



October 2016

## Dues Raised 25 Cents to \$4 Per Acre to Cover Expanding Program

The addition of groundwater to ESJWQC regulatory responsibilities has put increasing pressure on coalition budgets, prompting the Board of Directors to raise membership dues to \$4 per acre, returning them to the level charged in 2013. No single expense showed dramatic increases; rather a combination of higher costs

led to the board's decision including a jump in legal costs, adding full and part time staff to handle reporting of fertilizer applications by members and increased overall administration costs. Despite the dues increase, the board had to accept an overall lower level of financial reserves to cover emergency funding needs.

## Member Mailings Combined Into One Packet

As members have noticed recently, the number of reports required under the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program have increased dramatically since the new Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) went into effect in 2012. Varying deadlines for the numerous reports led to what seemed like constant mailings and reminders from ESJWQC. To streamline the process, ESJWQC staff came up with a Member Folder that is being sent to members in November. The Folder is divided into sections that contain:

- Membership Invoice
- Farm Evaluation Survey
- Nitrogen Management Plan Summary Report (NMP Summary Report)
- Nitrogen Management Plan (NMP) Worksheet
- Sediment Erosion Control Plan (SECP) Requirement Information

Members with large acreage and numerous parcels have been contacted and offered the same information in electronic format. Members who receive the Folder can request electronic format in future years.

## Crop Specific Workshops In 2017

A major change in the ESJWQC outreach approach will begin in 2017 with the scheduling of crop specific workshops. Starting in late January or early February and continuing into the Spring, workshops will be set up for the major acreage crops grown in the coalition region including almonds, walnuts, wine grapes, silage corn and possibly tomatoes. Each meeting will focus on agronomy and irrigation as it relates to protecting groundwater from

nitrogen fertilization impacts. Specialists in the subjects with experience in the featured crops will speak at each session along with coalition staff providing updates on Regional Water Board issues. The meetings will count toward the one meeting per year requirement for each member. Announcements on dates and locations will be sent out prior to the meetings.

## Nitrogen Management Plan Certification Sessions Continue to be Scheduled

Growers who farm parcels in areas designated "high vulnerability" to groundwater contamination are required to have their Nitrogen Management Plan Worksheet (NMP Worksheet) certified by a Certified Crop Advisor (CCA). The only alternative is for a grower to attend a course that enables them to certify their own NMP Worksheet. The courses, developed by the California Department

of Food and Agriculture and managed by the Coalition for Urban Rural Environmental Stewardship (CURES), are in their second year and more than a dozen are expected to be scheduled between October 2016 and April 2017. A grower may attend any session in the Central Valley to obtain the certification. Course dates are posted at <http://www.curesworks.org/growerTrainings.asp>.



# UPDATE NEWSLETTER

October 2016

[www.esjcoalition.org](http://www.esjcoalition.org)

## Online Member Portal Near Completion

A secure internet-based member portal is set to be launched on November 1, providing a password protected website where personalized information can be accessed. The portal will be accessible using any computer, laptop, tablet or phone with internet capabilities and Internet Explorer. Included on the portal will be a member's current invoice (including any unpaid balance), enrolled parcels and associated acreages and a page to request adding new parcels. There will also be capabilities to print a summary of acres enrolled, dues balance,

status of member requirements such as whether or not required surveys have been returned, which surveys are required for the member, and designation by parcel of surface and groundwater vulnerability. Other features include a calendar of events, parcel maps, and the Nitrogen Management Plan Summary Report data entry form. All members who have provided an email address to ESJWQC will be notified when the portal is online and offered a password to use the site.

## Program In Development for Sediment and Erosion Control Plan Grower Certification

Central Valley water quality coalitions are combining resources to develop a program for growers to self-certify their Sediment and Erosion Control Plans (SECP). Currently, these plans are required of growers who have the potential to discharge storm water or irrigation drainage into waters of the State. The existing requirement is that a professional such as an engineer must develop and approve these farm specific plans. The deadline has already passed for this certification plan to be developed and kept on farm but many growers have

not completed the plans. The new program is intended to enable growers to participate in the training, take a test then develop their own plan. The Central Valley coalitions hired an engineering firm to develop the training curriculum that must then be submitted to the Regional Water Board for approval. The firm will work closely with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and coalition leads to develop the curriculum before it is submitted for review. Plans are to hold grower training sessions at various locations by early 2017.

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