

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
FROM: MICHAEL S. LEBRUN *MSL*  
GENERAL MANAGER  
DATE: MAY 4, 2012



## GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

### ITEM

Standing report to your Honorable Board -- *Period covered by this report is April 21, 2012 through May 4, 2012*

### DISTRICT BUSINESS

#### Administrative

- Operations recruitment;
  - Mr. Derek Calleja is scheduled to start work at the District on May 7, 2012.
- Supplemental Water Project:
  - Financing ballot process is ongoing. Over 4,000 ballots have been returned. Ballots received by the close of today's public hearing will be opened and counted. Results of the ballot will be announced at a public meeting scheduled for 3 p.m. on May 10, 2012. District staff and the Assessment Engineer continue to field numerous questions on the overall funding process and supplemental water need.
  - Since July 2004, the District has expended over \$3.8M developing, studying, designing, and bringing this important water supply project to fruition.
  - People's Self Help Housing requested a presentation on the project be given in Spanish. The presentation will be given Monday May 7, 7:30 PM in the District Board Room. The Assessment Engineer and a bilingual colleague from The Wallace Group will support the effort (announcement is attached).
- Office Projects
  - Front counter 'Store Front' installation in process – weekend and evening work schedule to minimize disruption to customers and District business day.
  - Parking lot seal, top-coat, and re-stripping scheduled for Memorial Day Weekend.
- Announcements and Industry News of Interest; the following documents are attached:
  - April 26, 2012 SLO County Laetitia Ag Cluster Subdivision ADEIR announcement.
  - May 1, 2012 District Comment Letter on Nipomo Community Park Master Plan PEIR
  - May 9, 2012 Integrated Waste Management Board Agenda
  - Water Pipeline Dreams in the Desert.

Next Page

**Connection Report**

Nipomo Community Services District  
Water and Sewer Connections

**End of Month Report 2012**

	Dec-11	JAN-12	FEB-12	MAR-12	APR-12
Water Connections (Total)	4232	4232	4239	4239	4239
Sewer Connections (Total)	3022	3022	3035	3035	3035
Meters turned off (Non-payment)	23	28	22	18	28
Meters off (Vacant)	62	64	62	64	68
Sewer Connections off (Vacant)	20	24	22	22	27
New Water Connections	0	0	7	0	0
New Sewer Connection	0	0	13	0	0
Galaxy & PSHH at Orchard and Division Sewer Connections billed to the County	460	460	460	460	460

**Meetings**

*Meetings attended:*

- April 23, Cambria CSD General Manager and Engineer on Desal history
- April 24, Southland WWTF Upgrade Bond Team
- April 25, Regular NCSD Board Meeting
- April 30, NMMA TG
- April 30, Board Officer coordination
- May 1, SLO County Energy Watch
- May 1, iPAAC support consultant
- May 1, Lucia Mar School District Board of Education
- May 2, Heritage Ranch CSD tour of sludge dredge project
- May 3, Supplemental Water Project partners
- May 3, Southland Phase I Improvements bid open
- May 4, Supplemental Water Project, City of Santa Maria and County of Santa Barbara Public Works

*Meetings Scheduled:*

- May 8, AM 1440 KUHL
- May 8, Supplemental Water, Spanish language presentation
- May 9, Regular Meeting Supplemental Water Project funding ballot Public Hearing
- May 10, Special Meeting, Ballot tabulation result
- May 11, Quarterly All-Staff Safety
- May 14, Board Officer coordination
- May 14, Special Meeting 2012-2013 Budget Workshop
- May 17, Santa Barbara IRWM Salt and Nutrient Mgmt Group

Next Page

**Safety Program**

No accidents, injuries, or incidents to report.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff seeks direction and input from your Honorable Board

**ATTACHMENTS**

- Supplemental Water Spanish language presentation
- Laetitia Ag. Cluster Revised Draft EIR
- District Comment Letter on Nipomo Community Park PEIR
- SLO CO Integrated Waste Board May 9 Agenda
- News: Water Pipeline Dreams in Desert

T:\BOARD MATTERS\BOARD MEETINGS\BOARD LETTER\2012\MGRS RPT\120509 MGRS RPT.DOCX

Peoples' Self-Help Housing Corporation

3533 Empleo Street  
San Luis Obispo CA 93401



NCSD  
P.O. Box 326  
Nipomo CA 93444-0326



**Nipomo Community Services District - El Distrito de Servicios Comunitarios de Nipomo**  
Property Owner Assessment Ballot - Boletó de Evaluación de Dueño de la Propiedad

You should have received a package in the mail in late March with information and a ballot to vote for a proposed assessment to develop a supplemental source of water. The information provided was all in English. At the request of some Spanish speaking property owners, Nipomo Community Services District (NCSD) will conduct a meeting:

Monday, May 7th at 7:30 p.m.  
at the NCSD Office at 148 Wilson Street

to explain the proposed assessment in Spanish and answer questions regarding the proposed assessment.

