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## Message from the President

By Ed Sills, Diversified, Organic Grower

Happy New Year for 2020!

PNSSNS wishes all of you a prosperous farming and ranching year!

It has now been 17 years since PNSSNS formed and members were required to join a coalition and start monitoring the waters for any agricultural inputs. Since that time, as you all know, costs have risen dramatically and a heavy regulatory burden of lots of paperwork and reporting is required by the waterboard. PNSSNS is proud of all the positive examples you set through implementing best management practices protective of water quality and the environment as a whole.

PNSSNS is here to not only help you through the regulatory requirements but also to help be a voice for all the successes we have in our subwatershed and to advocate for reduced costs and reporting. Since we now have 17 years of monitoring and reporting, we feel this should be recognized as a consistent trend of good farming practices and clean water results from thousands of samples.

This past fall, the PNSSNS board and members provided letters and presentations to the waterboard on your behalf. UC Davis Rangeland Water Quality Lab, UCCE Farm Advisors, County Boards of Supervisors, Agricultural Commissioners, etc. provided letters to the waterboard and a panel discussion for the economic and scientific conclusions to demonstrate why irrigated pasture should be exempted from this regulatory program. The waterboard appreciated the efforts and the information, and they seemed to recognize that pasture has year round vegetation, allows for water infiltration, filters nutrients and holds soil in place. The counties that provided letters of support emphasized the importance of these “green belts” of pasture and how rural counties with high fire danger depend on these areas to help stop or slow the rate of fire spread. The waterboard’s final response from staff is they would need about 9 months or more to decide on this issue.

As always, stay tuned!

**Mark your calendars! Our Annual Membership Meeting is Tuesday, February 25<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm at the Placer County Water Agency, 144 Ferguson Rd in Auburn. Come for information, education and regulatory updates. Hope to see many of you there!**

**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 R5-2019-001 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 pasture/ livestock, orchards, row and field crops, vines and managed wetlands. Our members continue to work diligently to protect our clean waters and keep our lands healthy.

Contact PNSSNS  
At  
916-645-1774  
Or  
Pnssnssubwatershed  
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## 2018/2019 Water Quality Monitoring Results

PNSSNS has been sampling for water and sediment since 2004 and has had very few exceedances resulting in excellent water quality. All farmers and ranchers should continue to implement best management practices to help keep our waters clean and our environment healthy.

Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program monitoring completed through September 2019 in the PNSSNS subwatershed included management plan sampling and assessment monitoring at one site. A total of nine sampling events were conducted throughout the past year.

Water sampling was conducted for PNSSNS by Walter Clevenger, biologist and USDA soil scientist, for an array of potential contaminants and environmental chemistry. The certified labs tested 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 included 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 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).

The samples resulted in three exceedances of E. coli and 1 exceedance of pH in the past monitoring year. If possible, PNSSNS may have a qualified and certified lab “speciate” the water sample to determine if there is any E.coli present from bovine, birds or human trying to determine its source. There does not seem to be any management activity agriculture can do to prevent the pH result that can occur from time to time as it may be due to more natural factors. In May 2019, there was an exceedance of Bifenrin (pyrethroid). Both the Sutter County and Placer County Agricultural Commissioners both provided data that there was no contributing agricultural sources from their reports.

Although the members of the PNSSNS Subwatershed Group and the associated farms and ranches only make up 2.6 % of the land use in the watershed, this regulatory program puts heavy responsibility and costs on agriculture. Agriculture becomes responsible for monitoring the waters we may have little association with or control over because of such a mixed land use. In saying that, each and everyone one of us needs to continue to do our best to protect the water quality. Farmers that use nitrogen fertilizers should manage nitrogen applications according to the plant’s need and timing. Other best management practices include managing fertilizers including organics, pesticides and how we control and apply our irrigation water. Cover crops and perennial pastures are an excellent way to preserve soil from erosion and filter nutrients. Utilizing irrigation water to crop needs helps save water as well as reduce any potential run off.



### Who Needs to Join the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program?

Any land owner or land manager engaged in commercial agriculture and who irrigates the land. Call PNSSNS if you have any questions as whether you should belong or could be at risk of receiving a waterboard enforcement letter.

