

CV-SALTS SUMMARY DOCUMENT

The overarching goals adopted by CV-SALTS include:

- Sustain the Valley's lifestyle;
- Support regional economic growth;
- Retain a world-class agricultural economy;
- Maintain a reliable, high-quality urban water supply; and
- Protect and enhance the environment

CV-SALTS was tasked with developing a Salt and Nitrate Management Plan (SNMP) for the entirety of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board's jurisdictional area.

Although broader in overall scope, the SNMP was also developed to meet requirements set forth in the State Recycled Water Policy (RWP). To achieve desired outcomes for the management of salt and nitrate within the Central Valley, this Central Valley SNMP addresses the requirements of the RWP, and also addresses legacy and ongoing salt and nitrate accumulation issues. The Central Valley SNMP is built on the following management goals;

- 1) *Ensure a Safe Drinking Water Supply,*
- 2) *Achieve Balanced Salt and Nitrate Loadings and*
- 3) *Implement Managed Aquifer Restoration Program*

In general, these goals recognize the need to focus limited resources first on health risks, and then focus on balancing salt and nitrate loading followed by restoring impacted water. Notably, however, activities (both regulated and unregulated) leading to salt and nitrate balance are ongoing now (e.g., preparation and implementation of nutrient management plans, improved irrigation practices, real-time management of discharges, pilot studies, etc.) and are anticipated to continue and improve moving forward. With respect to the ultimate goal of restoring the region's groundwater basins, the SNMP recognizes that it will be a time and resource intensive effort. The SNMP provides a framework with milestones and timelines for undertaking such restoration efforts. The Central Valley SNMP also identifies a number of proposed policy changes that will support this effort, and recommends that the Central Valley Water Board take action to adopt these policy recommendations.

The Central Valley SNMP provides the over-arching framework, including default identification of current ambient water quality and available assimilative capacity in the Central Valley's groundwater basins, for the Central Valley. However, due to the diversity of the region, the SNMP also provides for local flexibility and encourages local-scale management plans to be developed and implemented by local and/or regional entities as local stakeholders deem appropriate.

The SNMP includes the required elements from the RWP and recommends new policies to be considered for adoption by the Central Valley Water Board. To better explain some of the proposed policy changes (and how they might work in reality), the SNMP is supported by archetype/prototype studies ("proofs of concept") that provide examples and/or guidelines for consideration when implementing various elements of this SNMP. Further, findings from technical studies provide the basis for SNMP recommendations for the short and long term management of salt and nitrate throughout the Central Valley. The Central Valley SNMP establishes the minimum or default

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expectations for the management of salt and nitrate in discharges to surface and groundwater in the Central Valley Region. Generally, and after the relevant recommendations are adopted into Basin Plans, the SNMP recommends that management measures identified in the SNMP be implemented through the Central Valley Water Board's issuance of Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) (individual or General Order) or Conditional Waivers (Waivers).

Policies being developed for Board consideration:

- Nitrate Permitting Strategy (13 June 2016),
- Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level Policy (3 June 2016),
- AGR Salinity Policy (14 June 2016),
- Offsets Policy (3 June 2016),
- Exceptions Policy (8 June 2016),
- Management Zone Policy (10 June 2016),
- Drought Policy (3 June 2016),

These will provide new authorities to the Board. The existing authorities provided in the Basin Plans will remain and available to the Board.

Archetype/prototype studies staff plans to propose as Basin Plan Amendments are:

- Incorporating a process into the Basin Plans for determining appropriate designation and level of protection of Municipal and Domestic Supply (MUN) in agriculturally dominated water bodies
- Setting salt/boron water quality objectives and adding/modifying an implementation program for the Lower San Joaquin River
- Evaluating the designation/dedesignation of the MUN and agricultural supply (AGR) beneficial uses in a portion of the Tulare Lake Bed Groundwater Basin

Alternatives and implementation Strategies can be found in:

- Nitrate Implementation Measures Study (NIMS)
- Strategic Salt Accumulation Land and Transport Study (SSALTS)

Website for more info:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/salinity/index.shtml