



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE OF PUBLICLY OWNED TREATMENT WORKS

MONTHLY UPDATE

A Message from the Executive Director...

July 2005

If the year of your birth is after 1970, I give you fair warning that you are in for one of my “back in the day” columns. But Mary Jane tells me that my columns always have this weird stream-of-consciousness aura about them, so who knows, your eyes just might not glaze over and the “old dude” might even touch a nerve - or nirvana depending on my conscious or unconscious stream. (Editorial Note: Those born prior to 1970 might just want to grab a giant jolt of java right about now, too.)

So this is a story about the 60s. As I recall, it was a time when a lot of folks were trying to simplify their lives – “get back to nature” – a concept which many interpreted as taking off your clothes and heading up to your local nudist camp. But, I digress.

If I were a sociologist, I would speculate that this was in response to the increasingly complex world we were living in at the time – Sputnik, typewriters, color TV, Star Trek, the Beatles.

But I’m not a sociologist; I’m an engineer. And the world didn’t look any more complex to me than it did in the time of the Pharaohs – I mean, how *did* they build those pyramids? And who was the first guy who figured out that chewing on tree bark would get rid of a headache. I mean, you don’t just wake up one morning and think – “Man, I partied way to hard with Yurt and the guys last night. I think I’ll chew on some tree bark and see if I can knock out this headache.” You see what I mean, the world isn’t any more complex, it’s just filled with more possibilities and stuff that no one thought possible – you just have to figure it all out. It’s just that that gives you a headache to think about and then you’re really glad the guy figured it out about tree bark.

The thing about the 60s was – science was making it possible for us to understand natural forces and predict outcomes, and for the first time in history, this knowledge wasn’t the purview of a few monks and noblemen – anyone could get it in a 10th grade chemistry class. So it wasn’t a huge leap that the environmental movement was born – in my not-so-humble opinion – not because of Rachel Carson’s “Silent Spring,” but because we all knew that there was stuff we could do to fix what we broke. Science was good.

Oh, young reader, those early years were great! Sure, the political will that lead to The Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act were shining moments in American legislative history, but without the technology, they would be like legislating cold fusion to replace fossil fuels – great idea, but the technology just ain’t there.

And did we have technology! Fine bubble aeration for secondary treatment – plants that were barely removing 50% of their influent pollutants were now achieving 98-99% removal efficiencies – consistently. Rotating biological contactors (RBCs) were making small plants just as efficient. Cogeneration – generating two powers simultaneously and making thermophilic digestion economical – and fast! It was the Golden Age of the Environment and science told us that not only could we clean up our air and our water, we could make sure it would never get that bad again.

And yet, I will acknowledge there is still much to do – we still have legacy pollutants like arsenic from old mines and silver from old dentists, but the low hanging fruit is gone. We have addressed a lot of the dark-side of the Industrial Revolution (and not just by exporting most of it to Mexico and Asia!) and what is left is the stuff of permit appeals, lawsuits and urban legend (for the record, if you get rid of all the mercury thermometers in the world, the old mines around San Francisco Bay will still be spewing out mercury). The days when science was full of possibilities seems gone, and common sense took a hike, too.

Upcoming Meetings

Air Quality Committee – Thursday, July 28, 10-Noon, LACSD

Water Committee – TBA

Biosolids Committee – TBA

And then Jerry Secundy came and spoke to our SCAP Water Issues Committee and said, "If there isn't a scientific basis for the proposal – I'm not interested." I swear I heard a choir sing "Hallelujah!" Okay, I didn't hear the choir, possibly because I wasn't at the meeting. But Mary Jane was there and she told me, and then I heard it. Or probably I was having a flashback, because I think the last time I heard a State Board member say something about science, it was when Mary Jane was on the Board and if you couldn't demonstrate a meaningful benefit scientifically, she wasn't too interested either.

Mr. Secundy is an interesting guy, with some interesting, uh, "street cred" I believe you young'uns call it. After graduating from Harvard, he went to Columbia Law School and upon graduation went into the Peace Corps and directed a youth center in Peru for two years. He then came home and joined the Department of Justice where he argued environmental law cases at the appellate level.

He then joined Atlantic Richfield – yep, the oil company, where he worked his way up to Vice President of Environmental, Health and Safety Affairs. After 20 years with ARCO, he retired and ultimately became the Executive Director of Audubon California. I could spend another twenty column inches telling you about all of the philanthropic organizations he's been a board member for (Girls Club of Pasadena, Las Familias del Pueblo, Inner City Law Center, etc.) but you get the idea. What strikes me is that he has been through rigorous educational and professional training that has shaped his viewpoint. And his viewpoint includes the idea that environmental regulations should be scientifically sound – a point our industry has been trying to emphasize when public policy terms like "reasonable potential" and "environmental justice" are used to create the sense that scientific analysis alone is not enough – somehow we're still missing something.

In his comments to our committee, he noted that the environmental community wants numerical limits for stormwater permits; he thinks BMPs may offer better solutions. He spoke about the Florez biosolids bill and disagreed with the Senator, stating that the scientific studies and historical practice show it to be a safe and effective practice. And he questioned whether it was fair to stick 1.6% of the mercury dischargers to San Francisco Bay with 100% of the bill to clean it up.

