

P&A Committee April 2025

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Update 2024 Annual Inspection Reports for the Grazing Lease Program

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

The Monterey County Water Resources Agency (Agency) is leasing and performs property management of Agency real property. The Agency acts as a lease administrator and provides property management services on its owned properties. The property consists of 24,000 acres of purchased vacant land surrounding Nacimiento and San Antonio Reservoirs. The lease of land for grazing involves eight (8) ranch areas consisting of 16,000 acres total or appropriately 10,300 acres above high water. The site search and selection available to local ranchers has been surveyed as 7,700 acres of suitable forage area. A suitable forage area map was created for each lease in 2010. The Agency grazing leases require annual monitoring of Residual Dry Matter (RDM) levels to be reported and applying to areas that are capable of producing a grazable amount of forage. This amount is typically at least 1,800 lbs/acre during an average growing season. Growing, or the grazing season begins November 1 and ends October 31. Conditions are assessed in the middle of the season to better understand a minimum level of RDM is retained to allow a reasonable level of livestock use and protection. The Agency Operations staff has completed the 2024 annual inspection reports. The reports will be used to inform Agency administration of the leases and the agreement allows for necessary changes in allotment of cattle, if necessary.

These activities align with Strategic Plan Goals A, *Infrastructure Maintenance, properly maintain MCWRA infrastructure to ensure safe and reliable function, A2 Create a comprehensive capital improvement plan for all facilities which includes preventative maintenance, addressing backlog of maintenance repairs, and making improvements to ensure safe and reliable facilities.* Activities associated with this program are included in Funds 111 and 116 of the FY 24-25 budget.

2024 Self-Assessments, Evaluation Meetings and Annual Reports

In the latter part of each spring or early summer, from mid-June through September, the Agency collects annual self-assessments, conducts evaluation meetings and then prepares annual reports. The timing of this inspection and sampling survey allows the Agency to capture conditions of the grazing season at a time when planning for the upcoming cattle operations. In this way, the Agency is assured the RDM data is an assessment of the relative, year-to-year change in forage throughout the properties.

For FY 2024-25, all lease areas showed needs for maintenance and surveys were performed to initiate improvements. The Agency staff was able to address key issues with infrastructure needs including fencings, gates, debris cleanup, and planning alternative water sources. The magnitude of proper vs improper grazing is also being evaluated ahead of the next lease cycle. The leases are being administered by the Agency. The success is the Agency is regulating grazing and optimizing land stewardship by following important protocols in the lease agreement. The Operations Division is assisting to help ensure the generation of property-related revenues is

being realized to support adequate infrastructure on these lands. There is economic importance of the grazing program and the experience increases support for the rural community, helps to preserve open space as well as wildlife habitat.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

None

FINANCING:

There is no financial impact in receiving this report. Activities associated with this program are included in Funds 111 and Fund 116 FY 24-25 budget.

Prepared by: Jennifer Bodensteiner, Associate Hydrologist, (831) 788-3514

Attachments:

1. Grazing Lease Map San Antonio Reservoir
2. Grazing Lease Map Nacimiento Reservoir