



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE OF
PUBLICLY OWNED TREATMENT WORKS

MONTHLY UPDATE

A Message from the Executive Director...

March 2004

By 1837, the British Empire was well on its way to fulfilling the declaration that “the sun never sets” on it. New Zealand, Australia, India, South Africa, Nigeria, England, Scotland, Ireland, Canada and Christmas Island were part of, or soon to be part of, the Empire. An amazing statistic really, for a population that at the time totaled no more than about 3 million people in England. [Editorial note: Mr. Miller’s amazement has nothing to do with the fact that the origin of “Miller” is English – by way of Ireland].

When Queen Victoria assumed the throne in 1837, London was a crowded, smelly, difficult to navigate city, and it had no sewers. Cholera routinely killed thousands. But this isn’t a story about sewers, as important and sacred as you and I believe them to be. This is about the telegraph.

When the British first laid telegraph lines alongside its railway in 1837, they had little reason to know that this one action would ultimately allow it to administer a far-flung empire. But after they captured their first killer, who had escaped on a train (the police were waiting for him at the next station), they began to have a clue.

The really interesting part of this story, at least to me, isn’t necessarily about the start of telecommunications. All right, that’s pretty fascinating, since communications hadn’t really changed much since the days of the Romans, but there’s a lesser-known part of this that is really remarkable. It involves all of the cable that was laid around the world for the telegraph system.

Crossing the Atlantic Ocean with a submarine telegraph line was an incredible feat; they started in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, and using two warships, pulled the wire to the opposing sides of the Atlantic. The telegraph worked for about two weeks, because unfortunately, scientists had not anticipated the high voltages that were required to send messages across those thousands of miles. The cable burnt out until new, low voltage wires were installed.

Submarine telegraph lines spread across the world as the British government realized the full potential for governing and communicating with its far-flung empire. But it also contributed to their worries. The website: British Empire: Science and Technology notes: The cables were kept in British colonies or under British controlled seas as much as possible, but this was not always possible. Whenever this occurred, the British worried about interceptions of messages or of cutting the link altogether. For example, the link to Australia passed over Dutch Java, the South American cable ran through Portuguese Madeira, but probably the biggest headache of all to Britain’s strategic thinkers was the cable that ran from London to Calcutta. In fact, there were three such cables. One ran from Lowestoft to Germany, through Russia, Persia and into India. Apart from the strategic nightmares of this essential line of communication was the fact that the Germans and Russians were in a position to keep the costs of using this cable artificially high. The second cable was not much better. It ran across Europe to Constantinople, across Turkey to the Persian Gulf and then to Karachi. The third cable ran from London to Gibraltar to Malta, Egypt to Aden and then on to Bombay.

Upcoming Meetings

Air Quality Committee –

Tuesday, March 9, 10:00-Noon,
LACSD

Biosolids Committee – Monday,
March 22, 10-noon, LACSD

Water Issues Workshop –

Tuesday, March 23, 10-1:00, OCSO

Collection Systems Workshop –

Tuesday, March 30, 9-noon,
Coachella Valley Water District

To add to the strategic difficulties, the vagaries of the currents and weather caused yet further headaches. Storms, winds, silt, even fishermen could all accidentally disrupt the sending of messages. Combined with the distances involved, it was really expensive to operate. And yet, the British were convinced that the value of the system was worth the price. All over the world, Englishmen were employed laying or maintaining cables or operating booster stations along the line. The cable manager often became a key member of society for the further flung outposts of imperial society. In Australia, Alice Springs actually came to life as the central station for the overland 2,000-mile telegraph line stretching from Adelaide to the north. These 36,000 telegraph poles were built years before any road or railway line crossed the continent. And, it could be dangerous too. In 1874, two cable men were speared to death by Aborigines. [Editorial Note: This was probably due to the fact that they showed up at 7:00 p.m. for an 11:00 a.m. appointment.]