Mr. Secundy spoke frankly about the push to step up enforcement efforts at the Water Board. He felt that the Air Board had done a much better job of publicizing the enforcement it had done, and that the Water Board needs to get the word out about the already high level of enforcement that has been going on – and to tell the story that the environment *is* better.

So here's the point, my chronologically challenged friends. If you are lucky enough to stay in this profession long enough, you will have the opportunity to carp about how things have changed and are going to – well you know where they go to in a hand basket.

But if you stay in it really long, say 40+ years, you get to see that things come full circle. And life is full of possibilities again.

Renaissance-ively yours,
Ray Miller

P.S. Do yourself a favor. Sometime this summer, go to your local county fair. Eat the really tasty-but-bad-for-you-food, hear some pretty good local musicians and see a mineral collection that was started by your local pediatrician when he was 10 (and that belongs in a museum). Most of all, buy something that you believe will solve a major domestic chore in your home and then put it in a drawer and look at it periodically to remind yourself that you really should use it. Sit down at the Footsie-Wootsie, have your feet vibrated until you can't feel them – and then take a look around you at all the people that walk by. Smile. And then go find the cinnamon role place... again.

Board of Directors Meeting

New Officers and Board Members Appointed

At the SCAP Board of Directors June 28th meeting, Blake Anderson of Orange County Sanitation District was elected Chairman for a two-year term, succeeding John Pastore. Mr. Anderson is SCAP's fourth Chair, following Chuck Carry, Kamil Azoury, and Mr. Pastore.

Mike Thornton of the San Elijo Joint Powers Authority was elected to the position of Vice-Chair; Dave Caretto of the South Orange County Wastewater Authority (SOCWA) and Mike Hogan of the Encina Wastewater Authority (EWA) were re-elected to the positions of Secretary/Treasurer and Assistant Secretary/Treasurer, respectively.

New and reappointed Board Members (terms had expired) are:

Los Angeles County

Jim Stahl, LACSD, Board Member
Joe Mundine, City of Los Angeles, Alternate Board Member

Orange County

Blake Anderson, OCSD, Board Member
David Caretto, SOCWA, Alternate Board Member
Virginia Grebbien, OCWD, Board Member

San Diego County

Alan Langworthy, City of San Diego, Board Member
Mike Hogan, EWA, Alternate Board Member
Mike Thornton, SEJPA, Alternate Board Member

Ventura County

Chuck Rogers, City of Thousand Oaks, Board Member

Did you know...

You can directly receive a free copy of our *Monthly Update* via email by visiting our website at www.scap1.org and completing the newsletter subscription form.

Board Approves FY 2005/2006 Budget

In response to a reduction in the amount of dues received by SCAP, the Finance Committee recommended a 3% reduction in SCAP's budget, from \$441,000 to \$424,000 for FY 2005/2006; with these adjustments, there will be no increase in dues. Additionally, they recommended that the Board consider approving an annual COLA increase to the dues starting in FY 2006/2007. The Board approved both items.

A small shortfall in this year's revenues was proposed to be funded through a transfer from the Special Projects Fund; the Board approved this transfer. The shortfall was partly due to unanticipated travel expenses incurred.

Executive Director Search Will Expand

A five-member subcommittee of the Board was formed to develop a process for the Executive Director search. The committee will look at using an RFP process to evaluate potential candidates, and encourages the membership to contact the SCAP office with the names of potential candidates.

Discussion was also held regarding the assumption of administrative duties by one of the large agencies, with the large agencies rotating responsibility periodically. Board members expressed concerns about conflicts

of interests or the appearance of conflict and agreed to continue to retain a consulting firm to provide these services.

Board Discusses SCAP's Future

The Board held an energetic and productive afternoon session reviewing SCAP's mission and potentially changing some of the aspects of how it operates. Based upon the discussion, a subcommittee was formed and members will be meeting to continue the discussion and refine the mission and duties of SCAP and its committees.

It must be emphasized that Board Members expressed their strong support for SCAP and particularly for the information and support provided to the membership. The review is intended to make a better, more focused, alliance.

Water Issues

Water Issues Committee Meeting Notes

Over 40 SCAP members attended a meeting to meet new SWRCB Board Member Jerry Secundy and hear the latest information pertaining to Electronic Self Monitoring Reports (e-SMR) using the Water Board's CIWQS (California Integrated Water Quality System) program and the internet.

Mr. Secundy, who is awaiting confirmation from the Legislature on his appointment, spoke to the Committee about his professional and environmental background. His experience, particularly in the air arena, has allowed him to "hit the ground running" to some extent and he enjoys a level of understanding regarding some of these difficult issues that is expansive. He fielded questions regarding the shifting of pollutants among environments, mercury TMDLs, biosolids, enforcement policies and sustainability regulations in a direct and thorough manner.

