



6/19/07 BdMtg Item 8
Quail Valley
Deadline: 6/6/07 Noon

OPPOSITION TO SEPTIC TANK PROHIBITION IN QUAIL VALLEY

TO: REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD REGION 8
QUAIL VALLEY SEPTIC TANK PROHIBITION

FROM: CHARLES E. SMITH

DATE: JUNE 4, 2007

SUBJECT: PROPOSED PROHIBITION OF SEPTIC TANKS QUAIL VALLEY

CC: EASTERN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS
ELSINORE VALLEY MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS
CANYON LAKE PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS
RIVERSIDE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
RIVERSIDE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

The Regional Water Quality Control Board is currently involved with a political and profitable arrangement with various Property Owner Associations, and Developers within The City of Canyon Lake, Eastern Municipal and Elsinore Valley Municipal Water Districts. Canyon Lake was completed as an impoundment reservoir in 1927 to capture waters within the San Jacinto River and Salt Creek for irrigation of citrus within Temescal Valley and Corona.

The San Jacinto River drainage area, which includes more than seven hundred fifty square miles of farmland, septic, rural sewer collection systems, and recreation to include dairies, chicken ranches, horse stables, goat farms, off road recreation and or overnight camping. On any given weekend you will find these types of conditions along the San Jacinto River which has a 750 square mile drainage area from Banning, Beaumont, Lake Hemet and Idyllwild, how can you point an uninformed finger at Quail Valley as a whole which puts bacteria into the lake every time it rains. Lets be realistic almost all who use this area do, or have, they are not prepared for sanitary conditions when needed, this area is open along the San Jacinto Drainage Channel and is used every weekend for recreational use jogging, motor sports, horseback riding, camping, most just let the hose flow when they flush their R.V., or go where and when they can, not to mention all the waste created from various cattle and neighborhood yards which drain into the San Jacinto Drainage Channel.

Several of the questions asked or which were presented at your meetings were not answered, if the homeowners agreed or disagreed with the proposal, your presentation was directed at telling the public what you have already decided, put sewers into Quail Valley, and the first step was to ban the septic tanks, even the working ones. I did not hear that the Regional Board investigated any sewer overflows this past winter season along the Perris drainage channel from any Municipal System, this sewer collection system belongs to Eastern Municipal, where during rain events the sewer along Perris Boulevard overflowed and mixed with the storm waters as if flowed into the San Jacinto River Channel, as the Sheriffs Department stood almost knee deep in waters without protection, and the utility for the area was nowhere to be found, I witnessed this in February 2005 after the February 16th rain event. Nor did I hear about how the Regional Board forced enforcement actions onto any of the farmlands, or cattle yards which drained their corrals to mix with the storm waters because they had nowhere else to drain it.

Where were the enforcement agencies to ensure the dairies, stables, chicken ranches, and the private citizens did not drain their property into the sewers to keep storm waters from entering their homes, or ensuring that these type of events do not happen. Yes if you look into a standing pond of water you will find bacteria, was it proven to be septic waste as your enforcement officer led the public to believe, NO. Where are the verified laboratory samples with dates, times, and sampler info, location and type of sample. As the Regional Board stated, the Regional Board cannot guarantee that once septic is prohibited in Quail Valley that the bacteria problem will go away within Canyon Lake, Elsinore Valley Municipal has for many years had their own problem of to low of manholes along the lake shoreline, and overflowing manholes from surcharging their system and spilling into Canyon Lake during rain events, they would be hard pressed to document one rain period in which Canyon Lake overflowed the spill way and Elsinore did not have a Sanitary Sewer Spill, lets check the records, where is the enforcement action on these SSO's ? And where did it happen with Canyon Lakes sewer system, not Quail Valleys septic systems.

Your agency has cancelled several meetings to keep the public informed as to how to address this serious issue, only to meet behind closed doors to make decisions on what is going to impact an area, in actuality destroy this area. Homeowners who cannot afford to plug their septic and use as holding tanks will in fact revert as they have more than 100 years ago, we will now have pit toilets with this valley endorse by Riverside County Supervisors, Riverside Economic Development, with the State wielding the enforce stick. This smells of Riverside County Economic Development Agency working as the fore runner for various developers, Municipal and Homeowner Associations to label this area as blighted, to reduce land values so large corporations can purchase large lots of property for very little money, such as unpaid back taxes on property which you force the people to vacate because now they cannot afford to pump the waste monthly, so now even more will flow unchecked into drainage areas.