As usual, you must be wondering, "What IS the point of this story?" Well, when I was considering that collection system operators have a tough time ensuring that there are ZERO spills coming from their pipes, and that it is a dangerous and potentially deadly environment to work in – there was a little ray of sunshine in the fact that the nation's security wouldn't be threatened if a pipe broke, nor had I heard that anyone had been speared, uh, recently. [Editorial Note: Ray's Motto: Always look on the bright side.]

Seriously though, we've spent quite a bit of time over the past few months, trying to keep up with Collection Systems Committee Chair Nick Arhontes as we've met with most of the Regional Boards in the Southland about expanding the commonwealth of SCAP members to focus on the issues facing collection systems. While many of our existing members have always had responsibility for both maintaining a collection system and treatment and disposal of wastewater, we are reaching out to a myriad of agencies whose only wastewater involvement is the collection system within their community.

The need is there. As we've met with Regional Board staff, we've been told that many cities and districts are unaware and unprepared for the implementation of cMOM and enforcement of SSOs. In the Coachella Valley, Colorado River Regional Board staff has gone out of their way to promote SCAP's first workshop, which will be held on March 30 at the Coachella Valley Water District.

Our vision for this committee is rather simple, but hopefully effective. We are going to hold a workshop within each Regional Board governing SCAP member agencies this year, focusing on regulatory requirements and how we can assist agencies in meeting these. We will also identify a person/agency that will agree to act as a regional sub-chair, responsible for facilitating future meetings in their areas, and willing to attend 1 or 2 full committee meetings with other regional sub-chairs. Additionally, we will establish a Collection Systems area on the SCAP website that will be a repository of regulations, best practices and other useful information. On a statewide level, we are working with the SWRCB to simplify reporting requirements. All of this will be provided for the relatively modest cost of \$500 per agency/per year for Collection Systems Only members (for full SCAP members, this is included at no additional cost).

I'd also like to alert you to two other meetings that will be held this month. The Water Issues Committee is holding a workshop-style meeting on the NPDES permit renewal process that will feature case studies from several member agencies that have had various degrees of success with this process. Also, former Region 4 Executive Officer, and now Orange County Sanitation District Technical Services Director, Bob Ghirelli will team up with our own former State Water Resources Control Board member Mary Jane Foley to talk about how important it is to establish and maintain a relationship with your regulators. There will be some very useful information passed on here, hope you can make it.

The Biosolids Committee is also holding a meeting this month and as I write this, the State Board is holding a public hearing on the revised EIR/General Order that could finally provide a rational standard for biosolids reuse in the state; several SCAP members, along with Mary Jane, are there testifying in support of this. Please come and hear the latest on this subject and what opportunities and alternatives are out there for biosolids reuse.

It seems quaint to think about telegraphs and cables in this day of cell phones and other wireless communications, but some things never change and that is that there are unsung men and women out there that

build, operate and maintain many vital systems all over the world, and unless they invent materials that never degrade, there will always be a need for them. As the rain poured down last night in Southern California, my thoughts turned to those that are out there doing what they do. They build empires too.

Majestically yours,
Ray Miller

Collection Systems

Collection Systems Committee to Hold First Regional Workshop in Coachella Valley

The first regional workshop of the Collection Systems Committee will be held on Tuesday, March 30, 9:00 a.m. to noon at the Coachella Valley Water District offices (85-995 Avenue 52, Coachella). This first workshop, which is being heavily promoted by the Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board, will focus on collection system-related regulations.

Water Issues

Water Issues Committee to hold NPDES permit renewal workshop on March 23

How much do you and your staff know about the NPDES permit renewal process? Do you know what latitude the permit writer has when writing the permit? What about all of the requirements of the CTR/SIP and the Ocean Plan – how are those incorporated into permits? Why should I care about Basin Plan amendments that don't affect my agency?

These and other questions will be addressed at a 3-hour workshop on March 23 sponsored by the Water Issues Committee. Held at the Orange County Sanitation District's office in Fountain Valley, actual case studies by several southern California agencies (at press time: City of Los Angeles, Inland Empire Utilities District, Las Virgenes Municipal Water District) will be reviewed and their experiences discussed.

