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## Message from the PNSNS President Ed Sills, Organic Farmer in Sutter County

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

Sills Farm  
Organic Beans  
Sutter County

On behalf of the PNSNS Board of Directors, I want to thank all of you for the good work you do on your farms and ranches. Your investments in conservation practices that protect soil and water are a necessary part of any successful operation. We're proud to represent you in this program.

It seems that we are always bringing you news of increased regulation requirement and costs, but this year we have a few bright spots to report. Our projected budget for the coming year shows a modest surplus, so the Board of Directors voted to reduce your membership dues from \$225 to \$200 per member and from \$4.75 to \$4.50 per acre. This action will provide some relief to our members. An organization funded by farmers and ranchers should not be building its resources up when many of its members are struggling.

On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, we were able to have six farmers and ranchers present their views on this program directly to the Regional Water Board members. Most of the board members were very receptive to what was said. We don't know what kind of relief will eventually be given to us, but it is certainly a change from years past. Please read more about it on page 3.

Lastly, I would like to thank our Executive Director, Lesa Osterholm, for the work she has done on our behalf. She works diligently for growers and ranchers interests and never fails to represent us as the good stewards we are. If you have any difficulties with this program, she is there ready to help. Thanks to all, Ed



## 2019 Water Quality Monitoring Results (to date)

PNSSNS has been sampling and monitoring for water and sediment quality since 2004 and has had very few exceedances resulting in excellent water quality. Everyone should continue to implement best management practices to keep our waters clean and environment healthy. Water sampling continues to be conducted for PNSSNS by Walter Clevenger, biologist and soil scientist.

There have been two E.coli exceedances this year in January and again in May. We had a longer rainy season this year which may have contributed. It still appears that migratory fowl most likely are a contributor. This is a reminder to all that have livestock and especially with the ability of storm water or irrigation water to run off into a creek, allow a large filter strip to capture any potential run-off and move young calves away from stream corridors during the first several months. This helps avoid potential pathogens from entering water ways.

Monitoring is now looking at water and sediment samples for **Pyrethroids**. These fall under many different trade names and are also used by rice production, household use, right of ways and structural pest control. In May there were two exceedances; Bifenthrin and Lamba Cy. Both the Placer and Sutter County Agricultural Commissioners determined there was no ag use in the vicinity of the monitoring site during those times except for rice which is not included in the PNSSNS requirements or monitoring. Please continue your safe use of these products and especially avoid or limit use near waterways.

### What's Due this Coming Year?

1. Sept/Oct/Nov- **Renew PNSSNS Membership**, pay dues  
**Verify your correct parcel numbers and acreage amounts!**  
**Update your crop types**  
**Add your correct email address so you can get quick updates**  
\*\*ALL Nevada County members need to verify the NEW parcel number sequence  
(send new parcel number info back with invoice and check to PNSSNS )
2. ALL Members- **Complete Sediment Plans** (most of you have already completed this)  
(SECP Plan is a one time only (unless you make changes to your property) and you keep plan on site for your records, In order to “self-certify” your Sediment and Erosion Control Plan, you must attend a workshop and take a simple, short test in order to self-certify your own plan. This course and test will be available to do ONLINE in January and February 2020 again.  
  
\*\*Nevada County members do not have to take the test to “self-certify” the Sediment and Erosion Control Plan if you are following the County Ordinance to prevent erosion. You can fill out the SECP and check the box on the last page that says you self-certify by following the County Ordinance.
3. If you completed a **Nitrogen Mgmt. Summary Report** earlier this year for 2018 usage, you must report nitrogen usage again for the 2019 year by December 31, 2019. Send or email it to PNSSNS. This is only for the High Vulnerability parcels that submitted earlier this year.  
(All members who use nitrogen will be required to report in 2021)
4. An online reporting database is in the works and coming soon!

Call or email PNSSNS if you have any questions or changes to your membership. Thank you!

## ILRP Regulatory Update

By Lesa Osterholm, Executive Director

The new Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) membership year is upon us now for the October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020 year. Invoices are being sent out along with this September Newsletter to provide updates and alert you to the regulatory requirements for the coming year.