It seems that the Regional Board is being taken advantage of, if all these other agencies get the Regional Board to act under the false pretence of an emergency, maybe we can skirt by various CEQA requirements, get the Board to have various properties labeled unfit and the people to vacate while the EDA, and developers come along behind them in the shadows and pay little for various properties, because now the property is worth nothing. EDA gets reimbursed for most of the funds they put up front, Jeff Stone gets extra votes because he cleaned up an area that was ok to start with, but now we can have higher density housing, not as many large lots, and rolling hills and let's not forget Riverside County now can collect more tax dollars

If you going to force this issue, then lets do it right, produce the CEQA documentation, not proposals drafted behind closed doors, put all the players out in the open, not try and steal property from the current owners, if you want us out pay the current market values. You know as well as I not all the people in this valley will pay to pump their tanks regularly and the Regional Board does not have the staff to enforce this action, now or in the future.

Rather than have public meetings and producing false information, or scheduling meetings and then cancelling them produce all the correct documentation which would and should stand up in the Courts, don't try and intimidate us because you are the Government, do what is right for all the people of this area, not just the ones in Politics.

1. Educate people with septic systems on how to properly maintain them, pump on a regular basis, do not put grease, and oils into your clean outs, or sink drain, same for egg shells, coffee grounds and potato skins.
2. Enforce building codes within the area, currently within the gated area of Quail Valley you can build on as small a lot as you want with a septic certification, and put as many converted homes on a small lot, and move as many people in as you want, septic systems are sized to what can percolate into ground safely.
3. Ensure septic percolations are performed on the lot and they do perk.
4. Educate Canyon Lake. Yes their homes may cost more, and they pay association fees, but they cannot control property which they do not own, Canyon Lake was designed to capture water within a drainage area (key word is drainage area, 750 square miles of, septic, sewer and animal waste) they will always be in a drainage area and collect the runoff of other properties including Winchester and Diamond Valley Lake.

5. Enforce Storm water discharges within the San Jacinto and Salt Creek drainage areas, when it rains your enforcement teams should be out ensuring that the upstream discharger is in fact keeping his water on his property, this includes digester sludge applied to farmland, which in most cases may or may not meet land application requirements.
6. Has a study and in-depth profile been prepared on either the San Jacinto River or Salt Creek on the source of the bacteria contamination, maybe some of the trash and dead animals are also contributing.
7. Has an in depth Environmental Report been prepared for these areas, to include the various contamination sites, as you may know when the San Jacinto flows these flows can be from areas as far away as Lake Hemet, Banning, Beaumont, Moreno Valley, Winchester, and surrounding areas as well as Eastern and Elsinore Valley from their sewer collection systems.
8. Most of the septic systems within the area work and work well, there are some that don't, however whenever a person buys property or a home in this area they are not provided information on how to maintain a septic system, most are coming from areas with sewers and they just flush, the Regional Board and Riverside County should provide additional information on maintaining this type of system.
9. Your written and produced information only provides half of the truth (Canyon Lake has been closed to body contact recreation for the past several months), Canyon Lake and Lake Elsinore are closed every time the lakes receive significant rainfall, and the lakes level change dramatically. In the past prior to construction of the Perris Valley Drainage Channel, Canyon Lake would not receive water from the flows into the San Jacinto River until at least 2 inches of rain fell, now with just a little over ½ inch of rainfall the San Jacinto River provides inflow to Canyon Lake. This is runoff from field areas, backyards, and streets within the valley and drainage areas tributary to Canyon Lake, not just Quail Valley.
10. Do the complete engineering study, evaluate the entire picture, economics for the entire project good and bad.
11. How will this project affect the community as a whole?
12. Address all the issues, smog traffic, assessments, taxes, pocketbooks, current and future home owners, communicate in both languages of the people you are affecting, including in the newspaper, and mass mailings, to date they are all in English.
13. When a project is agreed upon will it actually stand up with the people and the various Courts.
14. Which consumer groups are actually paying for these studies, engineering and who is going to get the best benefit from this project, to date it is not the current homeowner within the benefit area.

15. Eastern Municipal had a study performed on this very issue in the late 1980's and what they found then is the same issue you see today, how do we get a sewer system in this area without paying for it, it will generate a steady revenue for our budgets, lets get other Municipal agencies and County Government as well as the State to pay for it or force the current homeowners to foot the bill, tell them they need it: However it still will not reduce the bacteria levels within Canyon Lake or Lake Elsinore.

Is a sewer collection system best for this area, I think all aspects need to be evaluated and addressed prior to a prohibition on all septic tanks within this area, you should do it correctly the first time without lining pockets of corporations, and developers as well as economically for the current and future home owners.

Sincerely

Charles E. Smith

29233 Avenida Gaviota

Quail Valley, CA. 92587