

CEO BULLETIN



To: Board of Directors
From: Rick L. Callender, CEO

Weeks of August 19 – September 8, 2022

Board Executive Limitation Policy EL-7:

The Board Appointed Officers shall inform and support the Board in its work. Further, a BAO shall 1) inform the Board of relevant trends, anticipated adverse media coverage, or material external and internal changes, particularly changes in the assumptions upon which any Board policy has previously been established and 2) report in a timely manner an actual or anticipated noncompliance with any policy of the Board.

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1. Update on State and Federal Actions Related to PFAS

The state and federal governments continue to move toward increased consumer notification and regulation of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). PFAS have been widely used in consumer and industrial products such as stain-resistant fabrics, food packaging, and firefighting foams. PFAS can accumulate in humans, animals, and the environment.

On July 7, 2022, the State Water Resources Control Board Division of Drinking Water (DDW) proposed notification and response levels for Perfluorohexane Sulfonic Acid (PFHxS) at 2 and 20 parts per trillion, respectively. If a notification level is exceeded, drinking water providers must notify their governing bodies and DDW recommends they inform customers. If a response level is exceeded, the water provider must remove the source from service; use treatment or blending; or notify customers if the affected source remains in service without treatment.

PFHxS is one of the more commonly detected PFAS in water supplies throughout California. If the proposed notification and response levels are finalized there may be significant impacts to drinking water providers. Statewide data from over 1,000 drinking water sources sampled from 2017 to 2022 indicate that 95% of sources have PFHxS above the notification level and 15% have PFHxS above the response level. Based on Valley Water's voluntary testing of 55 groundwater monitoring wells, PFHxS was above the notification level in 15 wells and above the response level in 2 wells. These wells are not used for drinking water. PFHxS has not been detected in Valley Water's treated surface water.

On August 26, 2022, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a pre-publication rule to designate two PFAS substances (PFOA and PFOS) as hazardous under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act. Valley Water is evaluating the potential implications of this rule.

Valley Water continues to track the rapidly evolving PFAS science and regulations, work with regulatory agencies and water retailers to evaluate potential sources and treatment technologies, and provide timely, transparent communication to our customers and the public.

For further information, please contact Greg Williams at (408) 630-2867.

2. Uvas Creek Fish Habitat Improvement Project Construction Completed

The recently completed Uvas Creek Fish Habitat Improvement Project is part of Valley Water's Stream Maintenance Program. The project was funded by the Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection program, project D4. Uvas Creek provides important habitat for steelhead trout and other native fish. Every year, steelhead migrate upstream through Uvas Creek, seeking appropriate sediment to build their gravel nests (redds). As they migrate upstream, they need a diversity of instream habitats such as sheltered pools to hide from predators, and fast flowing waters to forage for food. The objective of this project is to increase native fish habitat through gravel and large wood augmentation at three sites on Uvas Creek between Santa Teresa Boulevard and Miller Avenue in Gilroy.

The large wood installed at the project sites are engineered log jams, which are designed to encourage development of shallower, more diverse-flowing water within the existing slow flowing habitat to increase the variety of habitat types. Two of the three sites in this project feature the "engineered bar apex jams" design approach, which were the first of their kind to be constructed in a Valley Water creek. Engineered bar apex jams mimic naturally forming log jams that result in a scour-pool at the upstream end, and a mid-channel sediment bar that forms with the deposition of gravels at the downstream side of the log jam. This results in the flow splitting around the newly formed sediment bar island, resulting in faster and more diverse flow patterns that increase habitat variety.

Planning and design of this project involved the concerted efforts of Valley Water engineers, biologists, stream maintenance staff, and design engineer consultants from AECOM and Balance Hydrologics in order to complete the necessary designs, flood analyses, permitting, biological surveys, and migration planning to minimize impacts of this project. Construction of the engineered log jams and gravel augmentation, conducted by Valley Water's field construction staff, started this summer in mid-June 2022 and was successfully completed by mid-August 2022.

On August 4, 2022, the project was featured in Gilroy Dispatch under the title "Uvas Creek work aims to help fish" (<https://gilroydispatch.com/uvas-creek-work-aims-help-fish/>).

For further information, please contact John Bourgeois at (408) 630-2990.