Former Los Angeles Regional Board Executive Officer Bob Ghirelli (now OCSD's Technical Services Director) will speak on perhaps the most important aspect of the workshop: "Building a relationship with your Regional Board." Mary Jane Foley will also speak about relationships and permit writing requirements.

A working lunch will be served at a cost of \$7.50 per person. Reservations for the workshop are required; however lunch costs may be paid at the door. If you and/or your staff plan on attending this informative workshop, please email (ljones@scap1.org) or call (949) 489-7676 to RSVP.

San Diego RWQCB to Form Stakeholder Group for Bacteria TMDL

The San Diego Regional Board announced that it will form a Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) to participate in the development of the Bacteria-Impaired Waters TMDL Project for Beaches and Creeks. The first meeting of the SAG will be on March 9, at a public workshop for the TMDL. The Board has delineated representation on the SAG by watershed and will invite 5 representatives from municipalities and 4 other representatives, who will represent the environmental community, academic/research, the public-at-large and Caltrans.

Committee Chair Contact Info

Air Chair: Dan McGivney - dmcgivney@emwd.org

Biosolids Chair – Diane Gilbert - dxg@san.lacity.org

Water Chair – Roger Turner – turnerr@emwd.org

Collections Committee Chair – Nick Arhontes – narhontes@ocsd.com

The Regional Board notes that participation on the SAG will require a substantial commitment of time; if your agency plans on participating in the SAG, please let us know. Mary Jane Foley will be in attendance at the meeting and encourages all agencies regulated by Region 9 to attend the meeting even if they are unable to participate in the SAG, as there will also be a presentation of the draft technical portion of the Bacterial TMDL Report in the afternoon.

Regulatory Affairs Roundup

Regulatory Affairs Consultant Mary Jane Foley traveled around the State in February:

- Testified at the February 3 workshop in Sacramento on the Ocean Plan Amendments.
- Testified at the February 5 SWRCB 303(d) policy hearing in Torrance and presented the comments of the regulated community on the policy.
- Testified at the February 11 SCAQMD workshop in Diamond Bar on Rule 1470 regulations (stationary engines).
- Testified at the February 26 CARB meeting in Sacramento regarding the Stationary Engine ATCM
- Attended Biosolids media training.
- Met in Sacramento with Wayne Verrel, the lead SWRCB staff person for the newly released Biosolids EIR, and worked with staff to review any comment letters.
- Attended March 2 Biosolids EIR public hearing in Sacramento and helped arrange comments from SCAP members.
- Visited the Integrated Waste Management Board office on March 2 and requested that the Chair include a biosolids info item on their agenda.

Mary Jane has also been working with individual member agencies on specific issues pertaining to their permits with their Regional Boards. If your agency would like help with strategy, process or procedural issues, please call her. A few members have already responded to this offer and have felt empowered in their deliberations.

Urban Water Institute Sponsors Clean Water Act Conference

The Urban Water Institute will hold a summit conference asking if we can do better with the Clean Water Act. The program includes a presentation of a new issue paper on "Reassessing California's Water Quality Program" done with a statewide basin planning group now called the Coalition for Clean Water. The paper is very provocative and gives case studies of why the paper was created. It has a powerful group of participants and will be very interesting to all who deal in basin planning issues. SWRCB member Pete Silva is also on the agenda and will be reviewing the new legislative proposals that may lead to the reformatting of the regional boards.

SCAP is a co-sponsor of the conference that will be held March 17-19th at the Double Tree Hotel in Santa Ana, and arranged for Judy Wilson, former SCAP Board Member and former Director of the City of Los Angeles' Sanitation Department, to speak about the challenges the city faced in meeting the mandates of the Clean Water Act.

The program includes panel presentations on TMDLs, the various "Plans" (Basin, Ocean, Inland Surface, etc.) and legal issues. For more information, go to www.urbanwater.com or call 949/679-9676.

Santa Ana Regional Board Adopts New TIN/TDS Requirements

After multi-year, multi-million dollar (approximately \$3.5 million) studies conducted by a special Task Force (organized and headed up by the Santa Ana River Watershed Project Authority) to review groundwater TDS and nitrate-nitrogen objectives, revised Total Inorganic Nitrogen (TIN) and Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) wasteload allocations and other components of an association Nitrogen/TDS management plan have been adopted by the Region 8 Board.

