

California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Santa Ana Region

Special Board Meeting  
Minutes of October 3, 2006  
PUBLIC HEARING

Canyon Lake Middle School, Multi-Purpose Room  
33005 Canyon Hills Road  
Lake Elsinore, CA

Chair Beswick called the meeting to order at 6:06 P.M.

Board Members Present

Board Members Absent

Carole Beswick, Chair  
John Withers, Vice-Chair  
William Ruh  
Seymour Van Gundy  
Mary Cramer  
Deborah Neev

Staff Members Present

Jorge Leon, Regional Board Legal Counsel  
Erik Spiess, Regional Board Legal Counsel  
Kurt V. Berchtold, Assistant Executive Officer  
Michael J Adackapara, Supervising Water Resources Control Engineer  
Steven D. Mayville, Chief of Enforcement  
Hope A. Smythe, Chief of Basin Planning-Inland Waters  
Susan Beeson, Sanitary Engineering Associate  
Bill Norton, Sanitary Engineering Associate  
Michael Perez, Water Resources Control Engineer  
Kevin Heinemann, Staff Information Systems Analyst  
Felipa Carrillo, Executive Assistant

State Board Representative

None

Public Attendance

Alex Adamek  
Liz & Dennis Ahlgrim  
R. Alexander  
Darren and Shelley Allanson  
Janet Anderson  
Kris Anderson  
Luis Aragon  
Nancy Blair  
Becky Cobb

Herb Crane  
Peggy Crane  
Shelley Doyle  
Scott Foster  
Angie Gilchriese  
Cindy Grimes  
Randy Hartog  
Charles Hill  
Dave Hyatt  
Jane Joy  
Kathy Kassens  
Gerry and Larry Kinsley  
Peter Krakowiak  
Susan Krepech  
Jim and Sue Loggan  
Ian MacKenzie  
Dan Marbut  
Tommy Morgan  
Melvin McCutcheon  
Colleen Mueller  
Meghan Muelle  
Grant Mushrush  
Darlene Pauquette  
Joey and Brenda Placenti  
Eli Pavoni  
Joe Quinn  
James Richard  
Rosalind Richardson  
Lattie Robertson  
Richard Roe  
Joyce Sapp  
Bernie Strojny  
Ben Wicke  
Marc & Linda Wilson

Public Speakers

Darren Allanson  
Luis Aragon  
Greg Cannon  
Jim Cobb  
Dan Cormier  
Teresa Kessler  
Larry Kinsley  
Melvin McCutcheon  
Tommy Morgan  
Jim Perry  
Keith Richardson  
Kelly Robertson  
Spence Scarcello  
James Sheppard  
Steve Wernick

### Interested Agencies

Charlie Bachmann, EMWD  
Martin Gibson, Mayor, City of Canyon Lake  
Damian Meins, Riverside Co. Environmental Health  
Joe Mouawad, EMWD  
Ron Roberts, Co. of Riverside, District 3 Supervisor's Office  
Harvey Ryan, EVMWD  
Phil Williams, EVMWD  
Ronald Young, EVMWD

### **Proposed Basin Plan Amendment to Incorporate Waste Discharge Prohibition on the Use of Onsite Individual Septic Tank/Subsurface Disposal Systems (Septic System) in the Quail Valley Area of Riverside County**

Information pertaining to this item is contained in a verbatim transcript.

Jorge Leon, Regional Board's legal counsel, discussed the purpose of the special Board meeting and the process for the adoption of the proposed Basin Plan amendment. He indicated that if the Basin Plan amendment is approved by the Regional Board, then it has to be sent to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) for its consideration. If approved by the SWRCB, the amendment becomes effective upon approval by the Office of Administrative Law (OAL). All interested parties could submit comments on the Basin Plan amendment prior to its consideration by the SWRCB and by the OAL. Regional Board staff will be submitting a list of interested parties to the SWRCB and OAL. Mr. Leon urged all interested parties to sign up for inclusion in the interested parties list. Mr. Leon and Ms. Beswick indicated that the Board is charged with protecting water quality and does not have any control over the cost of sewers or land use planning. Such issues must be directed to the appropriate agencies.

Steve Mayville began the staff presentation by providing the Board with background on the septic system problems in Quail Valley. He informed the Board that staff was originally alerted to the problem by a complaint from the City of Canyon Lake in March 2004. He outlined the problem in Quail Valley by describing the threat to public health and water quality from the large number of failing septic systems. He indicated that surface flows from the area are tributary to Canyon Lake, the beneficial uses of which include municipal and domestic supply. The Lake is also designated for body contact recreation (REC-1). When Canyon Lake overflows, it discharges to the lower reach of San Jacinto River and flows into Lake Elsinore.

