



# EL DORADO AGRICULTURAL WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT CORP

PROTECTING OUR PRECIOUS RESOURCE

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# Watershed Connection

*A publication for members of the El Dorado Subwatershed Coalition*

*A member of the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition*

<p><b><u>Officers:</u></b></p> <p><b>Dedrian Kobervig</b> <i>President</i> <i>Crystal Creek Farm</i></p> <p><b>Norm Krizl</b> <i>Vice President</i> <i>Krizl Vineyard</i></p> <p><b>Maryann Argyres</b> <i>Secretary</i> <i>Argyres Orchard</i></p> <p><b>Bob Witters</b> <i>Treasurer</i> <i>Crystal Springs Vineyard</i></p> <p><b><u>Directors:</u></b></p> <p><b>Tom Heflin</b> <i>Rainbow Orchards</i></p> <p><b>Linnea Marengo</b> <i>Penobscot Ranch</i></p> <p><b>Kirk Taylor</b> <i>Smokey Ridge Ranch</i></p> <p><b>Carolyn Mansfield</b> <i>Goldbug Farms</i></p> <p><b>Ann Johnson</b> <i>Walker Vineyard</i></p>	<p><b>ILRP Update</b> <span style="float: right;"><i>By Lesa Osterholm</i></span></p> <p>In 2003, the exemption for agriculture of any waste discharges to surface waters was removed and what is now called the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) began. For the past thirteen years, El Dorado County has tested the surface water quality and has had excellent results demonstrating good management practices by its members. Yet despite the clean water results, regulations continue to increase and more and more information from producers and growers has been required.</p> <p>In 2014, a new Waste Discharge Order from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board required the additional monitoring of groundwater, Farm Evaluation Plans and Sediment and Erosion Control Plans among the magnitude of the mandated reporting and costly development of plans.</p> <p>In 2016, the State Water Quality Control Board got further involved and proposed draft regulations to increase the regulatory requirements even more. The proposed regulations would require all members to be considered high vulnerability with no regard to the low vulnerability status that El Dorado County has worked so hard to achieve recently. Public comments were accepted through June 1st and we are waiting for a response from the State Water Board. The proposed requirements would require your personal information and farming and ranching practices to be made public, require you to test your private wells and certify required plans. All of these requirements will increase your costs substantially.</p> <p>Your Board of Directors continue to work hard on your behalf to assist members with the reporting and regulatory compliance. What can you do?? Continue to implement best management practices to protect surface and groundwater from any run off of sediment and pesticides. We will continue to advocate on your behalf with the hope of reducing this regulatory burden. Stay tuned...</p> <p><b>Treasurer's Report</b></p> <p>The Coalition's income from 300 plus members is \$30,644 which is on budget. Expenses through June 30 were \$14,723, which is below budget. However, we hear from Sac Valley that they did two monitoring events, but to date, we haven't received an invoice. Our current checking balance is \$23,968 and our current saving balance is \$40,148, bringing our total assets to \$65,239.</p> <p>Our current budget status is \$26,926 (budgeted) vs. \$14,722 (actual).</p>

**President's Notes***By Dee Kobervig*

My first order of business as your new president is to thank the past president, Carolyn Mansfield, for the long hours and hard work she has put into this organization. Her efforts and those of other dedicated board members are the reason we have a low vulnerability status at this time. A shout out to Maryann Argyres for keeping out minutes and attending every meeting.

As most of you know, the State Water Board is attempting to add another layer of bureaucracy to this program. Disregarding all the hard work we have put into it over the last thirteen years. I thank all of you who took time to write a letter of concern and those who attended the State Water Board meeting in Sacramento. Forty one letters, including one from our Board of Supervisors were submitted to the State Water Board.

Because of the short time the State Water Board gave us to respond to their planned actions, email address became a very important tool in responding as a group in order to have our opinions heard. If something comes up unexpectedly that we need to respond to as a group or as individuals, emails are the fastest way to get that information out. If we do not have your email address, or you recently changed email addresses, please email me at [dkobervig@gmail.com](mailto:dkobervig@gmail.com) so we can update the database.

