

Kings River Water Quality

Surface water within the Kings River watershed continues to meet or exceed Basin quality standards according to 2010 monitoring results. The Kings River has shown no significant water quality issues since implementation of the surface water monitoring and data collection program in 2004.

Under the Irrigated Lands Program initiated by the State, several sites are monitored by the Kings River Conservation District. (For monitoring sites, please see the map on the back of this page.) The samples are analyzed for toxicity in organisms and exceedances of water quality standards.

The only ag related issue encountered during the monitoring in 2010 was the detection of an insecticide at one sample site. Additional research was conducted to pinpoint the source and the cause of the detection. It was determined that the the insecticide could have come from over-spray or from runoff. With careful cultural practices these types of issues can be easily avoided so regulatory actions from the State are not triggered that would impact how a grower manages pesticide applications on their land.

Looking Forward for the Irrigated Lands Program

With the current Irrigated Lands Program (Program) expiring on June 2011, the Regional Water Quality Control Board is expected to take action in April to approve a long-term regulatory program that will include protection from discharges into groundwater. The Board may also establish additional requirements for growers.

Along with additional State requirements, fee increases for the Program are being proposed. In prior years, Coalition representatives have protected coalition members from fee increases by arguing for State General Fund support. Governor Brown calls for fee increases and elimination of General Fund support in the 2011/12 State Budget. It is anticipated that the fee would increase to 50 cents per acre or more if Governor Brown's budget proposal is implemented.

Reasons Coalition Membership is Important

The Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) has the authority under State law to regulate all waters in the State, and as such, they have established regulations for irrigators.

The State has established three ways a grower can comply with water quality regulations as an irrigator: join a coalition group; choose individual compliance with the Irrigated Lands Program (Program); or apply for a Waste Discharge Requirements Permit with the Regional Board.

The advantages of being part of a coalition includes cost savings to the grower along with eliminating the paperwork and physical monitoring practices required by the Program. Even the most remote of risks can effectively and efficiently be managed by being a part of a coalition.

If a grower is not part of a coalition and has not filed for either the Irrigated Lands Conditional Waiver or for the Waste Discharge Requirements Permit, the Regional Board may notify a grower in writing of a discharge violation that may result in fines if there is a potential to discharge waste off of these lands that could affect the quality of the waters of the State.

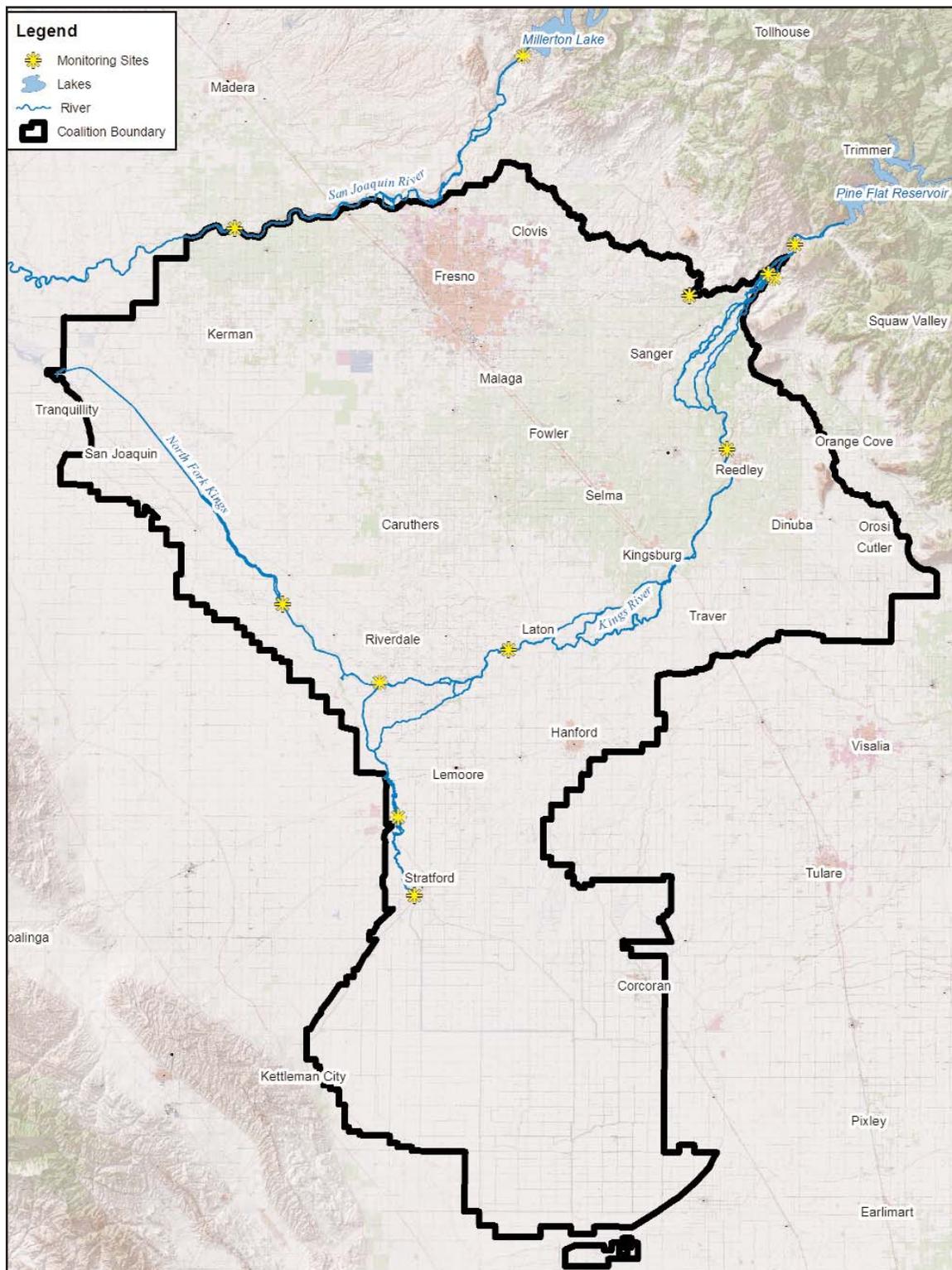
What the Coalition Fees Cover

The Coalition administrative fee of \$15 and the 16 cents per acre fee on a grower's 2011 bill covers the increased costs of laboratory testing mandated by the State, plus the costs related to billing, reporting, and communications as needed. The Kings River Conservation District and the Kings River Water Association subsidize the costs of the Program for growers within the KRWA and KRCD service area. This subsidy covers about half of the total cost of the Program. Growers outside of the service area pay a higher rate of 66 cents per acre.

Contact the Coalition

For questions regarding the Kings River Water Quality Coalition, please call 476-0539.

Monitoring Site Locations



Agencies that Represent Kings River Water Quality Coalition Members

The Kings River Conservation District (KRCD) and the Kings River Water Association (KRWA) have assisted districts and landowners within the Kings River watershed in complying with the set of regulations pertaining to discharges of waste from irrigated agricultural lands into waters of the Kings River. These regulations are more generally referred to as the Irrigated Lands Program.

KRCD and KRWA have joined together to form the Kings River Water Quality Coalition. KRCD and KRWA provide the staff and financial resources to manage the Coalition's program. Some of the work performed on behalf of the Coalition includes water quality monitoring, participating in policy meetings with the Regional Board, and enrolling growers into the Coalition.