According to the County of Riverside, there are more than 3900 buildable lots in Quail Valley. Approximately 1/3 of those lots have been developed, which means that between 1100 and 1400 septic systems exist in Quail Valley. The majority of lots in Quail Valley are served by septic systems, except the area being developed by Forecast Homes.

A number of factors contribute to the septic system problems in Quail Valley including high groundwater, the thin soil layer over fractured bedrock and small lot sizes. During the 2004/2005 rainy season, septic systems failed at an alarming rate forcing septic system wastes to the ground surface. Without a storm drain system, the septic system effluent commingled with runoff and flowed in natural drainage channels that drain into Canyon Lake. Some residents were observed discharging their grey water onto the streets because their septic systems were not functioning. Children were observed playing in the puddles and the drainage channels. Surface flows from Quail Valley are tributary to Canyon Lake, a 303(d) listed waterbody.

In 2005, samples of effluent were collected by both Board and Riverside County staff on multiple occasions. The samples tested reflect high levels of fecal coliform and enterococcus bacteria that are indicative of contamination by sewage.

Statistics gathered by Riverside County reflect that during the years 2003-2004 and 2004-2005, the number of complaints received by the County related to septic system problems in Quail Valley presented 13 and 21 percent, respectively, of the number of similarly related complaints received for the entire County. In the last 4 ½ years, ten percent of the complaints were repeat complaints from Quail Valley. The greatest frequency of complaints in Quail Valley were from sub-areas 4 and 9.

Board staff solicited assistance from stakeholders to address the problems related to the failing septic systems by forming an Ad-Hoc Task Force (made up of representatives from sewerage agencies, City of Canyon Lake and Riverside County) and by soliciting comments from the citizens in the community by conducting two town-hall style meetings in June and December 2005. The most viable alternative to septic systems in Quail Valley appeared to be the installation of a sewer system.

Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD) commissioned a sewer feasibility study, which concluded that sewer construction is feasible. The study suggested phasing construction in order to deal with the more impacted areas of Quail Valley, such as sub-areas 4 and 9. The entire Quail Valley community would benefit from installing a sewer system. Each septic system contributes its effluent to the shallow ground water. The elimination of septic systems from high density areas could reduce the load on groundwater and possibly eliminate surfacing of groundwater. Under this scenario, it is likely that septic systems in low density areas would function properly.

Board staff presented a draft Basin Plan Amendment (BPA) at the Board Workshop in May 2006 that proposed to prohibit new septic systems in sub-areas 4 and 9, and require existing septic systems to connect to sewers within one year of sewer availability. However, some significant events occurred after the May 2006 workshop that influenced Board staff to modify the proposed BPA. First, Riverside County adopted an ordinance prohibiting new septic system installation in sub-areas 4 and 9. The County ordinance will only take effect when the BPA becomes effective. Second, EMWD has indicated that it was unable to secure the \$1.85 million needed to design the sewer system for Quail Valley.

The revised draft BPA includes a provision to prohibit new septic systems in the entire Quail Valley area if the Board finds that the sewerage agency is not on schedule to provide a sewer system for Quail Valley within 5 years of the effective date of the BPA. If the sewer system design is proceeding, new septic systems may be permitted in all areas of Quail Valley other than sub-areas 4 and 9.

Mr. Mayville concluded his presentation by summarizing the comments and staff responses. He indicated that the most significant concern was sewer system financing and the cost to individual homeowners. He noted that EMWD, EVMWD, Riverside County Board of Supervisors and Board staff have been working on finding funding sources so as to reduce the financial burden on the individual homeowners. Mr. Mayville also noted that minor changes to the BPA were included in the errata sheet.

Following Mr. Mayville's presentation, agency representatives, citizens from Quail Valley and other interested parties commented on the proposed BPA. Mr. Berchtold responded to the public comments and questions. Mr. Leon indicated that staff had fulfilled the legal requirements for public notice.

The Board then briefly discussed the proposed BPA. Mr. Withers asked Board staff to update the Board on a regular basis regarding the progress of sewer system installation in Quail Valley.

Action: It was moved by Member Withers, seconded by Member Ruh, and unanimously approved that the Board adopt the Basin Plan Amendment by adopting Order No. R8-2006-0024 with the errata.

28. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 P.M.

Respectfully submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerard J. Thibault". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G".

**GERARD J. THIBEAULT**  
Executive Officer

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