

Comments

2-13-2012



To: Bruce Warden and the CRWQCB/Lahontan Region  
Re: Renewal of general conditional waiver of waste discharge requirements for grazing operations in the East Walker River Watershed/Bridgeport Valley.

Thank you for your attention to maintaining the quality of our state/local waters. I recreate in the waters of the Walker River and their health and quality is important to me and our community. I understand your desire to prevent unnecessary economic hardship to the ranchers and can support a staged approach to reaching water quality compliance - as long as real progress is made in a reasonably short period of time and maintained over the long term.

I have the following comments related to the Tentative Grazing Waiver:

I hike in Buckeye Canyon often. This is *public* land that is seasonally grazed by a large number of cattle. The amount of cattle manure in this valley is staggering. While the USFS wants people using the area to follow 'Leave No Trace' practices, the cattle are allowed complete access to the creek where they damage the banks and vegetation and pollute the water. The creek, the shore and the surrounding meadows are a mine field of manure. Public lands should not be allowed to be abused this way. The USFS should be held accountable, and indeed to a higher standard, when it comes to the water quality of this area. Water recreation opportunities in the first five miles of this canyon have been severely negatively impacted by the current grazing management practices.

With the issue of climate change, and especially when concerning the potential we have for having an exceptionally dry winter this year, any waiver issued should consider this topic and address required responses. How will an exceptionally low run off year impact the amount of pollution that will be found in the Walker River and reservoirs?

I would also like to propose that in exchange for generously allowing the Bridgeport area ranches to continue to pollute our waters for the next 15 years, that they be encourage/required to give up some water to support the health of Walker Lake downstream.

Sincerely,

Mark Langner  
109939 Hwy 396 Coleville Ca 96107

Response

**Langner-R1:** The public lands are not subject to this proposed grazing waiver. Section 13 of the proposed grazing waiver states, "Activities on federal lands adjacent to, or upstream of the Bridgeport Hydrologic Area as described in Finding 1, are not subject to this waiver. Water Board staff will review US Forest Service (USFS) allotment management plans and the Water Board will use its regulatory authority to ensure activities on federal lands meet State water quality requirements." Water Board staff is working with USFS to improve these public lands, separate from the waiver.

**Langner-R2:** In general, low water years will result in concentration of pollutants, which would cause higher fecal coliform counts. However, irrigated systems, such as in the Bridgeport Valley, typically manipulate the flows which doesn't always directly correlate with the change in pollutant concentration. Transport of fecal coliform to surface waters in irrigation return flows may be reduced by lower irrigation rates during low water years. This trend varies site-to-site, depending on site-specific irrigation management factors and whether the primary mode of fecal coliform is direct livestock contact with surface waters or fecal matter transport with irrigation waters.

**Langner-R3:** Potential improvement of Walker Lake water quality by less water being used by the ranchers is not in the scope of this regulatory action.