Usted debe haber recibido un paquete en el correo a finales de marzo con la información y un boleto para votar por una propuesta de evaluación para desarrollar una fuente adicional de agua. La información proporcionada fue todo en Inglés. A petición de algunos propietarios que hablan español, El Distrito de Servicios Comunitarios de Nipomo (NCSD) llevará a cabo una reunión:

el lunes, 7 de mayo a las 7:30 pm  
en la Oficina de NCSD en 148 Wilson Street

para explicar la evaluación propuesta en español y contestar preguntas.

RECEIVED

MAY - 3 2012

NIPOMO COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

This notice is sent courtesy of:



*Opening Doors.  
Building Neighborhoods.  
Improving Lives.*





# San Luis Obispo County

## Department of Planning and Building Environmental Division

**TO:** Interested Party  
**DATE:** April 26, 2012  
**FROM:** Brian Pedrotti, Project Manager  
**VIA:** Ellen Carroll, Environmental Coordinator  
**SUBJECT:** Laetitia Agricultural Cluster Subdivision -- Notice of Availability of Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report (Tract 2606)

RECEIVED

APR 27 2012

NIPOMO COMMUNITY  
SERVICES DISTRICT

The Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report (RDEIR) for the Laetitia Agricultural Cluster Subdivision is complete and available for public review and comment. The RDEIR consists of several revised sections of the 2008 Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), including water resources, biological resources, and alternatives analysis, and addresses the environmental impacts that may be associated with the request to subdivide twenty-one parcels (approximately 1,910 acres) into 106 lots, including 102 residential lots for the future construction of 102 single-family homes and four open space lots.

The proposed project is within the Agriculture and Rural Lands land use categories and is located approximately two miles north of Los Berros Road, between the City of Arroyo Grande and the community of Nipomo, in the South County Inland planning area of San Luis Obispo County.

**Background:** In September 2008, the San Luis Obispo County Planning and Building Department released a DEIR for the Laetitia Agricultural Cluster Subdivision Tentative Tract Map and Conditional Use Permit. The 2008 DEIR noted several significant, adverse, and unavoidable impacts related to biological resources, archaeological resources, agricultural resources, transportation and circulation, air quality, noise, aesthetics, hazards, hazardous materials, and public services and utilities. Following the closure of the 2008 public comment period, issues regarding water resources and applicant modifications to the project description delayed preparation of a Final EIR for the project and necessitated the need to re-circulate portions of the DEIR.

Copies of the RDEIR are available at the following locations: Cal Poly Library and City/ County Library of San Luis Obispo. Copies are also available on loan and for review at the Environmental Division of the Planning Department, located at the 976 Osos St., Room 300, San Luis Obispo, 93408-2040. The 2008 DEIR and RDEIR are on the Planning Department's web site at: [www.sloplanning.org](http://www.sloplanning.org) under "Environmental Information and Natural Resources", then "Environmental Notices, Proposed Negative Declarations, EIRs and other Documents".

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

The RDEIR is a revision to the DEIR prepared for the project. It is intended to address several issues that have arisen since the time the DEIR was originally prepared for the project. The RDEIR focuses on the following issues: water resources, biological resources, and alternatives

analysis. The 2008 DEIR focused on the following issues: agricultural resources, visual resources, biological resources, transportation and circulation, cultural resources, paleontological resources, wastewater disposal, water resources, air quality, geologic hazards, drainage/erosion and sedimentation, public services, population and housing, recreation, noise, and growth inducing impacts. The RDEIR also considers two additional project alternatives.

**HOW TO COMMENT OR GET MORE INFORMATION:**

Anyone interested in commenting on the RDEIR should **submit a written statement by 5:00 p.m. on June 5, 2012**, to:

Brian Pedrotti, Project Manager  
County Planning & Building Dept.  
976 Osos St., Rm. 300  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408-2040

If you need more information about this project, please contact Brian Pedrotti at (805)788-2788 (or e-mail: [bpedrotti@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:bpedrotti@co.slo.ca.us)).

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

The public hearing before the San Luis Obispo County Planning Commission to certify the EIR and consider the project for approval has been tentatively scheduled for **September 2012**, in the Board of Supervisors Chambers, County Government Center, San Luis Obispo. If you plan to attend, please call two weeks before this date to verify.

