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Our mission is to support our agricultural growers and producers, assisting them with compliance in the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program through information, education and resources for technical assistance to ensure good water quality throughout the area.

The PNSSNS Subwatershed Group is one of thirteen 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, water districts and some who simply support self-monitoring to keep our waters clean.

Letter from the President

By Ed Sills

Greetings to all and welcome to our new members. This year and next, you will be hearing from PNSSNS more than usual. Because of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board's (Regional Board) new Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) and Monitoring Reporting Program (MRP), there will be more forms to sign and new record keeping requirements. First off, go through this list to make sure your renewal will be successful.

1. Review your invoice and insure it is correct. If it is not correct, call 916-645-1774 or email Chelsie Nakasone pnssns.nakasone@gmail.com.
2. Pay your correct renewal fees. Please note that PNSSNS fees remain the same as last year.
3. Sign the **Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program - Required Notice of Confirmation** contained within your annual renewal packets. This confirms that you have read the new member requirements as written in *PNSSNS Subwatershed News -Summer 2014* also posted on www.cleanwaters.info and in the General Orders found at: www.swrcb.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/adopted_orders/general_orders/r5-2014-0030.pdf

Return the signed **Notice of Confirmation** to PNSSNS in the provided return envelope. The Regional Board requires 100% response.

Sometime by early December, you will receive another packet from PNSSNS. This will contain a 4 to 6 page **Farm Evaluation Plan** survey. The Regional Board requires 100% of members to fill out this survey. To assist all our members in filling out this **Farm Evaluation Plan** survey, we plan to do a number of things (see page 3). You will need to keep a copy of your **Farm Evaluation Plan**, a map of your farm and a copy of the *PNSSNS Subwatershed Newsletter-Summer 2014* (or the Regional Board's General Orders) in a safe place on your farm. You should be able to find this information should anyone from the Regional Board request it.

Your Board of Directors and the staff at PNSSNS have been working to make sure your compliance costs and requirements are reasonable and minimized. Unfortunately, what the Regional Board has implemented will require more effort on your part. Hopefully, if we all do our part to document our good practices through the **Farm Evaluation Plan**, we will show the Regional Board that we are good stewards of our land and water.

I thank all members who told friends, neighbors and relatives (who irrigate and sell any kind of ag product) to join before Oct 2nd, which was the last day of the Regional Board's "amnesty" period. As a result, PNSSNS added 81 new members and therefore renewal fees could remain the same as the past three years.

Mark your calendars! Our 9th Annual Membership Meeting is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, February 25, 2015. The PNSSNS Board of Directors and I wish you and your families good harvests, good health, and happy holidays!

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Water and Fire

By Elisa Noble, Placer County Resource Conservation District

Greek philosophers divided the world into four elements: earth, air, fire, and water. Farmers and ranchers know first-hand how intricately connected these elements are.

This year found farmers and ranchers in the midst of one of the worst droughts in four decades. They had to make many planting and planning decisions without knowing how much water would be delivered. Many people implemented voluntary conservation measures to use water as sparingly as possible. We commend all of you for your hard work in this effort.

Fire in California used to run low and cool, serving as a restorative force on the landscape. Now, many of our forests are grossly overstocked, sucking up water and providing fuel for large, catastrophic fires. The incidence of fire is even bigger and faster in drought years. Catastrophic fires leave behind destroyed wildlife habitat, scorched earth, and polluted water. One of the biggest concerns following a wildfire is impacted water quality as a result of soil erosion and a lack of groundcover. If you have any areas that have burned, you want to cover them with straw mulch and/or replant some type of vegetation as soon as possible. This is the same concept as installing buffer filter strips to catch any potential pollutants from entering waterways.

Many farmers and ranchers in the upper part of our watershed are growing a crop or raising livestock in forested areas that are at a high risk for fire. To protect your property in event of a wildfire, ensure that you have 100 feet of defensible space surrounding your home and any other important buildings or areas. 100 feet of defensible space means an area that is clear of dead brush, grass, and trees that would be fuel for a fire. Living plants and trees should be well spaced out. Trees should have lower limbs removed, and be trimmed at least 10 feet from the chimney.

We appreciate the great work farmers and ranchers do to conserve natural resources while producing agricultural products we all enjoy. ≈

2014 Water Monitoring Update

By Walter Clevenger, Placer County Resource Conservation District

Water quality compliance sampling and testing of Coon Creek waters were again conducted monthly during 2014 (February-September) at established sampling sites at Brewer Road Crossing and Striplin Road Bridge. All of the samples collected this year tested within the water quality thresholds established to meet State and County agricultural water discharge standards and requirements, **with no exceedances**.

