



## Water Board Enforcement Increases ESJWQC Membership

The Regional Water Board in 2019 continued its efforts to contact all irrigated crop land operators in the Central Valley not appearing on any coalition membership roles. In the ESJWQC region, those efforts netted 6,000 acres for the coalition in 2018-19 along with more \$200,000 in back dues revenue.

Non-enrollees that are contacted by the Regional Water Board are given the same option as any grower in the Central Valley: obtain coverage through an individual Waste Discharge Requirement or join the water quality coalition encompassing the irrigated cropland, to obtain regulatory compliance. To date, all

new members have selected the latter option.

Early on, the ESJWQC Board of Directors set a policy that any new members who operated irrigated crop land since the program started in 2004 would be required to pay back dues. If property was purchased after 2004, the back dues were prorated to that later date. This policy remains in place with no exceptions granted by the Board of Directors to date. The board's position, supported by members, is that paying back dues is the only equitable approach for leveling the playing field for existing and new members.

## Dues Remain at \$4 Per Acre Despite State Fee Increase

For the fourth year in a row, membership dues remain unchanged for 2020 at \$4 per acre. This despite three years of increases in fees charged by the State Water Board. While the increase was outlined two years ago by State Water Board staff, the \$1.08 per acre fee is making it a challenge for all Central Valley coalitions to hold down their annual dues levels. The

State fee, which is used to pay for Regional Water Board staff and its other program expenses, was increased by 11% for 2020. As for the ESJWQC 2020 budget, operating costs are remaining stable but funds from new memberships and late fees charged to members have increased revenues which allowed the Board of Directors to maintain the \$4 per acre level.

## ESJWQC Joins Groundwater Trend Monitoring Collaborative

Is groundwater quality getting better, worse or staying the same? That question for the ESJWQC region will be answered through the groundwater quality trend monitoring program required under the Waste Discharge Requirements adopted in 2012.

Candidate wells for the trend monitoring network were volunteered by ESJWQC members. While more than 500 wells were offered by members, fewer than 20 met the strict requirements including access to well construction logs and shallow depth. In 2018, 12 wells were sampled; in 2019 the total was 21 wells. (See the 2019 Member Annual Report for well sampling results.) Every five years, a trend analysis will be written and submitted to the Regional Water Board. This report will be the first of ongoing five-year reports that will identify trends in groundwater quality in the coalition for constituents such as nitrate.

Soon after the 2012 WDR adoption, ESJWQC staff and consultants began discussions with other Central Valley coalitions that led to the formation of the Central Valley Groundwater Monitoring Collaborative (CV-GMC). The coalitions saw potential efficiencies in producing the five-year report together and by cooperating on other technical issues related to groundwater monitoring, such as development of a single database to house groundwater results that enable efficiencies in shared reporting and data management. There is also potential future collaboration opportunities with other groundwater monitoring programs that involve irrigated agriculture, including data gathering for Groundwater Sustainability Authorities (GSAs) and the Surveillance and Monitoring Program (SAMP) under CV Salts.

## ESJWQC Bylaws Change on Board of Directors Makeup Goes to Member Vote

Proposed changes in the ESJWQC bylaws is expected to go out for a member vote in early 2020. The changes involve adjusting representation on the Board of Directors to ensure that growers representing the three main counties – Stanislaus, Merced and Madera – each have equal representation on the board. An additional seat or seats would be chosen by the Board after the next election from a combination of sources: current ESJWQC board members and growers from Tuolumne, Mariposa and

Fresno counties (Fresno County has a small amount of irrigated acreage in ESJWQC near the San Joaquin River and Friant Dam.)

Should the bylaw changes be adopted, members will be notified and asked to nominate candidate board members. Those who meet the criteria for board members will then be put on a ballot to be distributed to the membership. This vote is expected to take place in Fall or Winter 2020.



# UPDATE NEWSLETTER

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

## Pyrethroids Found in Waterways Prompting More Monitoring

Insect pressure was heavy in almonds, walnuts and alfalfa in June and July of 2018 and 2019, leading to increased applications of pyrethroid insecticides. Unfortunately, coalition sampling of regional waterways found pyrethroids that could have originated from either irrigation runoff or spray drift from treated fields. These detections occurred in five of the six Core sites. These Core sites serve as indicators of potential water quality issues at other monitoring sites within a Zone. Based on the surface water monitoring plan design followed by the ESJWQC, the pyrethroid

detections at Core sites trigger additional sampling in 2020 at the represented sites in the Zones.

Finding pyrethroids in these five Core sites will lead to new sampling in 16 represented sites in 2020. This sampling will end after two years if no pyrethroid exceedances occur. In June 2019, members with fields adjacent to any coalition waterway were notified by mail to take extra precautions when spraying pyrethroids or any pesticides near waterways.

## Web Portal Provides Online Access to Member Info

Use of the secure ESJWQC member portal is a convenient way for members to access membership information or make updates and changes. A feature recently added to the password-protected portal is the option of naming a secondary contact such as a farm manager or crop advisor who is then allowed access to the Farm Evaluations and Irrigation and Nitrogen Management Plan Summary Reports. You can also indicate if you would like to receive all coalition materials electronically. The portal is accessible using any computer, laptop, tablet or phone with internet capabilities and a web browser. If you are interested in using the portal, the first step is emailing ESJWQC staff at [contactesj@esjcoalition.org](mailto:contactesj@esjcoalition.org) and requesting a passcode. You can also request a passcode by calling 209-846-6112. Then you can login at [www.esjmemberlogin.com](http://www.esjmemberlogin.com). All your existing

member information is prepopulated. Select from a menu to view the current invoice (including any unpaid balance), enrolled parcels and associated acreages and a page to request adding new parcels. Members can also print a summary of acres enrolled, review status of member requirements such as whether or not required surveys have been returned, which surveys are required for the member, and a designation by parcel of surface and groundwater vulnerability. Other features include a calendar of events, parcel maps, and data entry forms for the Irrigation and Nitrogen Management Plan Summary Report and Farm Evaluation Survey. Members with large acreage and numerous parcels find the portal especially useful. A new feature on the portal is a document repository that enables members to retrieve and print records from previous years.

## 2019-2020 ESJWQC Board of Directors

**Alan Reynolds**, Gallo Vineyards, Inc., Chair  
**Breanne Ramos**, Merced Co. Farm Bureau, Secretary  
**Bill McKinney**, almond grower, Treasurer  
**Christina Beckstead**, Madera County Farm Bureau  
**Bill Brush**, B&B Consulting, grower  
**Jennifer Markarian-Peters**, Markarian Family LP, Madera  
**Tom Roduner**, grower  
**Al Rossini**, Albertoni Land Co Ltd., grape grower  
**Scott Severson**, Mid-Valley Agricultural Services

## ESJWQC Staff

**Parry Klassen**, Executive Director  
**Michelle Pimentel-Montez**, Chief Financial Officer  
**Wayne Zipser**, General Manager  
**Caitie Campodonico**, Grower Relations  
**Jennifer Sanchez**, Membership Manager  
**Jenni Theis**, Membership Assistant  
**Stefani Dias**, Grower Relations (Madera County)  
**Brittany Grogan**, Grower Relations (Stanislaus County)  
**Kierstan Rhodes**, Grower Relations (Merced County)



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