Land Management and Water Quality in the South Bay Aqueduct Watershed

The South Bay Aqueduct (SBA) Watershed encompasses the lands that drain to Lake Del Valle and Bethany Reservoir, including the San Antonio and Upper San Antonio valleys, Arroyo del Valle, and its tributary streams and canyons. These watershed lands contribute to the municipal water supply for over 2 million residents and businesses in Alameda and Santa Clara counties. Those who own and manage land and who live in the SBA Watershed can protect the water supply through:

- the continuation of existing practices that have protected water quality in the watershed; and
- the adoption of voluntary conservation practices designed to improve land management and reduce the risk of introducing pollutants to the reservoirs and their tributary streams.

There is a connection between your land and the drinking water quality of thousands of Californians.

South Bay Aqueduct Watershed Protection Program

Service is a proud sponsor of the South Bay Aqueduct Watershed Protection Program. "Protecting Our Water for Future Generations" is the SBA’s mission. Join our efforts to protect the water quality of the South Bay Aqueduct Watershed by contacting the South Bay Aqueduct Watershed Protection Program at (510) 668-6516 or by email at info@acwd.org. To learn more about the SBA’s efforts to protect our water resources, visit the SBA’s website at www.acwd.org/sba.php or download the SBA’s brochure by calling (510) 668-6516.

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Residual Dry Matter (RDM) Management

Residual dry matter is the old plant material left standing or on the ground at the beginning of a new growing season. It indicates the combined effects of the previous season’s forage production and its consumption by grazing animals of all types. Properly managed RDM can provide a high degree of protection from soil erosion, nutrient losses, and fire hazard. Individual land managers should establish their own RDM target levels, based on their management objectives and the characteristics of their land.

In-depth materials and technical assistance on all of these rangeland and livestock management measures are available through your local RCD/NRCS office and UCCE.
The SBA Watershed Protection Program Plan

The mission of the SBA Watershed Protection Program Plan is to protect and enhance the quality of water from the SBA watershed, including Lake Del Valle and Bethany Reservoir, as an important source for drinking water, while recognizing and respecting the agricultural, recreational, environmental, and other uses of these resources.

Agricultural and Open Space Lands Benefit Water Quality

The low density and low intensity of land uses in the Lake Del Valle and Bethany Reservoir watersheds is important to the protection of water quality produced by these watersheds. Increases in density or intensity of land use, for example through residential or recreational subdivision and development of rangelands, or through construction of new roads and railroads, could pose major risks to the water supply. There are many land conservation tools available to landowners to help preserve and maintain existing rural land uses.

One is the California Land Conservation (Williamson) Act, which provides the opportunity for landowners to enter into contracts with their county for the purpose of maintaining specific parcels of land in agricultural or related open space use. In return, landowners receive property tax assessments which are much lower than normal. For more information on the Williamson Act Program: www.conservation.ca.gov/dhp/lea

Conservation easements are another important land protection tool. A conservation easement is a voluntary, legally recorded deed restriction placed on a piece of property to protect its associated resources in perpetuity. The goal of a conservation easement is to protect land for future generations while allowing owners to retain most private property rights and to live on and use their land. Landowners can either sell or voluntarily donate a conservation easement to local government or to a land trust which is then responsible for ensuring that the terms of the easement are upheld. For more information on conservation easements, you can visit: CA Farmland Conservancy Program www.consrv.ca.gov/DLRP/cfcp/FAQ/aboutACE.htm

Tri-Valley Conservancy www.trivalleyconservancy.org

Grade Stabilization/Erosion Management

Maintaining an appropriate RDM level and achieving favorable distribution of cattle on grazing lands will reduce the likelihood of grade destabilization and erosion. Where grade destabilization is evident, structures such as retaining walls, rock barriers, filter strips, and sediment basins can be constructed to direct and manage runoff and to minimize the likelihood of introducing contaminants to drinking water sources.

Contact your local Resource Conservation District (RCD)

Alameda County RCD (925) 371-0154 www.acrcd.org

Guadalupe-Coyote RCD (408) 288-5888 www.carcd.org/wisp/guadalupe/

UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE)

(408) 282-3106 Sheila Barry, Livestock and Natural Resources Advisor for Alameda and Santa Clara Counties http://cesalameda.ucdavis.edu/ or http://cesantaclaire.ucdavis.edu/

UCCE, local RCDs, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service have abundant information, technical assistance, and in some instances, funding for improvement of rangeland management.

Household Hazardous Waste Information

Alameda County (800) 606-6606 www.stopwaste.org/home

Santa Clara County (408) 299-7300 www.sccgov.org/portal/site/deh

Free Drop Site for Used Oil

Paul Oil Co., Inc. (209) 892-8902

Santa Clara County Firesafe Council – Fire Prevention (408) 779-2121 www.sccfiresafe.org

Santa Clara Valley Non-point Source Pollution Control Program (800) 794-2482

To Report Illegal Dumping

Alameda County (510) 670-5500

Santa Clara County (408) 299-3233

The Nature Conservancy: Conservation Easements

www.nature.org/aboutus/howwework/conservationmethods/privatelands/conservationeasements/

Alameda County Environmental Health (Septic Wastewater Systems)

http://www.acgov.org/aceh/septic/ordinance.htm

SBA Contractors

Alameda County Water District www.acwd.org

Zone 7 Water Agency www.zone7water.com

Santa Clara Valley Water District www.valleywater.org