Farm on-site management practice verifications will be conducted in August/September. Because of our low vulnerability status for groundwater contamination, we only need to inspect 5% of our total irrigated acreage. Please respond promptly if you are contacted by one of our members to verify your practices and make sure you have your Farm Evaluation practices on site.

Annual education is going to be mandatory for all members. Sac Valley will be developing an online distance learning website where members can check in for continuing education. The Annual Membership meeting can count as an educational meeting as long as nitrogen management, safe use of pesticides, irrigation management or sediment and erosion control are discussed.

The next big obstacle to tackle is the groundwater and sediment concerns. Because of the topographical nature of our area (sloped hillsides), the state wants to put us into a high vulnerability category, which would require third party verification for all members. This will be an added expense that none of us want. We need to be especially vigilant as a group and as individuals when it comes to sediment movement on our property. We as a group and as individuals do not want to create any problems that could bring us to the attention of the State Water Board. If one grower is seen as a problem, we will all be seen as a problem and suffer the consequences. We are going to be arguing that because El Dorado County and the EDC Department of Agriculture have very stringent guidelines and strict enforcement of the local sediment and erosion control policies we should not need to submit reports or conduct third party inspections for another government entity.

I ask every member to please respond to inquiries, mailings, billings and documentation verification in a timely manner. We are all volunteers and have our own farms, families and projects we want to spend time with. Having to follow up two or three times to get a response wastes our time and breeds resentment. If you have any concerns or questions, please feel free to attend one of our monthly Board meetings.

## Ag. Water Quality Member Update

### What do I need to do if I'm going to grade my property or change the contour of my land?

New sediment and erosion control guidelines and requirements are in the works by the Central Valley Water Board. We need to be proactive as individuals and as a group to show the regional board that we are a low threat to water quality when it comes to sediments and erosion. A mistake by even one grower can have devastating effects on all of us. Best management practices are imperative at this time.

The El Dorado County Department of Agriculture website is a great place to visit if you are not sure what is required of you when grading or changing the contour of your land.

### **EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL REQUIREMENTS**

All agricultural grading activities that convert undisturbed vegetation to agricultural cropland, in the unincorporated area of El Dorado County, may be required to obtain an agriculture grading permit. Agricultural grading that does not substantially change the natural contour of the land and that use "best management practices" may be exempt from obtaining a permit, but must still comply with CEQA, the County Storm Water Management Plan, and all other relevant codes and ordinances. The Agricultural Grading Permit Application must include an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan that lists appropriate best management practices to be implemented to protect all disturbed area on the agricultural site from the effects of storm water runoff.

When assessing your property and farming practices you should answer "Yes" to the following questions if they pertain to your agricultural operation:

1. Do you use permanent vegetated buffer areas along waterways to prevent erosion and the movement of agricultural chemicals into surface water?
2. Do you maintain existing erosion protection measures on your farm?
3. Do you manage access roads, stock trails and other critical areas to limit surface water runoff and prevent erosion?
4. Do you have any of the following measures installed to prevent/reduce soil erosion?  
Cover crops, Diversion ditches, Vegetated buffer zones, Terracing,  
Contour planting, Sediment ponds, Grassed waterways, Stabilized access roads

When accessing your property and farming practices you should answer "No" to the following questions if they pertain to your agricultural operation.

1. Do you notice soil erosion from fields and other growing areas with slopes on your property?
2. During rain events, do you notice soil erosion from fields with bare soil or sparse groundcover?
3. During irrigation do you notice any erosion from fields?
4. Do you notice sediment moving off the farm after irrigation or storm events?

These Best Management Practices are excerpts from the *Farmland Self-Assessment Workbook* available at the EDC Agricultural Department.



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***Please consider joining the Coalition Board of Directors!  
This coalition was formed on your behalf  
and now's the time for you to get involved!!***