

U.S. Senate Confirms Strickland as Interior Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, Parks



Thomas Strickland

Thomas Strickland was confirmed by the U.S. Senate as Interior assistant secretary for fish and wildlife and parks. President Barack Obama nominated him for the position

on Feb. 20. Strickland, chief of staff for Interior, will serve concurrently in that role.

“I have worked closely with Tom for many years on natural resource initiatives and know that his vision, his experience, and his wisdom will be invaluable in the years ahead,” Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar said.

The assistant secretary for fish, wildlife and parks oversees and coordinates policy decisions for the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Strickland’s background includes serving as United States Attorney for the District of Colorado from 1999 through 2001. Together with Salazar, Strickland was a founder and board member of Great Outdoors Colorado, the lottery-funded endowment for Colorado’s public parks system.

He twice earned the Democratic nomination for the U.S. Senate. From May 2007 to when he joined Interior, Strickland was executive vice president and chief legal officer of UnitedHealth Group. Before that, he was a partner of the Hogan & Hartson law firm, serving as managing partner for the firm’s Colorado offices. He was also a member of Hogan & Hartson’s executive committee and worked closely with UnitedHealth Group as outside legal counsel on a variety of issues.

Stakeholder-Driven Effort Moves Forward to Develop Salinity, Nitrate Plan in Central Valley

As the accumulation of salts in soil and surface and groundwater supplies continues to negatively impact water quality and quantity throughout the state, a stakeholder-driven effort to develop a comprehensive salinity and nitrate management program for the entire Central Valley region is under way. ACWA staff has been attending the meetings and tracking the process.

Initiative Launched

With the support of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability initiative was launched in January 2006 after the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board and State Water Resources Control Board held a joint workshop on salinity and nitrate in the Central Valley.

The goal of CV-SALTS is to craft a comprehensive region-wide Salt and Nitrate Management Plan, developed and implemented through amendments to the three water quality control plans that cover the regional board’s jurisdictional area. It is the regional board’s primary mechanism to conduct research and develop technical and science reports for the basin plan amendments and to implement the plan once it’s adopted by the board.

Since its inception, CV-SALTS has worked with stakeholders on activities related to the nature of salinity and nitrate and their effects on the environment, including public outreach, the development of a detailed work plan, and a study conducted by UC Davis on the significant and negative economic impacts of salinity in the Central Valley.

Nonprofit Formed

In July 2008, the non-profit Central Valley Salinity Coalition was formed to

work in partnership with CV-SALTS and organize, facilitate and collect funding for efforts needed for the efficient management of salinity and nitrate in the Central Valley.

In April, the coalition completed an RFP process for a Salt and Nitrate Sources Work Plan and Pilot Implementation Study that will select three to five areas impacted by salt in the Central Valley and collect and review data to explain the net balance of salt in the area. In March, the regional water board received \$1.2 million for Salinity Management Planning from the state water board’s Cleanup and Abatement Account. This allocation augments initial contributions from stakeholders, but additional funding is being pursued.

The regional water board is encouraging more active participation by all affected parties, which they consider to be any and all users of Central Valley waters, to ensure stakeholder issues and concerns are addressed as basin plan amendments affecting the use designation and quality of those waters are developed.

More information is on the Internet at www.cvsalinity.org.

‘Salt of the Earth’ Documentary

The 60-minute public television documentary, “Salt of the Earth: Salinity in California’s Central Valley,” received two regional EMMY nominations from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. Major funding for the documentary was provided by the Water Education Foundation with additional assistance from the state water board and California Water Institute. More information is at <http://tinyurl.com/cz9v4l>. — ACWA Regulatory Advocate Danielle Blacet