Phil Isorena, the Chief of the NPDES unit for the state, spoke about permit standardization. This effort was started years ago, but it was only last year that the state dedicated focused resources on the issue. Some of the issues driving standardization include the need for efficiency at both the state and local water board staffing levels, assisting electronic self-reporting and making it easier to update protocols.

During Phase I of the permit standardization process, non-controversial and simple technical issues were addressed, and some Water Boards started using the new format as they renewed NPDES permits. During Phase II, standard language, monitoring streamlining and various controversial issues are being addressed and Mr. Isorena welcomed comments and discussion regarding the standardized permit and how smaller agencies, in particular, might be affected by this process.

Jim Maughan, Supervising Engineer for the Regulatory Division, noted that the e-SMR effort is being run hand-in-hand with the permit standardization effort. The state has started working with 15 dischargers on two tasks, testing the reporting process and how to convert their Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) data into a standardized electronic data file.

Rollout for the e-SMR is still planned for January 2006, with full transition to electronic reporting completed by December 2006.

Committee Chair Contact Info

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Biosolids Chair:

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Water Issues Chair:

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State to Develop Chlorine Residual Policy

The SWRCB will hold a scoping meeting in Sacramento on Thursday, July 7, to provide a forum for early public consultation on preparation of the FED for the proposed Total Residual Chlorine and Chlorine-Produced Oxidants Policy of California. This consultation will assist the State Water Board in determining the scope and content of the environmental information that the Responsible and Trustee Agencies, as well as other interested parties, may require.

EPA to Hold Permit Training Course for Permittees

The EPA has scheduled a Permits Program Overview Course for Permittees for August 10-11 in Providence, RI. The course will include presentations on New and Emerging Issues, and is designed to provide attendees with a strong understanding of the purpose of the NPDES program as well as the mechanics for developing, issuing, and implementing an NPDES permit. You can find more information at the following websites: www.epa.gov/npdes/training and www.wef.org/conferences/workshop_semin.

Air Quality

Air Quality Committee Plans Air Regs Workshop

The Air Quality Committee is planning to hold a half-day workshop covering federal, state and local air regulations and engine requirements geared for small and medium sized agencies. Topics on the tentative agenda include: stationary and portable engines, permitting strategies, fleet rules and a summary of regulations from the individual southern California air districts.

The Committee is seeking input as to the most convenient location to hold the meeting and topics of interest to their agency.

CAPCOA to Hold Free Workshop on Fleet Regulations

The Air Quality Committee is alerting the SCAP membership that the California Air Pollution Control Officer's Association is holding a technical conference entitled "Diesel Emissions Reduction for Public Agency & Utility Fleets." The conference is free if you sign up before July 22 – it will cost \$100 if you sign up after that.

The goal of the workshop is to provide an overview of the proposed statewide public fleet regulation, options for emissions control and the use of lower-polluting technologies for heavy-duty equipment.

The workshop will be at the Sacramento Convention Center. Monday's session includes a reception and vendor exhibits, with the technical sessions being held on Tuesday. The tech sessions include:

- ♦ CARB staff explaining how the proposed control measure affects your facility and steps you can take to comply.
- ♦ Government policy makers discussing potential funding sources and how to apply for funding assistance.
- ♦ Vendors, engine and aftertreatment device installers and manufacturers explaining the issues and concerns of fuel changeover and engine power and retrofit.
- ♦ Fleet managers presenting their experience with emission control technologies.
- ♦ Question and answer sessions with the presenters.

You can find more detailed information at: http://www.capcoa.org/fleet_conference.htm.

Standard Specifications for Engine Emissions Requirements Available

Greg Adams has volunteered to make available copies of LACSD's standard specs for engine emissions to anyone requesting them. While the specifications are five years old, they do address many of the complex, technical issues an agency needs to include in their specifications. Please contact Greg Adams at (562) 699-7411 x 2113, if you would like to receive a copy.

Biosolids

Opposition Still Strong to SB926

While Senator Florez was able to move SB926 out of the Environmental Quality Committee, the bill was re-referred to the Committee on Local Government where it is not expected to survive. It is currently a two-year bill.

Senator Florez has turned his efforts toward using the county initiative process to ban biosolids. The consensus opinion is that, though the effort to place such a measure on the ballot would be successful, the resulting law would be unconstitutional, and ultimately thrown out by a court.

Biosolids Chair Diane Gilbert noted that the situation in Kern is very negative, with the local newspaper continuously presenting only one side of the story and Senator Florez seeking opportunities to characterize the issue as one of the large, urban areas dumping on the small, rural ones.

Nursery Products Biosolids Facility Delayed

Opposition from both San Bernardino County Planning Commission and local residents from Newberry Springs have caused a co-composting facility, that was projected to handle 4,000 tons per day, to be delayed.

More than three dozen residents made the 140-mile trip to San Bernardino to protest the plant, which would replace a plant in Adelanto that must close down by the end of the year.

Non Sequitur

How far you go in life
depends on you being
tender with the young,
compassionate with the aged,
sympathetic with the striving and
tolerant of the weak and the strong.
Because someday in life
you will have been all of these.

- George Washington