As you know, PNSSNS advocates for our growers/ farmers and ranchers throughout the year for reduced costs and reporting requirements as well as address the challenges this program has caused our members. This year has been a busy one with new requirements and sending multiple letters and comments to both the State Water Board and the Central Valley Regional Water Board. For over fifteen years, we have advocated for many things but one constant was that irrigated pasture is really a Best Management Practice and should be recognized as such. We requested regulatory relief for all our members especially with costs. The good news is that the Regional Waterboard members and staff are listening. UC Cooperative Extension with Dr Ken Tate and team have presented numerous studies about the filtering capabilities of pasture as well as being a year-round perennial crop that holds the soil in place. This is especially important in the foothills which have been deemed "high vulnerability" for potential soil loss.

On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, myself and a team of ranchers and farmers provided presentations to the Regional Water Board on how the regulatory program adversely effects our growers. I hope you thank these members who include Bonnie Ferreira (Livestock/Pasture/ Hay/Rice), Brent Tadman (Certified Organic Rice/Hay), Ellen Fickewirth (Walnut/ Livestock/Pasture), Nicoli Nicholas (Hay/Pasture/Diversified/Underground Drip), Donn Coenen (Christmas Trees) and Patti Beard (Livestock/ Pasture). This group did a tremendous job pointing out high costs, duplicative reporting elements and duplicative agency oversight with some of the requirements. Letters to the waterboard can be viewed on the PNSSNS website [www.cleanwaters.info](http://www.cleanwaters.info) (its also in the middle of an update). The water board members really appreciated this level of detail and appreciated the time and effort our growers made for the presentations.

The next Central Valley Regional Water Board meeting will take place in Redding October 11<sup>th</sup> to discuss Irrigated Pasture, Managed Wetlands and possibly other "low threat" areas and crop types. The goal is hopefully to reduce reporting requirements and costs and have certain areas and crops recognized as "low threat". We hope this is finally the beginning for some positive changes with this program. Stay tuned!

### ENFORCEMENT LETTERS ARE BEING SENT

The Central Valley Regional Water Board (Region 5) will be sending out enforcement letters beginning in September. PNSSNS is required to report members who "drop out" and /or do not pay dues or complete the reporting requirements. The waterboard enforcement division is sending out enforcement letters and individuals are required to **reply within fifteen days**. **DO NOT IGNORE THESE LETTERS !!!!!**

If someone does not comply, these letters come with hefty fines per day and they hold the enforcement capabilities.

In some cases, it is a matter of a member enrolling the wrong parcel number or wrong number of acres. You can contact PNSSNS directly to resolve this and we can report the results to the waterboard. The waterboard enforcement staff utilizes GIS capabilities to view your parcels and measure what is being farmed. It is possible in some cases, they believe all of your parcel is farmed and irrigated when only a portion of it may be required in this program. If you receive one of these letters, contact PNSSNS immediately and we will try and help resolve any issues. Again, do not ignore these letters!

**PNSSNS**  
Board of Directors

**President - Ed Sills**

Sutter County, Organic Diversified Grower

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North Sacramento County, Diversified Grower

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**Director - Carol Scheiber**

Placer County, Cattle Rancher

**Executive Director- Lesa Osterholm**

**916-645-1774**

## NITROGEN MANAGEMENT PLANS

PNSSNS members in High Vulnerability Areas ONLY, that apply nitrogen fertilizers including organics, are required to complete Nitrogen Management Plans (NMP) annually. This information remains on site with the farmer unless the SWB/regional board deems a member in a high vulnerability area for potential nitrogen leaching. Anyone that submitted one earlier this year is required to submit again for the 2019 farming year.

If you are considered high vulnerability, you must either complete a Nitrogen Management Course and pass a test in order to self-certify your practices on your property OR you can have a certified crop advisor or other certified professional certify your annual nitrogen use and summary report. For Nitrogen Mgmt. Plan forms, visit the PNSSNS website at [www.cleanwaters.info](http://www.cleanwaters.info) and download a copy or pick one up at the Annual Meeting. Members are required to report the amount of nitrogen applied and the crop yield.

Irrigated pastures, managed wetlands or crops such as alfalfa that do not apply nitrogen, do not need to complete this form annually. For more crop guidelines on fertilizer use, go to [www.cdafa.ca.gov/go/FREPguide](http://www.cdafa.ca.gov/go/FREPguide) or call 916-900-5022



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