

County of Santa Cruz⁰³⁴³

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

701 OCEAN STREET, 4TH FLOOR, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060

(631) 454-2580 FAX: (831) 454-2131 TDD: (831) 454-2123

ALVIN D. JAMES, DIRECTOR

November 23, 1999

AGENDA: December 7, 1999

Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

PROGRESS REPORT ON SOQUEL CREEK WATER DISTRICT ISSUES

Members of the Board:

On September 21, 1999, your Board accepted a progress report on Soquel Creek Water District (District) issues. That progress report contained a status report prepared by Soquel Creek Water District (District), a summary report on the District's Integrated Resources Plan, (including the findings and recommendation of the Public Advisory Committee), and additional observations and comments from County water resource staff. Upon discussing the item, additional direction was given to staff. The emphasis of the additional directive was to report back on conservation measures enacted by the District. The Chairperson was also directed to send a letter to the District asking their Board to consider conservation measures, including the additional measures recommended by the Public Advisory Committee (PAC), within the framework of their water supply planning. A copy of your Board Chair's letter is included as Attachment 1. Updated information on the District's water conservation efforts and water supply planning is provided below in response to your Board's previous request.

Water Conservation

In the four months since receiving the Integrated Resources Plan document from the PAC, the Soquel Creek Water District has been diligently proceeding to evaluate and pursue many of the recommendations contained in the Plan.

The District has implemented a full suite of water conservation activities and programs. An update of these efforts has been provided for your Board and is included for your review as Attachment 2. Approximately

60% of the PAC's 40 conservation recommendations are currently being addressed by the District. The recommended programs which have been implemented largely relate to water audits, incentives, retrofits, and amended rate structures. The District would also like you to note that they have undertaken conservation programs beyond those identified by the PAC. These programs include the wise water garden mini grant and two programs for school age children. It is important for your Board to recognize that the PAC's conservation recommendations have widely varying water savings potential. At this time, the District is focusing on those recommendations that will produce the highest tangible savings either through direct retrofits or public awareness of conservation practices

Water Supply Planning.

As your Board may recall, the PAC recommended that three supplemental water supply alternatives be considered: 1) an off-stream diversion on Soquel Creek; 2) desalination; and 3) recycled water for non-potable applications (such as irrigation). All of these alternatives are being actively explored. The District has retained the services of technical, legal, and environmental consultants. Interviews for the Environmental Consultants were held November 19, 1999, and approval of a contract is anticipated at their December 7, 1999 Board meeting. Ultimately the consultants report will provide a detailed evaluation of the various project alternatives in order to assist and support the District's Board of Directors decision on a preferred alternative.

With regards to the proposed off-stream diversion, the District has renewed the purchase option for property located along Soquel Creek. They have also directed their water rights attorney to identify the various permitting issues that would need to be addressed for both diversion of runoff in the winter months and for groundwater injection. It is anticipated that permitting for in-stream diversions will get close scrutiny as it may relate to any impacts on anadromous fish and stream health.

Recently there has been a lot of media coverage on the potential for desalination as a supplemental water source. Towards this end, the District is considering options for either a local or regional desalination plant. To gather more information on this alternative, District Board members and staff have toured the Marina desalination plant and met with the project manager. They also attended a briefing about the proposed Cambria desalination plant.

With the release of the City of Santa Cruz's Water Supply Alternatives Study, which identified desalination as a viable option for meeting that agency's projected needs, Soquel Creek Water District sent Santa Cruz a letter proposing that the two agencies explore the feasibility of a regional project. Issues pertinent to desalination plants continue to be location, power grids, and handling or disposal of the residual brine which remains after treatment and purification.

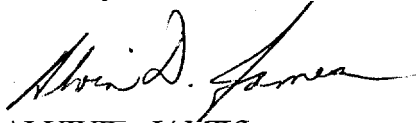
The letter from the District to the City of Santa Cruz also noted that reclaimed water was identified as a supply alternative by both agencies, albeit with limited application. The District expressed an interest in exploring this option with the City of Santa Cruz as well. Staff assumes that the studies for potential use of reclaimed water will be explored and developed further by the respective technical consultants.

The District has other water monitoring and management programs to consider, many of which were reported on in the September progress report. Staff will provide updates on some of the other programs as needed in upcoming progress reports on water resources management.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that your Board:

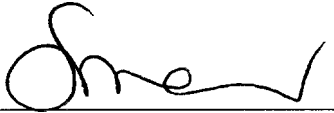
1. Accept and file this progress report on Soquel Creek Water District issues; and
2. Direct staff to continue to monitor and support Soquel Creek Water District water resource planning and management activities

Sincerely,



ALVIND. JAMBS
Planning Director

RECOMMENDED



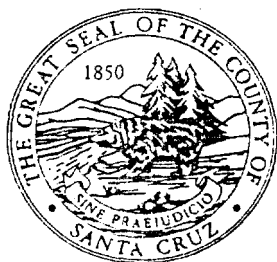
SUSAN A. MAURIELLO
County Administrative Officer

cc: Soquel Creek Water District

ADJ/Blc/SCWD09

Attachments 1) November 16, 1999 letter from Chair Almquist to Soquel Creek Water District
2) Soquel Creek Water District update on Conservation Activities and Programs

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County of Santa Cruz

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

701 OCEAN STREET, SUITE 500, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4069

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FIFTH DISTRICT

November 16, 1999

Mr. Daniel F. Kriege, President
Soquel Creek Water District
5180 Soquel Drive
Soquel, CA 95073

Dear Mr. Kriege:

This letter is to advise your Board that County Water Resource staff will be preparing a progress report on Soquel Creek Water District issues for our December 7, 1999, meeting. As you may recall, your Board provided a status report on Soquel-Aptos Groundwater Basin Management, newsletters, and a summary report on your District's Integrated Resources Plan to our Board on September 21, 1999. The summary report contained information about goals and objectives, water demand projections, conservation measures, additional conservation recommendations of the PAC, water needs assessment, supplemental water supply option recommendations, and additional recommendations.

