



Orinda Horse Association

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Absolute Scale 1:14,000

Relative Scale 1 inch = 0.22 miles



OHA Recent Improvements

- Governance
 - Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation
 - Release Agreement Updates and Insurance Expansion
 - Rule Revision Process
- Membership
 - Broadening our network for new members, guests, community events
- Range and Infrastructure
 - Grazing and Range Management Seminar by Richard King, USDA, ret.
 - Boundary Fence and deferred maintenance
 - Weed Management and Fuel Management

PASTURE WORK HOURS: Upward Trajectory

- Infrastructure
 - 2022 Boundary Fence Repair
- Range Management
 - Weeding
 - Mowing
 - Grazing Upkeep
 - Fuel Management



PUBLIC SERVICE

- Invited Guests
 - Revised and updated liability release
- Underserved Communities
 - At Risk Youth
 - Girl Scouts
 - Special Events
 - Other?



THANK YOU
FOR THE
OPPORTUNITY
TO PARTNER
WITH YOU!



Proposed Capital Improvement Projects
2022-23 Grazing Year
Orinda Horse Association
DRAFT 2/24/23

Introduction

This is the Orinda Horse Association's (OHA) proposed Capital Improvements Project list for grazing season 2022-2023. EBMUD did not accept a proposed list in grazing season 2021-2022, so some items are carryovers or extensions from the prior year. Each item has an estimated cost to OHA, and each item is intended to advance EBMUD's range management and natural resource protection goals.

Rotational Grazing

1) Native Grass-Forbs Protection and Enhancement

OHA practices intensive rotational grazing of its herd in order to promote growth and health of native grasses and forbs, while suppressing European annuals and invasive weeds.

In 2022 OHA hired noted range ecologist Richard King (USDA-NRCS, retired) to tour OHA, conduct an educational event on range ecology and provide site specific recommendations for improving and enhancing existing conditions for native grasses and forbs at OHA in the face of a changing climate. His lecture was well received, and his summary recommendations will be presented to EBMUD staff for consideration and possible application in the 2023 grazing year.

a) Rotational Grazing Credit

- i) OHA will conduct a Tier 3 rotation plan in the 2022-23 grazing year.
- ii) OHA intends to formulate new site-specific native grass and forb measures and weed abatement prescriptions as advised by range ecologist Richard King and EBMUD staff.

Tier 3 Rotational Grazing Credit = \$3,343

Capital Improvement Projects

2) Repair Water Valves and Delivery Systems

- a) OHA's existing water supplies are plagued by aging plumbing fixtures that result in leaks or irregular water supply to the herd. We propose to inspect and replace as needed all plumbing fixtures to maintain off-pond and off-channel water supplies for livestock. In addition, we propose to clear debris from spring boxes where covers have deteriorated and install new covers.
 - i) 5 Hudson Valves and associated pipe fittings
 - ii) 20 board feet construction grade redwood for spring box cover
 - iii) OHA member labor for installation

Total = \$350

3) Boundary Fence Repairs

- a) The Moraga-Orinda Shaded Fuel Break Project exposed extensive sections of boundary fence that need repair. Many of the fence breaks were clearly years, if not decades old. OHA has successfully repaired all fence along Wildcat Canyon from Inspiration Point to El Toyonal, including extensive fallen tree removal. We now propose to complete the fence repairs from El Toyonal to Camino Pablo. We understand that routine maintenance is required under our lease but the amount of deferred maintenance fence repair necessary in a short period of time is exceptional; OHA would greatly appreciate EBMUD's assistance in considering this work a capital improvement for this year. Terrain is uneven, poison oak laden, characterized by numerous fallen trees requiring extensive and dangerous chainsaw work and extremely steep in some places. We expect to replace significantly more than the linear feet requested here.

i) 200 linear feet of barbed wire fencing x \$9.50 per foot = **\$1,900**

4) Control of Invasive Weeds

- a) OHA has had remarkable success in controlling invasive plant species (including some toxic to grazing animals) that threaten to dominate native grasses/forbs. For example, our pasture is one of the few grasslands in northern California which has not been overtaken by yellow star thistle, thanks to aggressive manual removal by our members for many years. Similarly, French broom control efforts near Camino Pablo have increased biodiversity while reducing fire hazard. We appreciate EBMUD's support of our weeding work through capital improvements and suggest we continue these efforts in the coming year, through a combination of mowing and whacking hemlock, and manual removal of teasel, French broom, yellow and purple star thistle, and Italian and milk thistle.

We typically do more hours of weed control than listed in the capital improvements plan. We can adjust the cost applied for weeding to align with the remaining available credit after the projects listed above are completed.

i) Up to 40 hours of weed control at \$46.50/hour = **\$1,860**

5) Fuels Management

- a) California faces unprecedented new risk of wildfire due to extended drought and warmer average annual temperatures combined with decades of fuel load due to suppression efforts. Northern California is especially at risk due to *Phytophthora ramorum* infestations. OHA believes that holistic pasture management and invasives management can advance fire risk reduction while protecting and enhancing the abundant natural resources on EBMUD land in a changing climate. In support of the effort to balance fuel load reduction with natural resource protection, OHA focused fuel removal along the main roadways, notably Wildcat Canyon and El Toyonal. OHA managed workdays resulting in five chipper truckloads of combustible ladder fuel being removed. OHA proposes to continue this effort and dedicate substantial labor to removal of dead material, and *Bacharrus* encroachment onto grasslands.

i) Up to 40 hours of fuel management work at \$46.50/hour = **\$1,860**

6) Infrastructure Maintenance

- a) Built in the late 1960s and early 1970s, OHA's existing facilities are in need of significant basic maintenance in order to remain safe and secure. This is especially true for the two barns and shed that serve as hay and tool storage structures. By delivering and staging hay in these large structures, OHA minimizes traffic and use of the existing roads, and balances use of imported feed with abundant grass on site in order to benefit native grasses and forbs.