# NIPOMO COMMUNITY

## BOARD MEMBERS

JAMES HARRISON, PRESIDENT  
LARRY VIERHEILIG, VICE PRESIDENT  
MICHAEL WINN, DIRECTOR  
ED EBY, DIRECTOR  
DAN A. GADDIS, DIRECTOR



*Serving the Community Since 1965*

# SERVICES DISTRICT

## STAFF

MICHAEL S. LEBRUN, GENERAL MANAGER  
LISA BOGNUDA, ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER  
PETER SEVCIK, P.E., DISTRICT ENGINEER  
TINA GRIETENS, UTILITY SUPERINTENDENT  
JON SEITZ, GENERAL COUNSEL

---

148 SOUTH WILSON STREET POST OFFICE BOX 326 NIPOMO, CA 93444 - 0326  
(805) 929-1133 FAX (805) 929-1932 Website address: [ncsd.ca.gov](http://ncsd.ca.gov)

---

May 1, 2012

San Luis Obispo County Parks  
1087 Santa Rosa Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408  
Attention: Shaun Cooper

Via email to [secooper@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:secooper@co.slo.ca.us)

Dear Mr. Cooper:

**Re: NIPOMO COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT COMMENTS TO PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT NIPOMO COMMUNITY PARK MASTER PLAN, LEAD AGENCY: SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY (COUNTY PARKS).**

Please accept this letter as providing comments of the Nipomo Community Services District ("District") to the Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) associated with the development of the Nipomo Community Park (Park) Master Plan. This letter was authorized by the District Board of Directors at its regular meeting of April 25, 2012.

By way of background, the Nipomo Community Services District is a California Community Service District organized pursuant to Government Code Sections 61000 et seq. The District formed in 1965 and currently provides primarily water, wastewater, and solid waste disposal services to approximately 12,000 residents of the Nipomo area.

The District boundary lies within the Nipomo Mesa Water Conservation Area (NMWCA) established by the County Board of Supervisors on May 23, 2006 (see Exhibit "A"). On June 26, 2007, the County certified a Severity Level III for water resources within the Nipomo Mesa Water Conservation Area. The County's Resource Management System indicates that a "Level of Severity III exists when water demand equals the available resource; the amount of consumption has reached the dependable supply of the resource. A Level III may also exist if the time required to correct the problem is longer than the time available before the dependable supply is reached."

Further, the Nipomo Mesa Management Area Technical Group commencing with the first annual report (2009) has designated the groundwater basin under lying Nipomo Mesa Management Area (similar boundaries to the NMWCA) as a "potentially severe water shortage condition". A depiction of the Key Wells Index through Spring 2011 is attached as Exhibit "B".

The Nipomo Community Park is located within the boundaries the NMWCA and the District. The District currently provides the Park with potable water for irrigation purposes and amenities. Although available to the Park, the District does not currently provide wastewater treatment for Park facilities.



The District is implementing two key resource enhancement projects that directly impact the proposed development of the Nipomo Community Park as follows:

1. The District is implementing a Wastewater Project that involves the installation of improved treatment facilities (Biolac) to upgrade the wastewater treatment capabilities of the existing Southland Wastewater Treatment Facility, located immediately west of US 101 in the southern portion of the County. The Southland Wastewater Treatment Facility provides wastewater treatment to areas within the Nipomo Community Services District that are immediately adjacent to the Nipomo Community Park. The Biolac system is the same (or substantially the same) wastewater treatment process that is being implemented by the County as part of the Los Osos Wastewater Treatment Project. The District is keenly interested in the recycled water component of the Los Osos Wastewater Project and the application of recycled water to irrigate golf courses, school district fields, and public parks.
2. The District is also implementing the construction of a waterline from the City of Santa Maria to the Nipomo Community Services District to provide Supplemental Water to various water companies located within the NMWCA. As you are likely aware, the County, as a property owner, is participating in the Assessment District to finance certain capital facilities related to this project. The Supplemental Water Project will assist in remedying the water deficiencies/constraints within the NMWCA as certified by the County (Level of Severity Level III).

The proposed improvements and additional facilities addressed in the PEIR will clearly improve a valuable community asset. From a resource constraint analysis, the project has the potential to demonstrate:

1. The value of a well designed and maintained irrigation system.
2. The value of recycled water for approved irrigation uses.
3. A model of cooperation between the County and a Community Services District to improve community assets while addressing resource constraints.

The District supports the project and looks forward to working with the County to advance the project while addressing resource constraints as part and parcel of the Project Mitigation and Monitoring Program. The following are the District's specific comments to the PEIR's Wastewater Treatment and Water Use Analysis.

### **WASTEWATER TREATMENT**

The District's new treatment process (Biolac) is superior to the use of septic tanks to treat wastewater influent generated by Park facilities. Further, the use of treated effluent (recycled water) to irrigate provides an optimal model for maximizing water resources through re-use.

The connection of Park facilities to a community sewage treatment and collection system is consistent with Title 19 (19.07.022) of the County's Building Codes.



