



Placer County Health and Human Services Department

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UIC GRANT PROGRAM SUMMARY REPORT Prepared by Vicki Ramsey, REHS

Through a grant with the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9 Ground Water Office (EPA), Placer County Environmental Health Services performed record searches, field inspections and interviews within Placer County to identify whether wastewater, stormwater, and other fluids infiltrate below ground surface through devices subject to the federal Underground Injection Control (UIC) regulations. These activities were performed to assist the EPA to increase accuracy of its inventory of injection wells, and to research and identify sites of previously un-inventoried shallow injection wells within the County. Particular types of injection wells for which EPA seeks inventory are prohibited wells which include motor vehicle waste disposal wells, industrially used septic systems or sumps, and large capacity cesspools. EPA is also concerned with maintaining an accurate inventory of aquifer recharge wells. A risk based approach was utilized to prioritize the search for and inspection of injection wells. For example, UIC injection wells with stormwater injectate are a lower priority than UIC injection wells with wastewater injectate. A feature which discharges injectate subgrade is not by definition a violation even though it may meet the definition of a UIC Class V injection well. Grant activities were performed from October 2009 through September 2010.

In order to identify sites with potential UIC injection wells, significant research was performed by assigned Environmental Health Services staff who collaborated with Placer County Stormwater Pollution Control, Flood Control, Transportation, Engineering and Surveying, Planning, and sewer district, as well as Environmental Health Services CUPA and Land Use and Water Resources staff. The SPMUD sewer district, City of Lincoln, and USDA Forest Service, Tahoe National Forest office were also contacted. Environmental Health Services Land Use Assessor's files, CUPA inventory list, use permit list from Placer County Planning, Engineering and Surveying improvement plan information, and public sewer maps were also utilized.

Prior to receipt of this grant, seventeen shallow injection wells located on thirteen separate sites in Placer County were included on the inventory. As a result of Environmental Health Services efforts, eighty-four site inspections were completed and fifty-five injection wells were added to the inventory. One injection well had previously been included in the database in error and was removed. Seventy-one injection wells are now identified in the database, and a total of forty sites have been identified with injection wells. The UIC inspection and inventory data gathered by Environmental Health Services were entered into an Access database that was provided by and returned to the USEPA.

The UIC regulations include two basic requirements: that each injection well is registered on the federal inventory of injection wells, and that it is not used in a manner that could endanger underground sources of drinking water (Per regulations 40 CFR part 144.)

See www.epa.gov/region09/water/groundwater/uic.html or the regulations at 40 CFR part 144 for more information. The EPA can be contacted at the aforementioned website regarding the location of UIC injection wells in Placer County.

No on-going discharge violations to UIC wells were identified as a result of this program. However, investigations of historic releases at three sites on the inventory are under way by the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Although discharge violations to UIC wells do occur, a variety of County programs contribute to their discovery and resolution. The Certified Unified Program Agency regulates the disposal of hazardous waste and designated waste and performs routine field inspection of facilities that handle and store regulated quantities of such waste. Environmental Health Services Land Use and Water Resources Section reviews on-site sewage disposal, domestic water supply and land use planning applications, and as part of that review requires the elimination of any cesspools that are discovered. A regulatory structure exists within the County that requires review of projects by various County departments which would also contribute to the discovery and elimination of discharge violations. The Regional Water Quality Control Boards have jurisdiction and oversight of groundwater contamination. Over time, the general public and business community have attained an increased level of understanding regarding proper storage and disposal of waste.