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Farm Page  
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Our Imperial Valley farmers have all been working diligently on the silt/sedimentation TMDL for the past few years and thanks to the farmer's efforts they have made tremendous strides in reducing the silt that is leaving our fields. But did you know there are many other TMDL in our valley that are currently being implemented or will be in the future?

The Clean Water Act of 1972 is a federal law that requires Regional Water Quality Control Boards all over the United States to take inventory of all their local waterways and list the Nonpoint Source Pollutants, (NPS), that they find in their jurisdiction. A list of these NPS impairments, called the 303(d) List, is then published. It shows what all the impairments are and when management activities on the specific impairment, in the form of a TMDL, might be developed and implemented.

Nonpoint Source (NPS) Pollutants can come in many forms. Just a few examples of NPS pollutants include:

- Excess fertilizer, herbicides, and insecticides from agricultural lands and residential areas;
- Oil, grease, and toxic chemicals from urban runoff and energy production;
- Sediment from improperly managed construction sites, crop and forest lands, and eroding stream banks;
- Salt from irrigation practices and acid drainage from abandoned mines;
- Bacteria and nutrients from livestock, pet wastes, and faulty septic systems;
- Deposition of airborne pollutants that result from activities, such as industrial exhaust systems, traffic emissions, and burning of yard waste; and
- Habitat loss, watershed degradation, or other damage caused by channelization, dams or similar hydromodification activity.

Locally many current TMDLs have already been implemented that don't affect farmers but do affect our local community. Most of these TMDLs are the result of the pollution in the New River. There is even a Trash TMDL because of all the trash which floats into the United States from Mexico via the New River as well as plans for a TMDL soon that addresses industrial solvents in the New River along with dissolved oxygen.

Other impairments like the DDT and other old Chlorinated Hydrocarbons which have not been used since the early 70's, along with selenium are listed as impairments but are currently not scheduled for TMDL development in the near future.

So what will the next TMDL be that will directly affect farmers? More than likely as soon as a preferred alternative is chosen to restore the Salton Sea the Regional Water Quality Control Board will continue the development of a Salton Sea Nutrient TMDL. This TMDL, which primarily focuses on phosphate in the Salton Sea and phosphate from surface run-off of our farm fields, was under development when the QSA was signed but development was stopped until a preferred alternative to restore the Salton Sea was chosen.

Currently the amount of phosphate in the water column in the Salton Sea is 70 parts per billion (ppb). That number has not changed in over 35 years which suggests the Salton Sea is at a saturation point and can't hold any more. Current science suggests the extra phosphate has precipitated out and is mixed in the sediment on the bottom of the Sea ready to recharge the water column when possible.

What that means is that any change in the phosphate level in the Sea will be over a long period of time. To further complicate things Mexico is currently contributing 29 percent of the phosphate going into the Salton Sea. Whether the Regional Board can expect local farmers to implement more stringent BMPs to further reduce phosphate in the rivers, before the problem in Mexico solved, is unknown.

Stay tuned though! We should have a much better answer within a year. If you have any questions regarding TMDLs or any other issue facing our agriculture industry, contact me at the Imperial County Farm Bureau office at 352-3831 or check out our website at [www.ivtmdl.com](http://www.ivtmdl.com).

By: Linsey Dale