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Message from the President

By Ed Sills, Sills Farms, Inc.

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 watershed.

The PNSSNS Subwatershed Group is one of thirteen subwatersheds in the northern Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition under the Waste Discharge Order as required by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board. Our diverse membership represents both large and small farmers and ranchers including organic growers. The crops represented include pastures/ livestock, orchards, row crops, vines and managed wetlands. Our members continue to work diligently to protect our clean waters and keep our lands healthy.

Greetings to all and Happy New Year!

First of all, I would like to extend a welcome to our new members. Most importantly, I want to thank all of our growers and producers for their dedication to protecting our waters through responsible farming practices and the safe use of fertilizers and pesticides.

I also want to extend a big thank you to our staff and the PNSSNS Board of Directors. Your board members volunteer and work hard to attend meetings and work on your behalf. All the new requirements have increased staff time considerably due to increased tracking and reporting, developing new databases and informing our members of compliance requirements. PNSSNS has one full time employee and one part-time assistance during the membership renewal period. Staff responsibilities include tracking new regulations and providing strong advocacy for our members. PNSSNS has kept our costs to an absolute minimum but the increased regulations cost all of us more each year.

Much has changed under the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) since 2003 when we were first required to address potential agricultural discharges to surface waters. In 2014, a new Waste Discharge Order was adopted by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board and largely went into effect in 2015, 2016 and the 2017 year to come. Groundwater was added to this Waste Discharge Order and is being evaluated for potential concerns.

The 2017 year will focus on Nitrogen Management Reporting and evaluating its potential for leaching into groundwater as well as Sediment and Erosion Control Plans. High Vulnerability Areas (HVAs) have been established and will require those members to certify plans and report. More information will be available at the upcoming Annual Meeting. We encourage all our growers and producers to continue with implementation and maintenance of good management practices that are protective of our good water quality.

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PNSSNS Subwatershed Group
www.cleanwaters.info

Mark your calendars!

Our **Annual Membership Meeting is Tuesday, February 21st** at the Western Placer Waste Management Authority (the Dump), 3033 Fiddymont Rd, Roseville, CA 95747. The **meetings starts at 10am** with good presentations, information and time for questions and answers. We hope to see you all there!

2016/ 2017 Regulatory Review

By Lesa Osterholm

PNSSNS has been sampling for water and sediment quality since 2004 and has had very few exceedances resulting in excellent water quality. All members should continue to implement best management practices to keep our waters clean and healthy, and represent California's agriculture well.

2016 and 2017 are what's referred to as a Non-Assessment monitoring year and PNSSNS most likely will only monitor water quality for pH, temp and dissolved oxygen in 2017. Full Assessment monitoring returns next year and our sampling, monitoring and reporting costs will increase. There were no exceedances in 2016.

As of the time of this Annual Newsletter, PNSSNS has not been awarded the Low Vulnerability status it has been fighting for since 2003. PNSSNS submitted a plan to the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Board in May of 2015 and have not received a response yet. In April 2016, the PNSSNS Board members and staff conducted a tour for the regional waterboard staff and to further discuss our Reduced Monitoring Plan. The waterboard staff continue to question the valley farming area of the subwatershed and its *potential* for contaminants, although we have had excellent water quality from over 12,000 samples to date. Stay tuned as always, we are expecting a letter soon.

For reporting in 2017, members in Sutter and Sacramento counties are required to complete a new Farm Evaluation Plan (FEP) form annually. You only need to check the box at the top of the form if your farming practices have not changed. FEPs need to be returned to the PNSSNS office. Nitrogen Management Plans (NMP) are required for every member who applies nitrogen to their crops. These plans stay with the member unless you are farming in what may be designated a High Vulnerability Area (HVA) for potential leaching into groundwater. We will be notifying you very soon if this applies to you. If it does, PNSSNS needs to collect the information and provide a Nitrogen Summary Report to the waterboard. All increasing the labor and costs once again. In addition, a Sediment and Erosion Control Plan is being required for certain members in certain areas unless you have berms, levees or riparian vegetation in place. These requirements are still not clear and discussions are on-going. PNSSNS staff has fought hard to include irrigated pasture and cover crops to the exceptions but we have had mixed responses from the waterboard staff. All of this will be discussed at the upcoming PNSSNS Annual Meeting on February 21st.



PNSSNS ANNUAL MEETING

February 21st at 10am
Informative presentations

Western Placer Waste Mgmt
Authority
3033 Fiddymnt Rd
Roseville, CA 95747

Photo left: Sutter County orchard with many best management practices including efficient irrigation system and cover crops in place.

Pesticide Use Information

By Ed King, Deputy Agriculture Commission, Placer County

Pesticide laws, regulations, label directions, and permit conditions are in place to mitigate potential adverse environmental impacts and to protect applicators, field workers, and the public, as well as to aid growers in effective crop production. Therefore, it is important for stewards of agricultural lands to use pesticides judiciously and maintain up-to-date knowledge of current requirements.

Periodically pesticide rules change or are updated in response to new information from field monitoring and product re-evaluation studies. Case in point, chlorpyrifos, a widely used broad-spectrum insecticide used in the production of many crops, was designated as a restricted material in 2015. This change went into effect partly because of its tendency to drift or move off-site in runoff water and potentially contaminate rivers and streams in agricultural areas. Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) surface water monitoring tests often detected chlorpyrifos in these waterways at levels exceeding benchmark targets for aquatic invertebrates. The good news is there have only been three detections of chlorpyrifos in the PNSSNS area since 2003. Designation as a restricted material means that in order to purchase and apply chlorpyrifos for the production of an agricultural commodity you must first obtain a restricted materials permit issued by your County Agricultural Commissioner. This limits use of chlorpyrifos to certified applicators who may only make applications following notification to the Commissioner and according to specific permit conditions which define buffer setback distances from sensitive sites. Adhering to updated regulations like this not only protects the environment, but helps ensure that growers continue to have an assortment of tools available for pest management.

Effective January 2, 2017, DPR also adopted a number of revisions to worker protection regulations. Notable highlights include:

No employee under 18 years of age may handle pesticides used in production agriculture or enter a field under a restricted entry interval;

- Training for workers assigned to work in treated fields, previously required every five years, must be given annually;
- Employers must provide pesticide and application information to medical personnel treating an employee for suspected pesticide exposure;
- Employees must be notified of the location of decontamination facilities prior to handling pesticides and hand sanitizing gels or wet towelettes are not sufficient decontamination agents;
- Emergency medical postings must be updated within 24 hours of any changes to provider facilities;
- Property operators must display at a central location application information including crop or site treated, application start and end times, and pesticide Safety Data Sheets;
- Pesticide training records must include employees printed names, titles and sources of training materials, employer's name, and trainers name and qualifications.

Growers may also be interested in following pending regulations regarding pesticide applications near schools and day care facilities. DPR is proposing that certain agricultural pesticide applications within ¼ mile of school sites be restricted and that growers provide annual and application specific notification to schools.

**PNSSNS
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WHO IS REQUIRED TO JOIN PNSSNS?

If you irrigate your land, or land you lease or manage, and sell your crop or livestock commercially, then you are required to meet all the requirements yourself or join PNSSNS and comply as a group.

PNSSNS advocates on your behalf and manages the information you provide. PNSSNS coordinates information, education and outreach to assist you with the latest technological advances and recommended best management practices.

Your cooperation is appreciated and for more information, go to www.cleanwaters.info or call us at 916-645-1774



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