- i) Repair roof and repaint Pond Barn
- ii) Basic structural repair and repainting of Red Barn
- iii) Rodent-Proof and Repaint/Reinforce White Shed

Up to 40 hours of infrastructure repair and maintenance at \$46.50/hour = **\$1,860**

Total Capital Improvements Credit Available (not including rotational grazing credit): \$2,229

**EBMUD – Orinda Horse Association
Annual Grazing Plan Meeting
February 24, 2023**

Present in person: Joe Scornienchi, EBMUD Ranger; Michael Bowen, Erica Braun, Tanya Ericson, Linnea Wren. Attended via Zoom: Heather McHugh

Meeting began at 7:00 am at EBMUD Watershed Headquarters

- 1) Introductions
 - a. Joe is now our assigned ranger. Virginia is on extended medical leave.
- 2) Updates from OHA – Michael shared the attached slide deck to share OHA’s accomplishments in recent years, including:
 - a. Protecting the Pasture Ecosystem
 - b. Work Hours Completed
 - c. Revision of Governance Documents
 - d. Community Outreach
 - i. Joe expressed concern about liability if non-members are invited to events. Michael assured him that we have a stronger liability waiver now, that all guests are required to sign, and that we get a special event rider from the insurance company for large events.
 - ii. Joe commented on our success with recruitment, noting that Moraga Horsemen’s has had difficulty recruiting new members. Michael said he would reach out to Moraga and share our strategies. Heather said that Moraga does not have as much cooperative horse care (e.g., they don’t do herd feeding in the winter) which may affect their ability to attract members.
- 3) Annual Grazing Plan
 - a. Tiered Grazing Rotation
 - i. Joe confirmed we need to continue to follow Tier III grazing requirements and that we will we get credit for doing so. The Tier III grazing credit this year is \$3,343.
 - b. Capital Improvements
 - i. OHA’s Proposed Projects – see attached list of possible projects that OHA shared with EBMUD. Joe agreed to share the full list with Watershed management and see which projects are preferred. When OHA asked whether we could receive last year’s capital improvements credit this year - since EBMUD did not grant credits last year, and the lease states that the lessee can take 50% of the total cost of the lease in credits over the life of the lease - Joe said that we cannot, because this year is the first year of the new lease.
 1. Regarding plumbing, Joe said that while replacing valves and pipe fittings would likely be considered maintenance rather than capital improvements, the replacement of the spring box cover may be approved.

2. Regarding the boundary fence work, while Joe confirmed that boundary fence maintenance is OHA's responsibility, he thinks the condition of the Wildcat Canyon Rd. boundary fence may warrant considering it a replacement rather than maintenance, which would qualify as a capital improvement.
3. Regarding control of invasive weeds, Joe stated that EBMUD will no longer provide credit for mowing. We stated that OHA does a significant amount of hand-pulling of invasive species each year. Joe will check to see if we can get credit for hand-pulling. He asked OHA to provide a map of what types of plants we are pulling at which locations. He was highly complimentary of our restoration of the Lower Sullivan pasture, which at one time was being taken over by teasel.
4. Regarding fuels management, Joe asked for a map of where OHA has worked in partnership with MOFD to clear fuels. He also mentioned that EBMUD has an outdoor education program for grade-and middle-school children in which they help clear brush. He may be able to have groups come to OHA to help remove scotch broom.
5. Regarding infrastructure maintenance, Joe will ask if the EBMUD construction and painting crews can help with the needed repairs to the Red Barn and Pond Barn.

4) Check-In on AUM Usage

- a. Heather asked Joe how we are doing on AUM use the past three years. OHA has not received data on the RDM (residual dry matter) measurements since prior to the pandemic. Joe said he has been taking measurements (but not sharing them, for which he apologized, due to staffing shortages), and OHA is doing fine – we are not overgrazing the pastures. He was highly complimentary of OHA's management, saying our pastures look amazing.
- b. Joe said it is up to OHA to determine the right number of animals to keep on the pasture. He understands it is more difficult to manage a herd of horses than cattle, as horses are not moved on and off the property (or bought and sold) as needed to manage grazing throughout a year.
 - i. During the worst of the drought, some cattle ranchers had to sell off animals due to lack of water. We have been very fortunate at OHA that our springs did not dry up during the drought.
 - ii. Redwood Rangers had to reduce the number of horses on their lease due to lack of forage, in part because of the drought but also due to coyote brush encroachment on the grasslands.
 1. Speaking of coyote brush, Joe acknowledged that there are restrictions on controlling mature bushes because they supply habitat for protected species, and that that can be a problem when maintaining grazeable acres. However, control of all fire fuel near structures, including Longs', is encouraged.
- c. EBMUD is OK splitting the herd during the Spring growing season so that the horses prone to laminitis graze in a more controlled way, but EBMUD wants to see all the horses out grazing in the summer and fall, to graze down dry grass and reduce fuel load.
- d. Joe said if we were able to identify invasive plants that could be grazed down in the winter by goats, we could likely use goats for free, as Goats R Us is always looking for winter pasture for their animals.

5) Timing of Lease Payment

- a. Joe said once all the grazing leases are signed (there is one outstanding – not OHA's), invoices for the lease payments will be sent.

6) Request for Gate at Orinda Connector Trail

- a. Joe agreed to discuss this request with the EBMUD manager who oversees that trail.

Meeting adjourned about 8:45 am.

Notes respectfully submitted by Heather McHugh