



County of Santa Cruz

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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

(831) 454-2200 FAX: (831) 454-3262 TDD: (831) 454-2123

JANET K. BEAUTZ
FIRST DISTRICT

ELLEN PIRIE
SECOND DISTRICT

MARDI WORMHOUDT
THIRD DISTRICT

TONY CAMPOS
FOURTH DISTRICT

JEFF ALMQUIST
FIFTH DISTRICT

AGENDA: 3/5/02

February 21, 2002

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE WATER ADVISORY COMMISSION

Dear Members of the Board:

Attached **is** the Annual Report **of** the Water Advisory Commission for calendar year **2001**. I recommend that **the** Board accept and file this report and direct the Chairperson to thank the members **of** the Commission for their efforts **on** the County's behalf.

Sincerely,


JANET K. BEAUTZ, Chairperson
Board of Supervisors

JKB:ted

cc: Water Advisory Commission

01165A6



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

WATER ADVISORY COMMISSION

701 OCEAN STREET, 4TH FLOOR, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
(831) 454-2580 FAX: (831) 454-2131 TDD: (831) 454-2123

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY WATER ADVISORY COMMISSION 2001 ANNUAL REPORT

This report summarizes the activities and accomplishments of the Santa Cruz County Water Advisory Commission (WAC) during 2001. This year was notable in that the Commission took on a more aggressive role in dealing with water conservation efforts within the County. It also provided feedback to the Board of Supervisors on MTBE contamination and proposed wellhead/aquifer protection. Additionally, it was an active year for individual Commission members.

CORRESPONDENCE AND RELATED EVENTS

Several letters were prepared on behalf of the Commission to various agencies within the County responsible for water issues. Several letters were sent to the Board of Supervisors regarding water conservation and wellhead/aquifer protection. Another letter from the WAC was mailed to the Interagency Water Resources Working Group and its water conservation subcommittee regarding the status of county-wide water conservation efforts. The WAC also sent a letter to the Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin Advisory Committee regarding efforts to follow-up on the technical white paper recommendations.

During the year, the WAC had several individuals give presentations at the WAC meeting. These presentations included: 1) Toby Goddard, Santa Cruz City Water Conservation Coordinator-Urban Water Management Plan (including water conservation efforts by the City of Santa Cruz), 2) Bob Watson Director of County General Services-efforts to install water-saving fixtures in County facilities, 3) Charlie McNiesh, General Manager of the PVWMA-Basin Management Plan 2000 and State of the Basin report, and 4) John Ricker-Staff report on MTBE contamination and wellhead/aquifer protect.

The Commission actively participated in the review and discussion of the above items. This report describes organizational activities, additional significant items discussed and meetings attended by individual Commissioners.

ROLES OF THE WATER ADVISORY COMMISSION

The Commission was established in 1975 to serve as a policy advisory body to the Board of Supervisors on issues relating to the use and protection of the County's water resources. The roles of the Commission, as outlined in its bylaw, were revised in 1996 and are as follows:

1. Advise the Board of Supervisors (Board) on all issues impacting water resources in Santa Cruz County, including but not limited to the following categories:
 - a. Water quality and conservation.
 - b. Water supply development, storage and distribution.
 - c. Forestry and watershed management.



- d. Preservation of fish, wildlife, and riparian habitat.
- e. Groundwater extraction.
- f. On-site sewage disposal systems.
- g. Recreation.
- h. Water reclamation.
- i. Public health and safety.
- j. Monterey Bay preservation.

2. As appropriate, comment upon or participate in the formulation, implementation, review and updating of water oriented plans and policies such as the following:

- a. Local agency water management plans.
- b. Water resource development proposals.
- c. Environmental impact reports/statements.
- d. Santa Cruz County Water Master Plan/General Plan.
- e. County ordinances, and departmental policies and regulations.

3. Staffing, funding, and other resources available to the Commission necessarily limit the duties and responsibilities outlined above. Therefore, the Commission will utilize discretion in devoting time to those activities that are most important to achieving its overall goal of enhancing and preserving Santa Cruz county water resources. Individual Commissioners are authorized and encouraged to sit on and/or attend local committees as Commission representatives. County departments (and in particular the Water Resources Division of the Planning Department, Environmental Health, and Public Works) will assist the Commission in its work, by including the Commission in water related correspondence, and by having staff provide timely oral reports on pending issues.

MEETING DATES, TIME AND LOCATION

Meetings are held at 4:00 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each active month in the County Governmental Center Planning conference room. (January and August are considered inactive months). Agendas are posted five days in advance of meetings, and are distributed to all Board members, local water districts, AMBAG, interested persons and the press.

COMMISSION STRUCTURE

The Commission consists of seven members, five of whom are concerned citizens appointed by individual supervisors and two that are appointed at-large. The two at-large positions represent public water purveyors and private or mutual water companies in the County. David Reetz was re-elected as Chairperson last year. Al Haynes was re-elected as Vice-Chair. The Commission was pleased to welcome this year new commissioners Cherrie Bobbe, representing the 2nd District and Ralph Miljanich, representing the 4th Supervisorial District. Ms. Bobbe was appointed to the WAC in March 2001 and replaced the previous commissioner from the 2nd District, Mr. Frank Siri. Mr. Miljanich was appointed in July 2001 and replaced Mr. Richard Anderson.

