbrella is unique both in geology and agriculture. PNSSNS drainage includes Upper Watershed/foothill terrain as well as valley basins. Rather than sit and wait for the Orders to be written, the PNSSNS Board of Directors is taking a more proactive stance by working closely with the other Upper Watershed groups and SVWQC to define and present our requirements to the RWB. Our plan is to push for PNSSNS to be included in a low threat program based on the past 7 years of test results at Coon Creek, our Best Management Practices (BMPs) implementations, (BMP) education and outreach already in place and working for decades within the counties.

The new Orders will include a groundwater component and at this writing there are many unknowns. If you have any opinions or want to assist in figuring out our best options, please call Linda Watanabe on 916-645-1774 or email her for more info.

On February 16<sup>th</sup>, PNSSNS held our 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Membership meeting at the Placer County Water Agency. Thank you to our guest speakers Cindy Fake and Roger Ingram from UC Cooperative Extension, Jason Jackson, NRCS, and Lesa Osterholm, Advisory Committee. Thank you to Elaine Correia, Bonnie Ferreira and Linda Watanabe for the home-made cookies.~

## Outcome of Regional Water Board Hearing

Two years of scoping meetings, stakeholder meetings, agriculture coalition meetings, SVWQC meetings and local PNSSNS board meetings where concerns were voiced for the current one-size-fits-all program culminated at the April 7, 2011 Central Valley Region Water Quality Control Board (RWB) meeting. The five member board heard public comments from the agriculture community and environmental representatives regarding the proposed new Framework and EIR. After an 11 hour meeting the Board approved the EIR, took no action on the Framework with its new Tier maps and directed their staff to begin work on the individual coalition Orders. These Orders will be developed following the new Framework criteria.

On June 9, 2011 a second RWB public hearing resulted in the RWB approving a 24-month extension of the current program so that RWB staff could write the individual coalition Orders.

In general the RWB Board concluded:

- Coalition structure is a successful, cost-effective way to address the irrigated lands water quality program.
- Rejected the environmental request for total elimination of coalitions which they believe are sheltering individual irrigators from dealing with the program; and would require hiring 280+ more RWB staff.
- Acknowledged need for a tiered approach due to the diversity of the watersheds within the Central Valley region.
- Directed staff to redraw the new Tier maps which had extremely few Tier 1 areas.
- Directed staff to begin drafting the specific Coalition Orders rather than spend more time revising the Framework document. A pasture and/or geographic order may be possibilities for PNSSNS and other upper watershed coalitions.
- Expressed desire to develop a program that would not unduly burden small and medium sized family farms and ranches. ≈

### Linda's Corner ...

I want to thank all members who responded over the past several months to my "emergency" emails requesting letters and emails be sent to our legislators, RWB staff and RWB Board. If you haven't received my emailings, please send your email address to [cleanwaters@netscape.com](mailto:cleanwaters@netscape.com) and I will add your address to the distribution. Our letters were heard as evidenced when RWB staff unveiled the "framework" containing a low threat option (Tier 1) to comply with the new Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program.

Regarding the 250-400% state fee increase, please know your voices joined the California Rice Commission, California Farm Bureau Federation, Western Growers and others to avoid these increased fees. It is important to recognize that our members of the Legislature (without exception) have been consistently opposed to these fee increases and many others that are being proposed to balance the budget. The pressure for increased and new fees is coming from elsewhere in the zeal to balance a \$10B plus budget deficit partially on the backs of rural California. ≈

### Need Assistance?

*Notes taken from Jason Jackson, NRCS Annual Membership Meeting 2/16/11*

The 2008 Farm Bill offers ag producers and non-industrial private forest landowners assistance to voluntarily conserve natural resources as follows:

- \* Curbing water erosion
- \* Curbing wind damage
- \* Conserving soil and water resources
- \* Protecting waterways from erosion and degradation
- \* Managing manure
- \* Managing grasslands
- \* Establishing wildlife habitat
- \* Managing forest lands
- \* Improving air quality

Call for more information:

Placer Co: Mike Brenner 530-885-6505

Nevada Co: Jason Jackson 530-272-3417

Sutter Co: Alan Atkins 530-674-1461

No. Sacto Co: Dwayne Coffey 916-714-1104

[www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov)

Thank you to the **Placer County Ag. Department** for sponsoring this newsletter.

## BMPs for Chlorpyrifos ... Use Them

Spring has come and gone. Summer is here! Therefore, some of our PNSSNS farmers know that it is time to use Chlorpyrifos (trade names include Dursban, Lorsban 4E, Lorsban 4E-HF, Whirlwind, Nufos 4E, Govern 4E, Chlorpyrifos 4E) on agricultural crops. Application of these products may be by ground or air and include alfalfa, walnuts, almonds and other crops.

