



# H.R. LaBounty Safety Awards Nomination Form

---

## **Nomination Deadlines:**

**Spring Awards: February 3, 2025**

**Fall Awards: September 2, 2025**

**Agency:** Kings River Conservation District

**Project/Initiative Title:** Jeff L. Taylor Hydroelectric Powerplant Drainage Sump Inspection

Implementation Date: January 2025

Cost to Implement: \$2,000

Staff Time Required: 4 hours

Number of Employees/Facilities Impacted: 14 employees / 1 facility

## **Employee/Department/Committee Nominated:**

Name(s): N/A

Job Title/Department: Powerplant Division

---

## Nomination Summary

*Write a brief summary of your project/initiative. Clearly state the problem/hazard recognized by the nominee and the specific reasons that they initiated corrective action.*

Kings River Conservation District (KRCD) owns and operates the Jeff L. Taylor hydroelectric powerplant below Pine Flat Dam in Fresno County. The powerplant has two sumps that serve as the collection point for the plant's entire drainage system. Traditionally, powerplant staff would have to climb into the drainage sumps to visually inspect the condition of the valve bodies, shafts, supports for valves, piping, pump casing and structural. The two drainage sumps are approximately 18ft deep and a dark, confined space with standing water. Traditional inspection included use of an air monitor to ensure no toxic gas were present inside the sumps, one staff member to perform the visual inspections and one staff to watch the hole. These inspections present a hazard to staff by being performed in a confined space that has water present. Earlier in 2025, the Powerplant Division moved to eliminate this hazard to their staff by contracting with a consultant to use a drone to perform the visual inspections.

*Describe the specific actions taken to resolve the problem(s) or challenge(s). Share the best practices that made this initiative successful for the agency and its impact.*

Earlier this year, the Powerplant Division team has started conducting drone surveys of the drainage sumps to eliminate the risk of injury to staff. Use of a drone has been a powerful tool in that it allowed up close inspection of areas of the sumps that were previously difficult to get to such as areas that were too high to reach. The drone was able to provide clear video footage of the interior condition of the sumps thus allowing for review and analysis by multiple people. This has significantly helped KRCD's annual inspection of the drainage sumps by completely eliminating the risk of injury to staff, reducing staff time spent conducting these inspections, and allowing for better collection of data.

*State whether the hazard was reduced with engineering controls, introduced a new administrative or work procedure, or relied on personal protective equipment to solve the problem.*

The hazard was mitigated with "Elimination" controls. The risk of injury to staff was eliminated by contracting the annual drainage sump inspections to a third-party consultant. The consultant then employed a drone to perform the inspection thereby eliminating the hazard to all staff and consultants.

*Describe any extraordinary circumstances that made this nominee's safety accomplishments significant. Describe whether the nominee influenced safety in the workplace, encouraged employee participation in safety efforts, obtained organizational "buy in" to implement the solution.*

Using a drone to conduct visual inspections has been a powerful tool for the Powerplant Division to safely and effectively inspect the condition of the drainage sumps. Traditional methods of surveying the drainage sumps placed the employee at risk of slip and fall from a height, working in a confined space with water, and potential exposure to toxic gas. This new method of surveying the drainage sumps has improved employee safety, reduced time spent completing this task and provided KRCD with better data on our powerplant facility. The Powerplant Division team members approves of this new inspection method and plan to utilize it going forward.

*Describe whether the project/initiative addressed a hazard or exposure included in the JPIA Commitment to Excellence Program.*

☐ Office/Field Ergonomics

☐ Vehicle Operations

☒ Slip/trip/falls – falls from heights

☐ Emergency Readiness/Wildfire Prevention

☐ Other:

*List and attach any supporting materials that you feel are important for the reviewers to gain a complete picture of the nomination. Digital photos, supporting documentation, sample forms, etc.*

---

---

**Nominated by:** Soua Vang

**Date:** 4/24/2025

**General Manager:**



**Date:** 4/25/2025

---

---

Please email this form with supporting documents and digital photos (jpg) to [tlofinq@acwajpia.com](mailto:tlofinq@acwajpia.com).



## Drone Images of the Drainage Sumps



Photo 1: Piping inside of drainage sump



Photo 2: View looking down towards standing water inside the drainage sump



Photo 3: Drainage sump (confined space) with standing water. Access is via a vertical ladder.



Photo 4: Drone image provides interior condition of the drainage sump