Stevens, Brett@Waterboards

From: Stevens, Brett@Waterboards
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 10:59 AM
To: reg5_irrigated_lands@swrcb18.waterboards.ca.gov
Subject: Administrative Civil Liability Complaint Issued to Heritage Ranch LLC
Attachments: 01 30 15_CentralValleyILRP_Enforcement.pdf

On 20 January 2015, the Assistant Executive Officer of the Central Valley Water Board issued an Administrative Civil Liability Complaint ("Complaint") to Heritage Ranch LLC for failure to obtain regulatory coverage for commercial irrigated lands.

Please see the attached press release for more information; or view the Complaint and related documents here under Madera County:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/tentative_orders/index.shtml

You may send comments concerning the Heritage Ranch Complaint to Brett Stevens at Brett.Stevens@waterboards, or by regular mail at:

Attn: Brett Stevens
Central Valley Water Board
11020 Sun Center Drive, Suite 200
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

Comments must be received no later than **5 March 2015**. If you have any questions, please contact Brett Stevens via the above email or by calling 916-464-4642.

Enforcement News

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/

Madera County Landowners Face Proposed Fines for Discharging Irrigated Land Waste Without a Permit

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 30, 2015

Contact: Brett Stevens
Phone: (916) 464-4642

The assistant executive officer of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board has proposed a pair of fines for two Madera County landowners for allegedly failing to get the required permits for discharging waste from their irrigated croplands.

Heritage Ranch LLC and Sarbjit and Satwant Athwal are facing fines of $51,480 and $31,460 respectively for their properties located in the Eastern San Joaquin River Watershed.

State law requires water quality permits for facilities that discharge waste because pesticides and fertilizers used on cropland can run off into streams, or seep into groundwater sources. These permits ensure waste discharges don't harm the Central Valley's groundwater aquifers and rivers.

In December 2012, the Central Valley Water Board issued waste discharge requirements that allowed farmers in the Eastern San Joaquin River Watershed to join a coalition of growers called the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition. The coalition holds a water quality permit that covers all of its members, conducts monitoring and provides reports to the Central Valley Water Board on behalf of the growers. Growers who don't join the coalition incur much higher costs associated with conducting their own individual monitoring and reporting directly to the Central Valley Water Board. Landowners whose parcels do not have the required permit are subject to fines and may lose their opportunity to be regulated under the coalition-based permit.

"Our board provided growers with a very cost effective option for getting the regulatory coverage required by law by joining the coalition," said Andrew Altevogt, assistant executive officer for the Central Valley Water Board. "The vast majority of growers have complied. For those who are trying to avoid these requirements, we have an aggressive program to identify their lands and, if necessary, issue fines to bring them into compliance. Through these fines, the board is clearly signaling that there is a steep price to pay for ignoring these basic regulatory requirements, and there is no economic advantage to delaying compliance."

Heritage Ranch LLC and Sarbjit and Satwant Athwal will have the opportunity to address the Central Valley Water Board at its April 16-17 meeting to discuss the complaints and penalty amounts.

For more information, see the Heritage Ranch LLC and Athwal Administrative Civil Liability Complaints here under the Madera County items.

Owners of irrigated cropland can find out how to join a coalition group and get the required regulatory coverage by going to the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program Join a Coalition Group webpage, or by calling the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program at (916) 464-4611. More information about these fines can be found at the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program Compliance and Outreach Activities webpage.

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