Membership during 2001 was as follows:

- 1st District: David Reetz
- 2nd District: Cherrie Bobbe
- 3rd District: Linda Wilson
- 4th District: Ralph Miljanich
- 5th District: Bruce Oneto
- At-large: Al Haynes
- Mutual: Betty Petersen

COMMISSION STAFF

Michael Cloud, the staff Hydrologist in the Water Resources Division of the Planning Department, funded by the Flood Control and Water Conservation District, served as Administrative Secretary to the Commission throughout calendar year 2001.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance by Commission members is shown on the attached roster. The Commission typically recesses for vacation during the month of August, and, due to logistical constraints, the WAC also does not meet in January. This year, the July meeting, which was scheduled on the Independence Day holiday, was swapped for the August recess.

ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Listed below are the principal issues and events that were discussed by the Water Advisory Commission during the year:

1. Santa Margarita Groundwater Issues

Dialogue about groundwater management issues in the Santa Margarita area closely paralleled discussions held at the Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin Advisory Committee (SMGWBAC). Both advisory bodies were directed at efforts to pursue a regional water supply planning effort. However, the SMGWBAC voluntarily restructured itself during the past year, raising questions as to whether the new committee would continue to pursue a similar agenda. The WAC discussed the merits and shortcomings of the previous SMGWBAC. Significant issues discussed by the WAC included development and use of reclaimed wastewater, issues related to the establishment of a water replenishment district, the identification of potential groundwater recharge locations within the Santa Margarita region, the impacts of MTBE and other contaminants on groundwater recharge projects, and the findings of a technical "white paper" prepared for the SMGWBAC. Several Commissioners have been independently active in this region throughout the year on a myriad of other issues.

2. Pajaro Valley Water Supply Project and Groundwater Management Issues

During the past year PVWMA came out with its Basin Management Plan 2000 and State of the Basin Report. In the Basin Management Plan, several alternatives were identified to mitigate the extensive groundwater overdraft in the Pajaro Valley. These alternatives dominated the WAC's discussion of the Pajaro Valley during the past year. The WAC also kept apprised of the situation in the Pajaro Valley and efforts proposed to mitigate the problems. Other issues that the WAC has been following in the Pajaro Valley include: PVWMA's groundwater recharge project at Harkin Slough, the possible acquisition CVP water by PVWMA, nitrate contamination, seawater intrusion, possible impacts to stream baseflow from over-pumping, the possible use of tertiary treated waste water for irrigation, and local well deepening and CEQA review.

3. Countywide Water Conservation

The call for countywide water conservation was a major topic with the WAC in 2001. A proposal for a Countywide Water Conservation Plan came from the local Sierra Club and other environmental groups in 2000 out of concern over dwindling water resources, the different water jurisdictional boundaries, and various levels of authority. While it was decided that the Inter-agency Water Resources Working Group (IWRWG) was a better forum in which to promote such efforts, the WAC still kept apprised of water conservation efforts by individual water purveyors and major water users. The WAC urged the Board of Supervisors to have the County set an example by retrofitting plumbing fixtures at County facilities to be water efficient. The WAC continues to keep the dialogue open with the IWRWG to follow the efforts of that group.

4. MTBE Contamination and Wellhead/Aquifer Protection

The issue of MTBE contamination and wellhead/Aquifer protection became a major topic for the WAC this last year when the WAC learned of the potential risk to water supplies from the myriad of MTBE contaminated sites within the county. When the Board of Supervisors learned of the problems with MTBE, it directed the WAC to evaluate the feasibility of the County banning MTBE and provide recommendations back to the Board. The issue of MTBE contamination in groundwater was especially relevant to Commissioner Petersen because the wells in her water mutual company have been significantly impacted by MTBE for years. In the process of gathering information on MTBE contamination and other wellhead/aquifer protection issues, the WAC entertained discussions with a member of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board and presentations from County Environmental Health staff. The WAC recently sent a letter to the Board of Supervisors supporting the recommendations of County staff regarding this issue.

ADDITIONAL SIGNIFICANT ITEMS

The Commission also reviewed or followed the progress of the following issues and ongoing projects:

- The compilation of data into a County maintained Geographical Information System
- Development in areas designated Primary Groundwater recharge
- Water supply issues in the San Lorenzo Watershed
- Conjunctive use of groundwater and surface water
- Soquel Creek Water District's (SCWD) evaluation of future water sources
- The relatively high concentration of chromium VI in some of SCWD wells
- Misc. Groundwater issues related to quarry operations within the County
- The City of Santa Cruz water supply and conservation plans
- The re-use tertiary treatment of wastewater
- The feasibility of using desalted seawater as a potable water source
- The City of Watsonville's water fluoridation plan
- The City of Watsonville's restriction on water service to unincorporated areas
- Cooperative efforts between various water purveyors to solve regional water problems

It should be noted that Commissioners attended a wide range of public meetings on water resource related matters. Their attendance at other public meetings occurs either in the interest of the Commission or to satisfy or educate the individual interest of each Commissioner. In addition, Commissioners were regularly updated on actions taken by the Board of Supervisors on items that affected water supply, water quality, groundwater recharge, flood control, drainage, reclaimed wastewater and other related issues.

FUTURE GOALS

Commission members have not discussed any specific direction and goals for the Water Advisory Commission for 2002. However, one can ascertain from their actions over the past year that the Commission has a keen interest in promoting regional water resource management, water supply planning and monitoring, and protection of water sources. There is also a growing desire to solicit a greater involvement from the Water District managers from the Pajaro Valley and Santa Margarita areas at the Water Advisory Commission meetings. Until that discussion has been completed, the Commission will continue to evaluate important issues affecting the County's water resources, respond to requests by your Board and the public, and make timely recommendations on both policy and other appropriate matters.

Submitted by:

0072

Michael Cloud

Michael Cloud
Administrative Staff
Water Advisory Commission