After discussing the item on September 21, 1999, County staff was directed to report back again on December 7, 1999. Additional direction was given to send your District a letter asking that early in the process, your Board consider conservation measures within the guidelines of your water supply planning efforts. Our Board is specifically requesting that your Board consider the conservation measures that were recommended in the PAC report, and to also consider a time line as you consider these items.

I also want to let you know that on October 26, 1999, our staff was directed to work very closely with your District on issues regarding metering, monitoring private wells, and in developing a groundwater shortage contingency plan. Our staff looks forward to cooperatively working with your District on the aforementioned issues and on all other aspects of cooperative water resources management.

Sincerely,

JEFF ALMQUIST, Chairperson
Board of Supervisors

JA:ted

cc: Clerk of the Board
Bruce Laclergue, Planning



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Conservation Activities and Programs

The Soquel Creek Water District is undertaking a multi-faceted water conservation effort. Programs for the current fiscal year are described below:

Incentive Programs

1. Ultra-Low-Flow Toilet Rebate Program (on-going)
Offers \$75 rebate to District customers who retrofit existing high water use toilets to 1.6 gpf. Since July 1, 1998, approximately 574 rebates have been given.
2. High-Efficiency Clothes Washer Rebate Program (on-going)
Offers \$100 rebate to District customers who purchase approved high-efficiency clothes washers. Since July 1, 1999, approximately 70 rebates have been given.
3. Interior/Exterior Residential Water Audit Program (Spring 2000)
\$22,500 is budgeted to cover approximately 300 audits.
4. Waterwise Garden Mini Grant Program
Funds innovative projects designed to encourage public acceptance, desire for, and use of water-wise landscapes. Open to nonprofit organizations, schools and public agencies. \$250 to \$2,000 per grant. One \$2,000 grant has been awarded. Other applications are pending.
5. Free water saving devices
The District offers low-flow showerheads, low-flow hose nozzles, shower timers and water saving kits free to all customers in the District.
6. Conservation-Based Tiered Rate Structure
Effective July 1, 1999, residential water usage over 50 units during each two-month billing period costs \$3.50 per unit. The rate for 50 units or below is \$1.90 per unit. Provides an incentive for high-use customers to evaluate their usage and determine whether there are opportunities to save. All customers who are historically high water users were mailed letters informing them about the new rate structure and ways to conserve. Large postcards with similar information were sent to all customers.

Education

1. Conservation Brochures
Information on landscaping, irrigation, and indoor water conservation is available free-of-charge to all District customers.
2. Conservation Bill
The District's new bill format includes conservation information specific to each District customer. Included on the bill is a Four-Year Usage History;

Consumption History detailing gallons consumed per billing period and per day; a Water Use Efficiency figure, which shows how much more or less a customer has used compared to the same period last year; and a Message Box for conservation and billing information.

3. Web Page - www.scwd.dst.ca.us
Customers can obtain information on the District, conservation, download applications for rebate programs, read past issues of the District's newsletter, and link to other sites pertaining to conserving water by accessing the District's web site.
4. New Customer Packets
The District sends a packet to all new homeowners informing them about the water supply situation and encouraging water conservation. The packet contains information on District incentive programs and brochures on water efficient landscaping and how to use water wisely.
5. Waterwise Kids Club Pilot Program
Open to children, ages 5 through 12, who live or attend school in the District's service area. Every three months, members receive a packet of materials containing activities they can do at home, water-saving tips, information on special contests, incentives, etc.
6. "Learning to be Water-wise" school education program
Offered to three schools during the 1998-1999 school year. A "learn by doing" school-to-home based education program, which gives fifth grade students and families a strong understanding of the importance of water. Students are given the opportunity to "take their learning home" by installing conservation products and evaluating their impact on the environment.
7. *What's on Tap* District Newsletter
A quarterly customer newsletter that keeps District customers informed of current District activities including water supply, conservation, and incentive programs.

Cooperation/Coordination between Agencies

1. Communication and Conservation Coordinator participates on the following committees:
 - a. Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency Conservation Committee;
 - b. County Water Resources Conservation sub-committee; and,
 - c. County Office Of Education Environmental Education Advisory Committee.
2. Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance
District has drafted a water efficient landscape ordinance that has been provided to County staff for consideration as a countywide ordinance.

3. Retrofit at time of Resale Study
Conducted study pertaining to a countywide ordinance relating to fixture retrofits at time of resale. Provided to County staff.
4. Water Awareness Month Activities
Developed and coordinated Water Awareness Month media campaign which included the nine public water agencies in the county.
5. Conservation Requirements for all proposed development
The District takes an active role during the planning phase of new development to ensure that conservation measures are included in the design.
 - a. Working with Cabrillo College to recommend water-saving measures for college Master Plan.
 - b. Working with County Redevelopment Agency to recommend water-saving measures for proposed Anna Jean Cummings Park.

Community Events

1. Aptos/La Selva Fire District Open Houses
Participated in three open houses sponsored by the Aptos/La Selva Fire District over the course of three weekends. Distributed conservation information, low-flow showerheads, hose nozzles, and shower timers to approximately 1,000 area residents.
2. Aptos/Capitola Chamber of Commerce Business Showcase (on-going)
Participate in Business Showcase at Capitola mall to distribute conservation information and conservation incentives.