



Monthly Update

Counties of Inyo and Mono Agricultural Commissioner's Office
August 2016

Agriculture

Agriculture staff attended a meeting in Long Valley in July to look at sage grouse conservation efforts on LADWP lands. Concern has grown over the last several years of drought conditions that decreases in irrigation on LADWP leases in Long Valley may have a detrimental impact on sage grouse populations.

An Inyo Agriculture Resource Advisory Board meeting was conducted in July. This meeting was very productive, with several current issues such as the USFS Plan Revision, new pesticide laws, and agriculture hazardous materials storage being discussed. The advisory board has sent a letter with recommendations and comments regarding the USFS Plan Revision to the Inyo Board of Supervisors.

Staff is still waiting for the Department of Pesticide Regulation's release of proposed regulations pertaining to agricultural pesticide use near schools. This has been a hot subject in many parts of California for several years. There is concern that any sweeping prohibitions could adversely effect agriculture producers who are making pesticide applications legally under label requirements, and who are using methods that have little to no threat of off site drift such as wick-wipers or low volume backpack sprayers.

Agriculture Legislation of Interest

SB 313—Amends the Education code to require consultation with the local Agricultural Commissioner prior to approval of new school site selection.

Weights and Measures

Weights and measures staff has been busy this month finishing inspections of retail fuel meters and counter scales. The livestock scale season has already begun as well with a few requests to certify coming in. Livestock scale inspections are typically timed to coincide with the selling and shipping of calves.

Staff continues to participate in the statewide card skimmer survey. Each time a retail fuel meter is checked for accuracy, the dispenser is also opened and examined to make certain card skimming devices are not installed inside. These card skimmers can steal personal information that can then be used for fraudulent purchases.

This statewide survey is intended to gather information on both the prevalence of skimmers in California as well as what resources counties will need to continue these surveys as a part of normal inspection procedures. The Department of Measurement Standards may offer contracts to continue this work in future years, and as a current survey participant, Inyo and Mono Counties would be offered this type of contract first.

Weights & Measures Legislation of Interest

AB 2307—This bill would require county Sealers and registered service agents to work with local law enforcement when devices are found during inspections that could facilitate fraud. This bill was written by the California Agricultural Commissioner and Sealer's Association and is directed at reducing fraud committed via credit card skimmers.

Owens Valley Mosquito Abatement Program

Mosquito populations have been on the rise. The hot weather and continued Sierra runoff has increased populations to a level where several fogging operations have been required in the Owens Valley and Town of Mammoth Lakes. Population increases have also been attributed to fluctuating Owens River levels.



Trapping continues for mosquito species that can carry Zika. None of these species have been discovered in Inyo or Mono Counties.

Several mosquito pool samples from all parts of the Owens Valley and Town of Mammoth Lakes have been submitted for disease testing. This is a normal part of our surveillance program, and these samples are tested for the presence of several types of encephalitis including West Nile Virus. None of these samples have come back positive. Statewide, 32 counties have West Nile detections so far this year, with 1,159 mosquito samples indicating positive insects.

We anticipate high mosquito populations through August, and staff will be working hard to identify breeding sources before they hatch into adults. Disease samples will continue to be submitted as well, with August being the high point of the year for West Nile Virus detections. We encourage everyone to protect themselves from biting insect by wearing repellent and avoiding outside activities during dusk.

Eastern Sierra Weed Management Area

Staff continue to work on the five-year Wildlife Conservation Board Perennial pepperweed project. With all populations now treated, a second treatment circuit will begin to eliminate any regrowth that has occurred.

Treatments have also been completed in the Lower Owens River Project (LORP) area. These annual treatments help to ensure invasive plants do not become established in the LORP area. Crews return to areas where sites have existed in the past, and also respond to populations discovered during annual Rapid Assessment Surveys. Since the LORP flows were re-established, weed infestations have been kept at an extremely minimal level.

Management was also recently completed on Perennial pepperweed populations occurring in the Adobe Valley. This work was a cooperative effort between the ESWMA and the Eastern Sierra Land Trust (ESLT). ESWMA has provided technical and other assistance to ESLT on several of their properties.

This work is a prime example of why we have a weed management area group—to work across jurisdictional boundaries, eliminating invasive plant threats in the most efficient manner.

