

Lower San Joaquin River Committee



SALINITY ON THE LOWER SAN JOAQUIN RIVER

Salinity on the Lower San Joaquin River (LSJR) between the Merced and Stanislaus River inflows has been a long recognized problem. In 2009, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region (Regional Water Board) began a process to develop an amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River Basins (Basin Plan) to include site-specific water quality objectives for salinity and boron in the Lower San Joaquin River.

The proposed amendment was being prepared for several reasons: 1) the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) directed the Regional Water Board to consider numerical objectives for salinity in the San Joaquin River upstream of Vernalis; 2) the State Water Board is presently updating the salinity objectives for protection of Southern Delta agriculture immediately downstream of this river section; 3) the Salt and Boron TMDL that was approved by US EPA in 2006 called for new salinity and boron objectives for the San Joaquin River upstream of Vernalis; and 4) US EPA did not approve the boron objectives for the LSJR adopted by the Regional Water Board in 1988 and they must be redone.

To ensure consistency in salinity policy region wide, the Regional Water Board transferred this activity to CV-SALTS to ensure that what is developed for the Lower San Joaquin River is consistent with salinity policy that CV-SALTS is charged with developing for the entire Central Valley. CV-SALTS is a stakeholder effort to develop a salt and nutrient management plan for the entire Central Valley. CV-SALTS formed a Lower San Joaquin River (LSJR) Committee to develop a proposed basin plan amendment for salinity and boron objectives specifically for the Lower San Joaquin River.

The LSJR Committee is presently made up of stakeholders in the basin and downstream. The LSJR Committee has been meeting periodically for over a year now to educate themselves on the salinity issues, beneficial uses being made of the river, water quality needs and other factors that impact salinity in the LSJR. The LSJR Committee has developed a workplan for completing the basin plan amendment process and is now beginning to implement that workplan. A brief summary of that workplan is attached to this letter.

Groups and individuals interested in the salt and boron impairment in the Lower San Joaquin River are encouraged to join the LSJR Committee stakeholders as they move through the workplan to develop the proposed Basin Plan Amendment. Stakeholders who may be interested might include agricultural interests, water districts, governmental officials, environmental groups, or others with interest in or responsibility for agricultural drainage, storm water management, wastewater treatment and disposal, water diversions, or management of flow in the San Joaquin River. For those interested in staying informed about the committee's work and review the committee's proposed amendments, you can sign up at http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/reg5_subscribe.shtml by checking the box entitled "San Joaquin River Salt and Boron". By doing this you will receive periodic updates and locations of applicable documents that are being reviewed or prepared by the LSJR Committee. ALSO NEED A WEBSITE LOCATION??

If you have any questions, please contact _____.