The Basin Plan is in the process of being amended to reflect the changed allocations and the Regional Board has adopted a resolution noting that the changes meet the requirements of the state's antidegradation policy and was based on "sound and objective science." The Board is starting to write permits with the new TIN/TDS requirements in them.

This is an impressive achievement on the part of the Inland Empire wastewater and water agencies that have worked so diligently on achieving this milestone.

Ocean Plan Amendments Comment Letter

After attending the January 23 Ocean Plan Scoping Meeting and submitting oral comments, SCAP submitted written comments on January 29th regarding the proposed amendments to the Ocean Plan. As proposed by the SWRCB, the Ocean Plan amendments were limited to four issues: establishment of a single indicator organism for water contact standards, adoption of a fecal coliform standard for shellfish harvesting areas, reclassifying Areas of Special Biological Significance to State Water Quality Protection Areas, and defining "reasonable potential to pollute." Each of these proposed amendments contained areas in which we expressed our support or opposition to specific issues. We expressed particular concern with issues related to the diversion of non-point source runoff to facilities that may not have capacity available to accept it.

At a workshop session on February 3, SWRCB staff reviewed the entire 20+ Ocean Plan issues from the original 1999 Triennial Review, from which staff derived the four they proposed amending. Several board members were of the opinion that all 20+ should be addressed during this review; it is unclear at this time if the board will open the process up to all issues or stick with the initial four.

Air Quality

CARB Adopts Diesel Engine Air Toxic Control Measures (ATCMs) for Stationary and Portable Engines

ATCMs for stationary and portable engines were adopted at public hearings held on February 26, as well as amendments to the CARB's Portable Equipment Registration regulation. The stationary ATCM was adopted with restrictions operating near schools during school hours (7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.) and within a 500-foot radius of school property. Operating restrictions near schools for portable engines was continued; CARB staff must bring an amendment back to the ARB Board by next fall (August/September). The ability to participate in Interruptible Service Contracts was preserved

A *Green Alert* (information) will be sent to the membership by mid-March regarding the major provisions of these regulations.

Risk Management Plan Updates

As has been mentioned over the past year, the 5-year update to 1999 Risk Management Plans (RMPs) is due in June. EPA has provided a fact sheet on this called "A Checklist for Resubmitting your Risk Management Plan (RMP) for Chemical Accident Prevention" which can be found at: [http://yosemite.epa.gov/oswer/ceppoweb.nsf/vwResourcesByFilename/RMP2004-chklist.pdf/\\$File/RMP2004-chklist.pdf](http://yosemite.epa.gov/oswer/ceppoweb.nsf/vwResourcesByFilename/RMP2004-chklist.pdf/$File/RMP2004-chklist.pdf).

Jackie Kepke of CH2M Hill provides the following brief summary of the requirements:

- **Process Hazard Analysis.** A process hazard analysis or hazard review must be updated and revalidated at least every five years.
- **Offsite Consequence Analysis.** The offsite consequence analysis must be reviewed to assess whether there have been any significant changes to the process or receptors since 1999.

- **Emergency Action Plan.** The emergency response plan or emergency action plan must be reviewed to ensure emergency response procedures and emergency contacts and phone numbers are current.
- **Prevention Program.** Because the RMP contains a summary of the prevention program (also called the Process Safety Management Plan), the prevention program procedures must be reviewed and updated.
- **Seismic Assessment.** In California, a revised seismic assessment is required to assess the processes against current seismic standards. In October 2003, the CalARP Program Seismic Guidance Committee issued a draft guidance document, *Guidance for California Accidental Release Prevention Program Seismic Assessment*, requiring that a seismic walk down be conducted every five years.
- **RMP*Submit.** After the above information is reviewed and updated, EPA's submitting software, RMP*Submit, must be revised and submitted to EPA. Contact information and other administrative information must be updated.

