

Memorandum FILE:

Sonoma
POLLUTION

To : Captain Glenn Whitesell

Date: May 18, 1965

From : Department of Fish and Game Warden Curtis Kastner

Subject: FISH KILL

May 17 1965 at 5 PM the Santa Rosa CHP was trying to get a Warden on the radio, to investigate a report of fish dying in Sonoma creek. I responded and at 555 PM contacted the reporting person, Mrs. Peggy Gardner, Box 411, Glen Ellen Ph. 6-1571.

She said that at 2 PM this date she was down in the creek and noticed a lot of fish dead, dying and collecting in the pool where her son goes swimming.

Subsequent field investigation found dead fish in Sonoma creek from the junction of Calabazas creek downstream for approximately 300 yards. All the fish observed were anadromous fishes of the Genus Salmo. No rough fish were found dead, and no large Salmo. The average size of the dead fish was between one inch and three inches, in length. The count of all the dead fish observed at 6:20 PM was 271. The temperature of the water was 63 degrees and there wasn't any visible pollutant. Several other species (including Salmo) of fish were in the entire area and were live normal acting fish.

Interviews with local citizens revealed that a domestic water main was cleaned with chlorine on May 17, 1965, and the emanation was discharged into Sonoma creek immediately above the area where the dead fish were observed. The time of this discharge was coincidental with the observation of Mrs. Gardner, that fish were dying and the flushing valve was discharging a clear fluid that she believed to be water. This flushing valve is on an 8 inch domestic water main pipe that crosses Sonoma creek in the town of Glen Ellen. The pipe is suspended on the bridge on Arnold Dr. between Horn Ave. and Robertson Rd., adjacent to the Rustic Inn, in Glen Ellen.

At 9:20 PM May 17, 1965, Mr. Wesley R. Hill, General Manager of the Valley of the Moon Water District, was contacted at his home at 575 El Dorado Dr., Boyes Sprgs., Ph. 996-0187. Mr. Hill advised this officer that 52,000 feet of eight inch water main pipe was chlorinated on May 17, and the point of discharge was the flushing valve described above. Mr. Hill also stated that his Company is not responsible for the operation, as it is controlled by Mr. Gordon Miller of the Sonoma County Flood Control Office, in their program of supplying domestic water from Coyote Dam.

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To : Captain Glenn Whitesell

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Subject: FISH KILL (page two)

May 18, 1965 at 10:00 AM the Sonoma County Flood Control Office was contacted re this matter.

Mr. Orval Woodard, Sanitation Engineer, advised that this instance of dumping chlorinated water into Sonoma creek was due to their discovery of an increasing bacteria count in the Valley of the Moon Water system and hence the introduction of 44 ppm chlorine into the 52,000 feet of eight inch main water pipe, and resultant dumping into Sonoma creek from the flushing valve at the bottom of the line. Mr. Woodard stated he did not know of any method to eliminate this problem of keeping chlorine out of the stream (Sonoma creek).

I advised Mr. Woodard that our Department would contact him re this matter.

Any further action on this fish kill by this officer will be held in abeyance pending your directive.


Curtis Kastner
Fish and Game Warden