

Horse and Livestock Watershed Alliance (HLWA) meeting

February 18, 2015

5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

The Little House, Ojai, CA

Meeting called by: Ventura County Resource Conservation District

Facilitator: Dana Bogdanich, VCRC

Note taker: Caitlyn Teague, VCRC

Attendees: Jenny Newman (Los Angeles Regional Water Board), Snejana Toneva (LARWB), Alan Connell (HLWA), Leslie Connell (HLWA), Mike Williams (HLWA and VCCA), Evelina Mu (Ventura County Watershed Protection District), Sonya Webb (Nexgen engineering), Lynn Jensen (VC COLAB), Lauren Swift (VC COLAB), Tom McCormick (Proteus/Thacher School), Steve Todd, Stefanie Coeler, Dan Lopez, Ron McCre, Karisa Melendez, June Peterson, Jim Pendelton, Ed Bennett (Thacher School), Peter and Marilyn Camisien, J&J Ohaco, Glenn Kuhr, Adri Howe (CA Coastal Horse Rescue), Cathy Cunningham (CA Coastal Horse Rescue), Juan Sanchez (Thacher School), Leigh Hyndman (HLWA), Diana Engle (LWA), Chris Sobenes, Silvia Faulstich, Kimberly Rivers (Ojai Valley News)

Objectives

- Discuss letter that was sent to horse owners in the Ventura River Watershed by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (LARWQCB), dated February 4, 2015.
- Spread awareness about future regulations that will affect horse and livestock owners in the Ventura River Watershed.
- Provide LARWQCB feedback that will help shape future regulations, specifically the Conditional Waiver that needs to be established by 2018.
- Encourage HLWA membership to participate in and stay informed of regulatory action.
- Offer complimentary services and assistance of VCRC to help implement Best Management Practices, develop manure management plan(s), and facilitate HLWA.

Minutes

5:45 pm: Dana Bogdanich, Environmental Specialist at the Ventura County Resource Conservation District (VCRC), opens meeting with Agenda and an invitation for Introductions.

Dana presents some background history about the TMDL issued for the Ventura River in 2012 titled "Algae, Eutrophic Conditions, and Nutrients TMDL for Ventura River and its Tributaries" and the negative effects of Eutrophication.

A table was provided from the TMDL to describe the different nutrient contributors. Horse and Livestock contributes 22% of the dry-weather Total Nitrogen loading per year and 17% of the wet weather loading, making them the second largest contributing group behind the Ojai Valley Waste Water Treatment Plant.

The implementation of the TMDL requires the Horse and Livestock owners to be subject to future regulations including Waste Discharge Requirements (permits), Conditional Waivers, OR other regulatory means.

It is expected that a Conditional Waiver program will be adopted for horse and livestock activities which will require owners to develop manure management plans (storage and disposal), implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to stop the runoff of polluted water or the direct inputs of manure into waterways, photo documentation of BMPs, and potentially water quality monitoring.

To have a say in the regulatory mechanism, horse and livestock owners need to contribute input to the LARWCQB. The easiest way to face these regulations is to participate in the Horse and Livestock Watershed Alliance (HLWA).

6:15 pm: Questions for Jenny Newman and Snejana Toneva from the LARWCQB

1. How was the list of horse facilities developed? How were those who received the letter, chosen?

Ventura County Assessor data, aerial imagery, land use and zoning, and SCAG data. "The list was overshoot on purpose." Note: The letter might be re-sent specifying "horse owners" instead of "owners/operators of horse and livestock facilities".

2. When will list of nutrient contributors identified in the TMDL be available to public?

The table of contributors is available in the TMDL online but a direct copy can be obtained by contacting Snejana Toneva at stoneva@waterboards.ca.gov or (213) 576-7159.

3. Are golf courses NOT big enough to get their own category?
The golf courses are already lumped into a contributing category in the TMDL, either Urban Areas or Open Space.
4. What are the sources of [nutrient/pollutant] data?
There are multiple sources including Ventura County, Santa Barbara Channel keepers, and the University of California Santa Barbara. Sources can be found in the Resources section of the 2012 TMDL, "Algae, Eutrophic Conditions, and Nutrients TMDL for Ventura River and its Tributaries."
5. What is take-away/bottom line for horse owners?
 - a. Make manure management plan
 - b. Implement Best Management Practices (BMPs)
 - c. Stop runoff into streams
 - d. Photo documentation of BMPs

HLWA and or VCRCDD will develop a sample manure management plan.
Either HLWA (as a group) or individual will submit management plans to the LARWB.
6. Should waiver apply to Ventura County horse owners or just to Ventura River Watershed?
That is up for stakeholder input but the LARWB believes it would be more effective to target one watershed at a time. At this point the waiver will just apply to the Ventura River Watershed horse and livestock owners.
7. Did the inventory (used to send the letter) change the horse estimate in the watershed from what was stated in the TMDL?
No, the estimate is still around 2,000 horses.
8. How far does facility need to be from watershed to be regulated?
At this point, every horse owner in the watershed will be included in the regulations. LARWQCB is requesting input from HLWA.
9. Does the Agriculture group have a facilitator for their waiver?
Yes the facilitator for the Ag group is the Ventura County Farm Bureau.
Note: For the Horse and Livestock waiver we should emphasize BMP implementation, not water monitoring, because that is what's going to make the most difference. Also, water monitoring is a much more expensive option.
10. Is there a baseline for the water quality?
Yes, based off of data collected by the County of Ventura and the Santa Barbara Channel keepers and stated in the TMDL
11. Was the horse estimate in the TMDL realistic?
Perhaps not, but the TMDL has been established and the goals are not unrealistic to meet, so the TMDL will be implemented.

6:45 pm: HLWA Business

Currently, HLWA does not have a bank account. The group is in debt \$1,540 for the creation and update of HLWA website. Individual membership fee is \$25 per year. More members needed!

Next steps will be to: 1. Create HLWA bank account. 2. Develop budget. 3. Elect board

Tentative date for next quarterly HLWA meeting with LARWQCB will be May 20, 2015.

Note: It has been suggested that HLWA have a meeting before May 20th, to go over the draft Conditional Waiver and develop unified suggestions for changes. VCRCDD will facilitate the next meeting as well.

Meeting Adjourned 7:20 pm.

Resources:

Ventura County Resource Conservation District: www.vcrdd.org

Horse and Livestock Watershed Alliance: <http://vchlwa.org/>

Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board: <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/losangeles/>