Fall 2026

EL DORADO AGRICULTURAL WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT CORP
PROTECTING OUR PRECIOUS RESOURCE

2460 Headington Rd.
Placerville, CA 95667
Phone: (530) 622-7850
executivedirector@eldoradoagwater.org
Website: www.eldoradoagwater.org

Watershed Connection

A publication for members of the El Dorado Subwatershed Coalition
A member of the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition

Officers:

Dedrian Kobervig
President
Christmas Trees

Carolyn Mansfield
Treasurer
Organic

Bob Akin
Secretary
Irrigated Pasture

Directors:

Sid Davis
Vineyard

Kirk Taylor
Orchard

Steve Viani
Vineyard

Scott Chadd
At Large

James Frost
Vineyard

Presidents Message

By Dedrian Kobervig

Dear El Dorado County Ag Water Quality Management Members,

We have a few updates as we continue to navigate through the state's bureaucracy concerning clean water and agriculture's role

As many of you know we are in a testing year. El Dorado County was granted a special waiver that has allowed us to test our local waters only every five years. We were granted this waiver because we have not had any exceedances in toxicity in the last twenty years. Few coalitions are allowed this and must test every year costing them thousands of dollars. This waiver is due to the diligence and best management practices of our members.

How this test works:
Water samples are collected from our designated test site which must be a representative area of our local agriculture products. These water samples are then taken to a state authorized lab. Our closest lab happens to be in Fairfield. Melissa Neal and Kirk Taylor have taken on the responsibility of taking these samples and ensuring that they arrive at the lab in the required time frame. Their actions have saved you, the coalition members, approximately $30,000.00, the amount the lab was going to charge us for this task.

Once at the lab, the water is put into five containers and the organism, *Ceriodaphnia*, is added to each container of water. There is a control group added to certified clean lab water. *Ceriodaphnia* is a genus of tiny freshwater crustaceans commonly known as water fleas. *Ceriodaphnia* is used for ecotoxicology testing to measure water quality and chemical safety.

If there is a die off of over 80% the test is said to be a failure. These tests are being conducted several times over the year. If there is a pattern of continued failure, extensive testing for the cause will be triggered.

Lets keep our fingers crossed and continue to be diligent and use best management practices to keep our waterways clean. There will be a full report on our test results at the annual meeting in February 2027.

Ag. Water Quality Member Update

Treasurer's Report

Balance Sheet Ending July 1, 2025		Balance Sheet Ending July 1, 2026	
Income:		**Income:**	
Membership Dues	$17,700.79	Membership Dues	$21,883.79
Checkbook balance	$2,899.55	Checkbook balance	$1,694.13
Savings balance	$55,089.44	Savings balance	$10,079.11
Total:	$57,988.99	Total:	$11,773.24
Expenses:	$21,000.92	**Expenses:**	$61,258.78
Net Income:	$7,407.87	Net Income:	$-39,374.35

- The Board of Directors voted to increase the member fee to $6/acre for 2026, In order to cover monitoring costs
- Membership dues were significantly reduced due to a continual drop in membership.

Surface Water Quality Monitoring—2026 is a Monitoring Year

The Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) regulates discharges from irrigated agricultural lands. This is done by issuing Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs). The Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition, in which we are participating members, has developed and implemented the Monitoring and Reporting Program Plan to meet the requirements of the Conditional Waiver for Irrigated Lands as part of the WDRs. WDRs address irrigated agricultural discharges to protect water quality.
North Canyon Creek is the Representative monitoring site for the El Dorado County Subwatershed. Water quality at the site is of high enough quality that the Regional Water Board approved the site for reduced monitoring in 2016 and a renewal was granted in June of this year. Approving the site for reduced monitoring means that it only gets monitored once every 5 years.

The last monitoring year was in 2021 with Larry Walker and Associates conducting the monitoring. The cost for monitoring in 2021 was $21,115.80. The 2026 monitoring year costs are $52,375.78. We anticipate these costs by building up our savings but this year was especially expensive as can be seen in our depleted savings account and our net income deficit.

Ag. Water Quality Member Update

2026 Monitoring and *Ceriodaphnia* (water flea) Toxicity Tests

The 2026 monitoring year, is a year when the Coalition is performing monitoring at the North Canyon Creek site. The water quality sample collected on May 26, 2026, was found to be toxic to *Ceriodaphnia* (water flea), which is a standard test species used in toxicity testing. This is the first *Ceriodaphnia* toxicity exceedance observed since May 4, 2005, and only the second recorded at the site. The May water sample suggests that there was one or more pollutants in the sample that caused a medium-large toxic effect.

The water chemistry results we have for pyrethroid pesticides and malathion show all constituents reported as non-detect . The local Pesticide Use Reporting (PUR) data from the Ag department don't point to any smoking guns because we very often don't have much companion pesticide data for the site where the toxicity was observed. Unfortunately, we don't know what caused the toxicity observed in the May 2026 water sample and therefore, we describe the toxicity as caused or contributed by an unknown source. The single entry on the Watch List for this toxicity exceedance is the insecticide carbaryl. The PUR data reviewed in no way identify the application of carbaryl to apple in the proximity of the monitoring site as a smoking gun based on the distance (approx. 0.5 mi.), orientation (downstream), and time (40 days prior) between the toxicity exceedance and the most recent application of carbaryl.

Carbaryl appears on the Watch List to let growers know that among the pesticides applied in the proximity of the monitoring site in April 2026, carbaryl is one that requires careful attention when applying. The best the PUR data can do is identify products and their active ingredients that likely could have caused or contributed to toxicity based on a compound's toxicity to Ceriodaphnia.

Compliance Timeline

September 2026 — The Water Board will send out Notices of Violation to dropped/non-compliant members.

December 2026 — Annual Newsletter will be sent out with details on how to access the Irrigation & Nitrogen Management Plan (INMP) Reports for January Submittal.

January 2027 — Reminder emails will be sent for the upcoming reporting deadline.

January 31, 2027 — Irrigation & Nitrogen Management Plan (INMP) Summary Reports Due.

February 2027 — Annual Members Meeting will be scheduled. In order to vote on the budget and the Board of Directors we need a quorum of members to attend.

March 2027 — Membership dues invoices will be sent out in early March, following approval of the budget.

**If not paid by due date listed on the invoice, members will receive a late notice invoice with a $25 late fee added.

**If members still do not pay dues after this late notice they will be dropped and a $75 reinstatement fee will be required.

April 1, 2027 — We are required to submit a list of late reporters to the Water Quality Control. They then send out Notices of Violation to non compliant members, with the warning of potential fines up to $1,000.

July 2027 — We are required to submit a Participant list to the Water Board listing all current members and those who have been dropped due to delinquent reporting or non-payment.

IMPORTANT NOTICES

We have open Board of Directors positions! Curious about what your tole as a Board member would be? Join us at a meeting, held monthly every third Monday from 3:30-4:30 at our office located at the Farm Bureau Ag Center 2460 Headington Rd. Placerville.

If you are interested in serving on the Board please contact Melissa Neal, Executive Director.

Please contact Melissa Neal with any questions

2460 Headington Rd.
Placerville, CA 95667

Phone: 530-622-7850

Email: executivedirector@eldoradoagwater.org

2460 Headington Dr, Placerville, CA 95667-0286

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