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Message from the President

By Ed Sills, diversified organic grower 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 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 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.

First of all, I would like to extend a welcome to our new members and thank you all for your diligence in completing all the required regulatory paperwork as part of your membership. 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 chemicals.

I also want to extend a thank you to our staff and the PNSSNS Board of Directors. Your board members volunteer and work hard, attending meetings and working on your behalf. All the new requirements have increased staff time considerably due to increased tracking and reporting, developing new databases and keeping our members in compliance. PNSSNS has kept our costs as low as possible but the increased regulations cost all of us more.

Increased regulations and costs continue to be the norm with the waterboards. The PNSSNS Board of Directors provided a four page comment letter to the Central Valley Regional Waterboard for consideration prior to amending the Waste Discharge Requirements (Feb 2019) affecting our members. You can view this letter on the PNSSNS website at www.cleanwaters.info

PNSSNS continues to investigate the advantages of becoming our own Third Party entity and will be meeting with regional waterboard staff to discuss this in the coming months. We will continue to keep all of you informed.

Mark your calendars! The **Annual Membership Meeting is Wednesday, February 20th, 10am- Noon,** at the Western Placer Waste Management offices (dump), 3033 Fiddymont Rd., Roseville, CA. (near Thunder Valley Casino) This meeting will provide education and regulatory updates. This is a great opportunity to ask questions and hear from the regional waterboard staff. Hope to see you all there!

Sediment and Erosion Control Plans

Sediment and Erosion Control Plan forms (SECPs) are available on www.cleanwaters.info or call/email PNSSNS and we'll forward one to you. The online course will be available for a few more months at <https://irrigated-lands-regulatory-program.thinkific.com/courses/online-secp-self-certification-training> All members must take the course online or in person, take the test, print out your completion certificate AND complete the sediment plan for your property. You can also hire a certified professional to complete these plans for you. The SECPs were due December 31st, 2018 so call PNSSNS if you have any questions or need assistance.

2017/2018 Water Quality Monitoring Results

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.

Soil and water quality compliance sampling and testing of Coon Creek drainage waters, a representative site of the PNSSNS crops, was conducted monthly during 2018 (Dec. 2017-Sept. 2018). This increase required by the waterboard of two additional months of sampling increased the annual costs. The established, representative sampling site for PNSSNS' watershed drainage is at Brewer Road crossing and limited, additional monitoring at Striplin Road crossing. To date, 2004-2018, **5,637 number of tests** have been performed with a few exceedances approximately ten years ago (chlorpyrifos and copper).

Water sampling continues to be conducted for PNSSNS by Walter Clevenger, biologist and soil scientist. The samples are tested by Pacific Ecorisk and CalTest Laboratories for an array of potential contaminants and environmental chemistry. The certified labs test for the presence of E. coli bacteria, pesticide residues (pyrethroid insecticides /EPA625m), turbidity, aquatic toxicity, heavy metals concentrations, etc. In addition to the laboratory tests, our sampling includes monitoring and tracking field parameters including pH (a measure of how acidic/basic water is), Dissolved Oxygen levels (adequate dissolved oxygen is necessary to support aquatic life), Electrical Conductivity (a good indicator of water's salinity and the concentration of other minerals and contaminants), Water Temperature and fluctuating Volumetric Flows (in Cubic Feet per Second).



Cover crops in Sutter County Orchard

Reduced Monitoring Eligibility?

PNSSNS continues to advocate for a Low Vulnerability status if that remains possible with the regional waterboards adoption of the amended Waste Discharge Requirements about to be approved. This status would most likely apply for Nevada and much of the western Placer County area (typically foothill areas). PNSSNS has requested irrigated pasture be considered a low vulnerability crop. In order for this to be helpful to members, reduced costs, labor, monitoring and reporting requirements would have to be part of the low vulnerability status requirements.



Naggiar Vineyards, Nevada County



Hay field

New and Costly Regulations

The California State Water Control Board (SWB) approved a precedential statewide Waste Discharge Order for the E. San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition last February 2018. This new Order affected all the subwatersheds in the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition including PNSSNS members. What was most significant is the increased groundwater quality testing which included private property wells used for domestic water on parcels that are also farmed. The results shall be made public on the SWB's website and the testing requirement starts in 2021 (at the owner's expense). The SWB's Order also mandates all members be considered high vulnerability and attempts to remove the recognition of low vulnerability groups among several other increased requirements.

PNSSNS members are regulated specifically by the Central Valley Regional Waterboard under their Waste Discharge Order and Waste Discharge Requirements, and therefore the regional waterboard is attempting to align the new State Water Board's regulation with the Sacramento Valley Waste Discharge Requirements at its February 2019 hearing. PNSSNS provided a four page comment letter to the Central Valley waterboard December 2018 and the letter can be viewed on the PNSSNS website at ww.cleanwaters.info

Each year, the State Water Board acreage fees continue to increase as well as the waterboard requirements for additional and costly monitoring, research and reporting that cost millions each year paid by the ranchers, farmers and growers. PNSSNS has heard from our members and continues to advocate concerned with the economic impact on the growers, the request for the waterboards to focus on priority areas of concern, to consolidate reporting requirements and recognize low vulnerability areas and crops to reduce costs, labor, monitoring and reporting for the members.

What is due from each member in 2019:

1. Membership annual dues and acreage fees, notify PNSSNS if any acreage changes so your parcels are enrolled in the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP)
2. Updated contact information and email addresses, saves costs for member announcements
3. New members provide Notice of Confirmation (NOC) and Membership Application
4. Nitrogen Mgmt. Plan and Summary reports. These stay on site unless considered high vulnerability and then PNSSNS will notify you for this information.
5. Sediment and Erosion Control Plans IF you have not already completed one, to be kept on site
6. Soon, Nitrogen and Irrigation Management form (not available yet)
7. No Farm Evaluation Plans due for a few years.

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



Because Mandarins Are Great!



Mandarin Hill Orchards, Penryn



SFREC Irrigated Pasture and Cattle Grazing

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NITROGEN MANAGEMENT PLANS

PNSSNS members 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.

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 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.cdфа.ca.gov/go/FREPguide or 916-900-5022



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