## 2020 Member Requirements

The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board's new Waste Discharge Order R5-2019-001 has several requirements of which many take place this year. PNSSNS is in its 17<sup>th</sup> year of compliance with the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP). Challenges continue with the increasing regulatory requirements and costs regardless of our area's low impact and excellent water quality results.

Member requirements for 2020 include the following:

1. All members are required to "participate" in **education and outreach** -this includes reading the Newsletters, attending an educational workshop or enrolling in an online course to name a few.
2. Everyone who applies external nitrogen fertilizers must complete an **Irrigation and Nitrogen Mgmt (INMP) Report beginning this year on the new report form for the 2020 crop year**. Everyone must complete this form and keep on site for your records UNLESS you have been notified you have a parcel(s) in a designated High Vulnerability Area for potential nitrogen leaching (PNSSNS will contact you directly). You will be required to submit the INMP Nitrogen HVA reports to PNSSNS.
3. **High Vulnerability Area (HVA) Nitrogen Mgmt Reports** for the 2020 crop year will be on the new Irrigation and Nitrogen Mgmt. form and must be certified, signed and a copy submitted to PNSSNS by December 31st each year. Landowners or land managers can take the Nitrogen Mgmt Course and test in order to "self-certify" your report. Anyone already certified to "self-certify" your own property must attend 3 hours of continuing education courses every 3 years. Otherwise, anyone certified by the waterboard such as a Crop Advisor can certify and sign your plans.

**Upcoming Nitrogen Self-Certification workshops on February 12<sup>th</sup> in Williams  
and Feb 19<sup>th</sup> in Woodland. Must RSVP to 916-778-0993**

4. **Sediment and Erosion Control Plans (SECP)** are required by every member. These plans remain on site for your records. If you have parcels designated as High Vulnerability (most of the foothills according to the waterboard due to slope), you are required to certify your plans but they still remain on site for your records. There is an online course to provide information and education about erosion control and it will be available only for about another month online. You can take the online course and receive a certificate in order to "self-certify" your SECP.

**The SECP course can be found online thru February 29<sup>th</sup> only at:**

**<https://irrigated-lands-regulatory-program.thinkific.com/courses/online-secp-self-certification-training>** (print your certificate and keep for your records)

Nevada County Members , you can "self-certify" your Sediment and Erosion Control Plans IF you are following the Nevada County Ordinance for grading and erosion control practices. These members can check the box on the last page of the SECP form that states "County Ordinance Applicable to Sediment & Erosion".

**ALL FORMS ARE ON THE PNSSNS WEBSITE [www.pnssnssubwatershed.com](http://www.pnssnssubwatershed.com)**

### **PNSSNS ANNUAL MEETING**

**Tuesday, February 25<sup>th</sup> at 2pm**

**Placer County Water Agency  
American River Room  
144 Ferguson Rd, Auburn, CA**

**Informative presentations,  
education and regulatory  
updates**

**PNSSNS**  
Board of Directors

**President - Ed Sills**

S. Sutter County, Organic Diversified Grower

**Vice President - Alan Lauppe**

North Sacramento County, Diversified Grower

**Treasurer - Ellen Fickewirth**

Placer County, Walnuts/Rice/Cattle

**Secretary - Carol Scheiber**

Placer County, Cattle Rancher

**Director - Tom Aguilar**

Placer County, Mandarin Grower

**Director - Matt Conant, Sutter Co Supervisor**

Sutter County, Walnut Grower

**Director - Laura Barhydt**

Nevada County, Cattle /Pumpkins

**Executive Director- Lesa Osterholm**

## Resources for Members

### Fertilizers:

Irrigated Pastures and Managed Wetlands that do not apply nitrogen have been recommended to be exempt from nitrogen management requirement. For more crop guidelines on fertilizer use, go to [www.cdfa.ca.gov/go/FREPGuide](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/go/FREPGuide) or 916-900-5022

### Sediment and erosion control, maps of your property:

Contact your County Resource Conservation District (RCD) and USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) for land management assistance and preventing erosion and runoff from your land.

Placer County RCD/ NRCS	530-217-6259
Sutter County RCD/ NRCS	530- 671-0850
Nevada County RCD/NRCS	530- 272-3417

### UCCE Cooperative Extension Farm and Crop Advisors:

Nevada/Placer Crop & Livestock 530-889-7385



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