

DATE BASIN BOUNDARY  
REGULATION COMMENT  
RECEIVED BY DWR

8/30/2015

Via e-mail to: sgmps@water.ca.gov

Subject: Exclusion Request, Paso Robles Basin

Re: Exclusion Request

Re: APN's 017,221,010; 017,251,075; 017,251,076; 017,261,004; 017,261,007; 017,261,019;  
017,261,020; 037,291,001; 037,291,023; 037,291,025; 037,291,031

Please exclude the above referenced parcels from inclusion in the proposed Paso Robles Basin Water District Boundary. My family has sustainably managed these 4,000+ acres east of San Juan Road, Shandon for the last 65 years. We plan to continue managing this grazing land for many years into the future. This property would not benefit from being in the Proposed District nor would the Proposed District reap additional benefit from its inclusion. The grazing operation on this 4,000+ acre property uses less than 5 acre feet of water per year total, not per acre.

Groundwater from 3 stock wells provide for the livestock. All three wells are located near the western property line at San Juan Road. 2 of these wells replace stock wells 1 mile to the east of the current locations; the previous ones to the east did not provide a reliable source of groundwater. Do not think this was a current event, these replacements were made 15 and 35 years ago. Our grazing land does not have the same available groundwater sources as the ground to the west in the flat Shandon Valley.

This property is not suitable for development. Due to the topography and soil type vehicle access is not possible during periods of heavy rain and it often is not passable on horseback but can be traversed on foot. The bluffs and highly erodible soil cannot be overcome by a bit of grading and asphalt.

We have kept rainfall records for the past 65 years, the average is 10.45 inches per year. Since October 6, 1958 one of our wells has been monitored twice annually. October 6, 1958 the water stood at 92.30 feet. April 3, 2015 the water stood at 99.28 feet. There have been ups and downs and measurements have been made with the pump on and with the pump off. However this is a difference of less than 7 feet in a 57 year period. This is with 7 out of the last 8 years of below average rainfall. When rainfall records are compared to well depth levels there is a direct relationship. The spring groundwater level in our well is better one year after an above average rainfall.

The City of Paso Robles is requesting that water users limit use to 25 units per month. One unit is 748 gallons of water. At that level of use a household would use 224,400 gallons per year. This is .68 acre feet for the household in a year. The grazing operation on our property has much different consumption levels. We use less than 5 acre feet per year. This amount of water is equal to 7 ½ households using 25 units of water per month. Mature cattle use more water than younger animals and cattle consume more water during hot weather than in cold weather. Making the assumption that every animal is mature and that the weather for 365 consecutive days is over 100 degrees our usage would be 8.40 acre feet per year for the entire property. That level is not high consumption and it is doubtful we will ever need that quantity of water for the grazing operation.

Our land is part of the San Juan River Watershed. Rainfall runoff finds its way west of San Juan Road and contributes to the San Juan Basin. This natural occurrence will continue for years, even when our property is excluded from the proposed Paso Robles Basin Water District.

Additional considerations:

Grazing land does not have the same earning potential as irrigated ground. The County Ag Commissioner's Office reports that for 2014 grazing land rent in northern San Luis Obispo County was valued at \$7.00 per acre. There are many fixed expenses for grazing land, two of the major expenses are property taxes and insurance, they can easily total 38% of a grazing lease. A \$2 per acre water charge would be a fixed expense totaling 28.57% of the rent for that acre. A 50 cent per acre fee would be 7.14% of the rent for that acre. This is not an expense that can be passed on to a renter; it is an expense that could send a landlord into a relationship with a developer.

Most of the grazing land east of San Juan Road in Shandon is similar to our property; it does not belong in the proposed Paso Robles Basin Water District. The land sends its runoff water from rainfall to the irrigated land to its west while taking nothing in return.

Mary Russell