Water sampling was conducted for PNSNS by Placer County Resource Conservation District (PCRCDD) and tested by Pacific Ecorisk and CalTest Laboratories for an array of potential contaminants and environmental chemistry including the presence of E. coli bacteria, pesticide residues (pyrethroid insecticides /EPA625m), turbidity, aquatic toxicity, heavy metals concentrations, etc. In addition to the laboratory tested sampling, PCRCDD crews also monitored and tracked field parameters including pH (a measure of how acidic/basic water is), Dissolved Oxygen levels (adequate dissolved oxygen is necessary to support aquatic forms), Electrical Conductivity (a good indication of the amount of soluble nutrients available for crops to absorb), Water Temperature and fluctuating Water Discharge Volumetric Flows (in Cubic Feet per Second). All PNSNS Coon Creek water samples and field parameters tested for during 2014 were within established threshold limit values.

While sampling Coon Creek waters PCRCDD field crews made several naturalist observations of various signs of wildlife utilizing the creek corridor as habitat. Abundant wildlife use, throughout multiple food-web trophic levels, serves as a good indicator of overall watershed health and its ability to provide for quality food, cover and water habitat resources. Raccoon activity was the most ubiquitous sign of wildlife noted at both sites. Striplin Road site also showed sign of active skunk activity (tracks, scat and lingering thiol-butane odor). June through August brought small flocks of Yellow-billed magpie (*Pica nuttalli*) to the oak trees along the creek. The Yellow-billed Magpie is one of California's most striking birds and often overlooked by California residents as "common". Popular among birders and compelling among conservationists, the Yellow-billed Magpie is a true endemic that lives only in California's Central Valley and coastal ranges. ≈

Coming Soon... Farm Evaluation Plan

Brief Recap: On March 12, 2014 the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) adopted the new Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) and Monitoring Reporting Program (MRP). The WDR and MRP are known as the General Orders of the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP). The ILRP, existing since 2003, has required owners and operators of irrigated lands to implement management practices necessary to protect and improve water quality. The new ILRP covers discharges to both surface water and groundwater. The groundwater coverage is new under the recently adopted ILRP and will address waste (i.e. salt, nitrates, pesticides) percolating past the root zone into groundwater. The ILRP does not address the pumping of groundwater.

PNSSNS members will be required to submit a Farm Evaluation Plan (template scheduled to be distributed Nov/Dec 2014) specifying measures being taken to protect water quality. At this writing, PNSSNS is considered to be a low vulnerability area, so these plans must be kept at the farming headquarters and must be provided to the Regional Board upon request. This compiled regional information will not include member identifying information.

Responding to the Farm Evaluation Plan is mandatory and the Regional Board requires 100% of surveys completed. To accomplish this feat, PNSSNS is doing the following:

- * Various locations such as local farm bureaus and RCD offices will be open for the day or part of the day with a PNSSNS person available to assist farmers/ranchers to fill out the survey. A schedule of locations and times will be included within the Farm Evaluation Plan packet.
- * The Farm Evaluation Plan surveys will also be sent via email to all members with an email address. This 'fill in the blank' form can be returned to PNSSNS electronically.
- * PNSSNS staff will call farmers/ranchers and fill out the forms over the phone.

To reduce our personnel costs to assist farmers/ranchers in filling out this Farm Evaluation Plan, we are asking for volunteers. This project has a beginning and an end. If you are interested, please call Linda Watanabe at 916-645-1774 or email pnssnssubwatershed@gmail.com ≈

“Amnesty” Update

As a result of Regional Board mailings to farmers who were not in compliance with the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program, PNSSNS accepted 81 new members for a 576 total membership for the 2014-15 year.

Beginning October 3, 2014, growers must submit two forms in order to obtain regulatory coverage:

1. Submit a New Membership Application to PNSSNS (www.cleanwaters.info) and pay penalty of \$500 + fees listed on chart at right.
2. Submit an electronic Notice of Intent, eNOI (geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/region5enoi) to comply with Order R5-2014-0030, to the Regional Board.
3. Send a copy of the completed eNOI along with the associated fee to the Regional Board. The administrative processing fee is \$50 if the grower has not received a **certified** letter from the Regional Board, or \$200 if they have.

Once the above steps are completed, Regional Board will send a Notice of Applicability confirming regulatory coverage by obtaining membership in PNSSNS, one of 13 subwatersheds under the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition. ≈

2014-2015	
Fee Schedule	
Due before Dec. 31, 2014	
Annual Dues	\$100.00
PNSSNS Water Monitoring	70¢ per irrigated acre
State Board Oversight Fee	75¢ per irrigated acre
Annual Dues + PNSSNS Water Monitoring + State Board Oversight Fee = Total Membership Dues	

**PNSSNS
Board of Directors**

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Alternate Director - Frank Correia

Placer County, Cattle Rancher



June 2014: This is a view of the culvert bridge at the PNSSNS Coon Creek test site. The north side of the bridge washed away during the spring rains of 2012. In Sep/Oct there were county contractors making bridge and road repairs. During May and June, a flock of several hundred Barn Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) nested and fledged juvenile birds inside these remnant metal culverts of the Brewer Road Crossing.



PNSSNS

SUBWATERSHED GROUP

PLACER | NEVADA | SOUTH SUTTER | NORTH SACRAMENTO

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