Biosolids

State Biosolids EIR/GO Public Hearing on March 2

On March 2, the SWRCB held a public hearing on the newly released *Revised Draft Statewide Program EIR Covering General Waste Discharge Requirements for Biosolids Land Application*. This document, which was released on February 12, 2004, includes the analysis of two additional alternatives ("Class A Only Alternative" and "Food Crop Limitation").

The EIR was originally certified in 1999. Litigation brought against the SWRCB, after approval of the GO, has resulted in this revision of the original program environmental impact report (PEIR). The court generally found the 1999 PEIR to be adequate, but concluded that two of the project alternatives were dismissed from detailed analysis without sufficient grounds. It decertified the EIR and set aside the approval of the GO pending revision and recertification of the EIR, with new analyses of the two alternatives.

There was a great turnout of POTW representatives and other key participants who support biosolids at the hearing. SCAP had several members there presenting excellent comments, particularly Diane Gilbert, Chair of the SCAP Biosolids Committee. There is a 15-day comment period following this hearing; SCAP has sent out a formatted comment letter, which should be emailed to Wayne Verrill at the SWRCB (verrw@swrcb.ca.gov). The POTWs had such a strong voice at the hearing that we anticipate those who oppose the land application may start a quick campaign - the letters are important! (See [Orange SCAP Alert](#) dated 3/1/04).

The SWRCB will be considering the PEIR for certification and the GO for adoption on May 20, 2004.

Ray Kearney Retires

SCAP sends its best wishes and appreciation for a job well done to Ray Kearney, who has retired from his position as Assistant Director of the Sanitation Department for the City of Los Angeles. Ray was the first chair of the SCAP Biosolids Committee and served in that capacity for several years. Ray was instrumental in the founding of the National Biosolids Partnership, setting the standards for the EMS program, and furthering the environmentally safe and economically sound reuse of biosolids on both a regional and nationwide level. We will miss you Ray.

Virginia County Pays Penalty for Restrictive Biosolids Ordinance (courtesy National Biosolids Partnership (NBP))

Appomattox County, Virginia agreed on February 18, to settle a federal lawsuit (O'Brien v. Appomattox County, VA, W.D. Va., No. 6:02 CV 00043) brought by eleven county farmers that challenged highly restrictive biosolids

ordinances enacted by the county in 2002. The settlement follows a November 24, 2003 decision by the U.S. District Court for the Western District in Lynchburg that struck down the County's ordinances as inconsistent with Virginia law. The \$225,000 payment is for the farmers' attorney fees.

Another Virginia Court Decision on Biosolids Ordinance (courtesy NBP)

On February 9, a Virginia state court judge struck down a Spotsylvania County ordinance that sought to impose special use permits and other zoning restrictions on the land application of biosolids. The court in *Recyc Systems, Inc. v. Spotsylvania County* followed the recent federal court ruling in the *O'Brien v. Appomattox County* case and held that "all local zoning ordinances that now attempt to regulate or control land application of biosolids in agricultural zones are inconsistent with State law except those related to testing and monitoring." This decision is particularly noteworthy because the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit that issued this ruling includes many Virginia counties that have extensive land application activity.

Fed Government Considers Adding Biosolids to Compost Definition (courtesy NBP)

AMSA and WEF submitted separate comments in support of EPA's 12-10-03 Federal Register Comprehensive Procurement Guideline V and Recovered Materials Advisory Notice V of proposed rulemaking, which propose a revision of the current compost designation to include biosolids. Under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Class A biosolids would be placed on the federally endorsed list of products the federal government can purchase. Wastewater treatment facilities that generate Class A biosolids would have a new potential buyer – the federal government. This action shows continued federal support for the land-application of biosolids and is in accordance with EPA's responses in late-December 2003 to a July 2002 National Research Council report in support of land-application of biosolids and the Agency's rejection of a petition for a moratorium on the land-application of biosolids proposed by the Center for Food Safety.

Non Sequitur

'The name Pakistan was first devised by Indian Students studying at Cambridge in 1932. P stood for Punjab, A for the Afghan areas of the NorthWest Frontier, K for Kashmir. It was also convenient that PAK is a religious term with the meaning of "Pure."

- *the British Empire online*