



Water School

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San Diego County

# UC Cooperative Extension

- Joint program between the University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the USDA and the County of San Diego
- Our purpose is to conduct applied research, and provide outreach and education on local agricultural, land use and human resource issues. Cooperative Extension is in most counties in the United States and similar programs are in other countries.
- In San Diego County, we have two
  - 9335 Hazard Way, Suite 201, San Diego (Complex)



# Why are we holding “Water Schools”?

- To provide information to growers and land managers on water quality issues, regulations and best management practices (BMPs)
- To inform the local agricultural and associated industries of resources available to assist you in meeting the water quality requirements
- **To provide an opportunity for you to complete the annual two-hour water quality educational requirement found in the Ag Waiver.**



# Water Quality Laws and Regulations

- Will bypass MOST of the history behind the water quality law and regulations as they impact local agriculture and land use
- Some history is important so that you can sort out what applies to you and what does not
- As is usual with environmental regulation, California was first to enact specific water quality laws

# California Water Quality Laws

- Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act  
1969
  - Principal law governing water quality in California
  - Applies to both surface water and ground water
  - Established the State Water Resources Control Board and the nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards
    - These boards develop statewide and regional water quality plans such as the Basin Plans, set beneficial uses for water bodies and set pollution limits for water bodies.



# Federal Laws and Regulations

- Most important is the Federal Clean Water Act of 1972
  - Concerned with clean-up of point sources of water pollution
- Clean Water Act Reauthorization Amendments of 1987
  - Included nonpoint sources of pollution
    - Sections 303(d), 319, 401 and 404 are also of concern
- Endangered Species Act of 1973



# So, why are you here today?

- Primarily because of the Federal Clean Water Act of 1972/1987
  - The federal government passes down the responsibility of enforcement of federal laws to states
  - The State Water Resources Control Board and the Regional Water Quality Control Board are responsible for making sure the Clean Water Act are enforced in the State of



# There are three programs that we will discuss today:

- Stormwater Program
- **The Agricultural Waiver Program**
- The TMDL, or Total Maximum Daily Load Program

# Stormwater Program

- The Stormwater Program is a result of the Federal Clean Water Act
  - Responsibility was put on each state to comply
  - Compliance had to be at the local level, so State of California passed the responsibility to the local level through a stormwater permit (MS4)
  - A “stormwater ordinance”, or an agreement



# What does the Stormwater Ordinance require?

- Although it sounds like “stormwater” is what is regulated, the reality is that “non-stormwater” is regulated
- No water, other than clean stormwater can be discharged into the stormdrain system (MS4)
- The stormdrain system in stormdrains and the water

# Who is regulated under the Stormwater Ordinance?

- Businesses considered to be high priority include those that have the potential to pollute
- Restaurants
- Auto repair shops
- AND:
  - Greenhouse and Nursery Operations
  - Other agricultural operations on a complaint basis

# What happens to a nursery under the Stormwater laws?

- Must not allow irrigation or operational water to leave your property
- Must not allow rainwater to leave your property if it is carrying pollutants (petroleum products,
- Annual or Bi-annual inspections through the Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures if you are operating your nursery in the county, and from your city if you are a municipality



# Stormwater Regulations cont.

Stormwater regulations:

Prohibit irrigation water from leaving your property, and also rainwater if it is carrying any pollutant with it.

If you own a nursery, you will receive an annual inspection (approximately) the city where you do business.



# So what is the Ag Waiver then?

- The Ag Waiver, as it is known, is actually a waiver of the requirement to hold a Waste Discharge Permit, not a waiver that allows pollution of waterways without regulation
- Pertains to irrigated agriculture
- The Ag Waiver is conditional, and it is reviewed every 5 years.

# So what is the Ag Waiver then? (cont.)

- Requires that you

- Implement BMP's to eliminate discharge of pollutants.
- monitoring of water quality, and reporting the results to the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and also requires 2 hours of water quality education per year. You must be able to document this.
- Conduct annual self-assessments
- Obtain 2 hours of water quality education per year
- Have regular contact with FB, RCD, UCCE, NRCS
- Keep adequate records
- Train workers

# Who must be involved in the Ag Waiver program?

- Growers who use irrigation (even if it is your own well water) to produce commercial crops must enroll in the Ag Waiver program
  - If you have produced \$1000 in crops any year in the last 3 years, you are required to enroll
- Deadline was Dec. 31, 2010, but it has been reopened because some growers had failed to enroll on time, or were not clear about the responsibilities and requirements



# The Benefits of Belonging to an Irrigated Lands Group:

- An Irrigated Lands Group will take care of all the requirements of being part of the Ag Waiver:
  - The enrollment in the Ag Waiver
  - The development of a Monitoring and Reporting Program Plan, and a Quality Assurance Program Plan
  - The actual monitoring
  - Water quality reporting
- The cost will be split among the members of the group or the individual will pay the entire cost (\$15,000-\$20,000 per year.)



# Where are the groups in the San Diego area?

- San Diego County Farm Bureau, open to anyone in San Diego County,
  - Must be a member of the San Diego County Farm Bureau
- Upper Santa Margarita Irrigated Lands Group
- Upper San Mateo Watershed
- Upper San Luis Rey
- Contact your local water district with the following information to determine which group you should join:



# TMDL: Total Maximum Daily Load

- Specialized and localized programs for water bodies that are considered “impaired”, based on data submitted to the state
  - Generally a specific pollutant is of concern, for example a metal or nutrient in runoff
  - Sometimes localized to an area of stream or water body
- A program is developed to clean up the particular pollutant over a period of years
  - Requirements can be very rigid



# Summary:

- Federal, state and local water quality laws will impact you
- Three main programs that will require action from you
  - Stormwater Program
  - **Agricultural Waiver Program**
  - Total Maximum Daily Load Program (possibly)
- All three programs will require many of the same activities- use of Best Management Practices, reduction of runoff, record keeping, etc.

