

SHASTA-TEHAMA WATERSHED EDUCATION COALITION

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From the President

The Best Year Ever!!!!!!

To address water quality issues in the waters of the state, California implemented the Porter-Cologne Act in 1969. In 1982, irrigators were required to have a Waste discharge permit or participate in a voluntary waiver. Starting in 2002, the CVWQCB (RB) has allowed a waiver from the individual permit by providing a waiver for groups. The major benefit of the group waiver is cleaner water for downstream uses including residential, business, agriculture, recreation and wildlife. An additional benefit of the group waiver is that monitoring, reporting and water quality improvements are more efficiently accomplished at the drainage level and not at the individual farm waiver level. The resulting cost for our members is \$2.50 per irrigated acre annually compared to thousands of dollars annually for the individual waiver or permit approaches. In addition, the cost for the RB staff to support the group program is substantially less.

The group waiver program was extended for five years in 2006 by the RB. This decision was based on the successful implementation of the group waiver program by organizations like the STWEC. I would like to thank the board members for their countless hours of effort to make this success possible and also our 1602 members representing 75,460 irrigated acres. I particularly want to thank those who joined early in the program and showed the RB that the group waiver approach could get a majority of the irrigated landowners to participate to make the program a success.

The group waiver program five-year extension has new requirements added by the RB. These include extensive membership data submittals to the RB, an annual fee to pay for RB staff, and a group membership deadline of 12/31/06. There is also an increased enforcement effort by the RB staff.

Our water quality monitoring has indicated very limited water quality issues. Sacramento Valley water quality is good, which was known prior to the start of the waiver program. Our monitoring program is validating previous findings of good water quality. We found no irrigated land water quality problems from our monitoring on Burch Creek and therefore monitoring has now been completed on Burch Creek. The RB staff is following-up on the possibility of a landfill in Corning causing toxic water conditions in Burch Creek as suggested by our monitoring. Anderson Creek monitoring has indicated E. coli in the water. Preliminary analysis results from the University of California at Davis indicate human

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sources of the pathogen and hence outside the purview of the group waiver program. Monitoring results will be passed on to the appropriate state agencies. Coyote Creek monitoring has indications of low dissolved oxygen, which is a naturally occurring phenomena in low flow or stagnant creeks. These monitoring results in our two counties are from creeks determined to have the highest potential for water quality issues due to irrigated land and indicate statistically that few to no water quality issues should be expected in the future from our monitoring program.

Our extensive multi-year outreach and education program will continue using a variety of venues including meetings, newsletters and articles in local newspapers. We are grateful for the outstanding support that we have received from our two county's Agricultural Commissioners and their staffs as well as local UCCE personnel. This support has ranged from membership recruitment to hosting workshops and community meetings to publicizing best management practices.

The board has decided that the program has stabilized to the point where we should hire an organization to manage the organization's activities for us. Our day-to-day management and administration is now being conducted by the professional staff at the Cottonwood Creek Watershed Group under a month-by month contract with the STWEC while we complete our due diligence process. I applaud the board's time consuming active participation in all elements of managing the STWEC. This change will allow your board to function as a true board and not perform the day-to-day activity necessary in any organization. I appreciate that the three members of the board, whose terms have expired, have decided to run again for another two year term.

I look forward to another good year for the STWEC in its effort to improve the waters of the state of California.

See what's on the flip side!

Current Requirements for Irrigators

The deadline to join a coalition group directly has passed, so how do irrigators sign up? The process and applications forms for irrigated landowners and operators seeking to join Coalition Groups after the 31 December 2006 deadline have been established and posted on the Regional Water Quality Control Board website.

Go directly to:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/programs/irrigated_lands/index.html

This will take you to the section that describes process and includes links to the application form.

The RWQCB tried to set up a process and application form that would cover a variety of circumstances that have or will come up. If people meet one of the four conditions listed on the ILP-5.0, they just need to submit the form and supporting documents. If they don't meet one of the four conditions listed, they will need to complete both the ILP5.0 and ILP5.1, submitting both forms with supporting documents. As people call, they are encouraging them to download the forms from the website, but are happy to mail them as well.

Questions and requests, you can call the ILP telephone line at 916-464-4611 or send an email to IrrLands@waterboards.ca.gov

Info provided by Kelly Briggs, RWQCB.

2007 ANNUAL MEETING

Location: IOOF Hall -22551 Silverload Lane, Palo Cedro (off Hwy 44 @ Silver Bridge Road)

Date: May 21, 2007 **Time:** 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Agenda:

STWEC Overview-Bob Harris

Budget & Finances-Brendon Flynn

Membership-Hal Crain

Monitoring- Paul Bertagna

Election of Board of Directors- Dave Martin

Mark your calendar

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The STWEC uses a TAC, chaired by Paul Bertagna, to provide recommendations to the Board of Directors on technical issues. Topics include recommendations for monitoring sites, responses to monitoring results, BMP selection, membership outreach on technical issues and general education presentations. The Committee is composed of local farmers, ranchers, UCCE Farm Advisors and staff, County Agriculture Commissioners and their staff. If you are interested in participating, please contact the office. Another benefit of serving on this committee is by working with the board of directors, learning their duties and functions, helps to put you in the position of serving on the board, especially in the event of a vacancy.

Call anyone of the directors for more information.