In 2005 an exceedance of chlorpyrifos was detected in 2 samples taken from Coon Creek at Striplin Road. As a requirement of the subsequent "Chlorpyrifos Management Plan" PNSSNS tested for this pesticide through the past 5 years. No chlorpyrifos was detected in all 13 samples taken since 2005. Although agriculture sources were likely the cause of these exceedances, the series of monitoring events with no chlorpyrifos exceedances indicate that water quality objectives are being met for this chemical in the Coon Creek drainage.

In an effort to keep our water quality issues at a minimum, we strongly encourage that handling and applications of this insecticide are according to the label. Also, please utilize any and all Best Management Practices (BMPs) that are available. For example, control drift when applied, do not over-apply. Most of all be aware that if additional exceedances in run-off waters occur, then PNSSNS may...

- be forced to conduct additional outreach to its participants using membership fees which could increase future membership fees
- be forced to require individual farm management plans that could include individual water sampling

For more information in using Chlorpyrifos appropriately to reduce chances of an exceedance, please contact your local Ag Commissioners office. Placer County 530-889-7372; Nevada County 530-273-2648; Sutter County 530-822-7500; Sacramento County 916-875-6603.

In 2011 PNSSNS must still monitor for this constituent as part of the regular Monitoring and Reporting Plan during "Assessment" years. If there are no detections this year, this pesticide will be removed from test requirements for the next two "Core monitoring" years. Any pesticide that can be removed from required testing will reduce costs.~

## Managing Pesticide Use

*Notes taken from Cindy Fake, UC Cooperative Extension  
Annual Membership Meeting 2/16/11*

**Use pest management practices other than pesticides:**

- Use traps, pruning, natural enemy releases, etc.
- Choose lower risk alternatives instead of carbamates, organophosphates, and pyrethroids.
- Use copper only if you have no other alternative.
- Avoid using dormant season pesticides than can create water quality issues.

**Calibrate your sprayers**

- Spray after rain, not before - avoid wash-off
  - 1-2" of rain removes 1/2 spray residue
  - >2" rain removes almost all residue
- Do not spray in breezy conditions to avoid drift
- Consider strip spraying -spray alternate rows  
e.g. thrips, leafhoppers
- Spray hotspots instead of whole orchard/field,  
e.g. CA red scale

For more BMP info, call UC Cooperative Extension  
Farm Advisors for Placer and Nevada Counties  
530-889-7385~

### Year-Round Pest Management Guidelines

Season by season checklists for pests for key crops  
now available for:

|            |         |           |           |
|------------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| Alfalfa    | Almond  | Apricot   | Avocado   |
| Cherry     | Citrus  | Cotton    | Dry Beans |
| Grape      | Lettuce | Nectarine | Peach     |
| Pear       | Plum    | Potato    | Prune     |
| Strawberry |         | Tomato    | Walnut    |

Follow recommendations at  
<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu>

## Contact Information

### Board of Directors

**President - *Tom Aguilar***

Placer County, mandarin grower

**Vice President - *Ed Sills***

Sutter County, organic diversified farmer

**Treasurer - *Bonnie Ferreira***

Placer County, diversified/cattle rancher

**Secretary - *Jim Gates***

Nevada County, organic cattle rancher

**Director - *Frank Correia***

Placer County, cattle rancher

**Director - *Matt Conant***

Sutter County, walnut grower

**Director - *Alan Lauppe***

Sacramento County, diversified farmer

**Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition**

Bruce Houdesheldt [BruceH@norcalwater.org](mailto:BruceH@norcalwater.org)  
[www.svwqc.org](http://www.svwqc.org)

**Natural Resources Conservation Service**

Placer Co. 530-885-6505 [www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov)  
 Sutter Co. 530-674-1461

**Placer County Resource Conservation District**

530-885-3046 [www.placercountyracd.org](http://www.placercountyracd.org)

**Nevada County Resource Conservation District**

530-272-3417 [www.ncrcd.org](http://www.ncrcd.org)

### Agricultural Commissioners

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**Sacramento County -**

*Frank Carl* [carlf@saccounty.net](mailto:carlf@saccounty.net)

**Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board**

Irrigated Lands Program 916-464-4611  
[www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water\\_issues/irrigated\\_lands/index.html](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/irrigated_lands/index.html)



**PNSSNS**

**SUBWATERSHED GROUP**

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