The District therefore strongly believes that the following Mitigation measure should be included in the wastewater portion of the PEIR.

"All Park facilities capable of generating wastewater shall be connected to The Nipomo Community Services District Wastewater System."

### WATER USE

In order to provide the public and other affected agencies with an accurate description of Park water demand (current and as proposed), the District suggests the following:

1. Modify Table 2-2 to include two additional columns. One column for existing water use for each facility and another column for proposed water use with conservation for each facility.
2. Update Section 4.12 to include:
  - a) Calendar 2009, 2010 and 2011 NMMA Annual Reports; and
  - b) The 2011 Update of the County's Master Water Plan.
3. Update Table 4.12-1 to include fiscal years 2009, 2010 and 2011. This will assist in establishing the base line for Park water use.

The District reports the following inaccuracies in the PEIR related to water use:

- 4.12-2 Correction: Rural Water Company is one of the many signatories to the Stipulation, but they are not represented on the NMMA Technical Group other than as a Stipulating Party.
- 4.12-2 Correction: The paragraph beginning, "The NCSD serves approximately 12,000 people over ..." is dated. The service area for water is no longer two systems; Blacklake Village has been incorporated into a single distribution system by the NCSD.
- 4.12-4 The NCSD conservation effort are focused on addressing LOS III for water and the pumping depressions near the ocean, the District's conservation goal is to reduce demand on the groundwater basin in our region by continued reduction in long-term per capita use. The District implemented a 4- tier residential 'water conservation' rate on November 1, 2011. And has implemented a number of other CUWCC approved BMPs in recent years.
- 4.12-4 Correction: In the last paragraph on the page, the list of watercourses in proximity to the proposed project, consider omit Pismo Creek, Arroyo Grande Creek, Lopez Creek, and Tar Springs Creek since these water bodies are not in the immediate area.

The project should maximize:

1. The use of water efficient irrigation systems.
2. The use of recycled water to irrigate where appropriate.

The District strongly recommends the following Mitigation measures:

1. All existing and future irrigation systems shall be designed and constructed to use recycled water with stub-outs for recycled water located at points designated by the District.
2. Provided that the District can provide recycled water to the Park that meets Title 22 requirements for Park irrigation at costs equal or less than existing water rates, the Park shall use recycled water for irrigation purposes.

Specifically, the District recommends the following changes to WAT/MM-4 and MM-5 (shown in redline):

*WAT Impact 4—Implementation of the project would create additional demand for water services from the NCSD.*

*WAT/mm-4—Prior to expansion or addition of integrated turf and landscaped areas, the County shall conduct a water survey of the existing irrigated turf and landscaped areas in consultation with the NCSD, that shall include, but not be limited to, the following:*

- A. *Quantify irrigated areas based on vegetation type, (i.e. turf ornamental landscaping, trees).*
- B. *Inspect and inventory the irrigation system, including timers, distribution lines, storage, and other infrastructure, and document needed maintenance and repairs.*
- C. *Develop irrigation schedule by month, based on precipitation rate and local climate.*
- D. *Document irrigation system performance and landscape conditions.*
- E. *Review irrigation schedule.*
- F. *Summarize water survey evaluation results and identify water savings recommendations, which shall achieve a minimum reduction in current water use.*

*WAT/mm-5—Prior to expansion or addition of irrigated turf and landscaped areas, the County shall demonstrate compliance with the water survey evaluation water savings recommendations, and shall submit documentation to the NCSD. Water savings recommendations shall be applied to additional irrigated turf and landscaped areas, include, but not limited to the following:*

- A. *Computerized irrigation controller that can estimate cumulative evapo-transpiration losses to establish the most efficient and effective watering regimes.*
- B. *Avoidance of close mowing, overwatering, excessive fertilization, soil compaction, and accumulation of thatch.*
- C. *Programming watering times for longer and less frequently rather than shorter periods and more frequently.*

D. *Installation of tension meters at different depths to measure moisture status, which will allow for better estimates on irrigation needs.*

E. *Linking irrigation of the Park to the California Irrigation Management Information System (CIMIS) station located at the Woodlands golf course to maximize irrigation efficiency.*

A. *and maintain the municipal collection water supply to the program consistent with California Urban Water Conservation Council best management practices.*

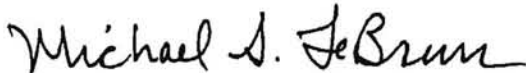
*Incorporation of recycled water from the Southland WWTF.*

We are encouraged by the County's forward looking plan for the Nipomo Community Park. We see many opportunities for working together with the County to achieve a great enhancement to an already valuable community asset. Public open space, play fields and facilities, when correctly planned and built serve as a great example of water use efficiency and management.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project.

Very truly yours,

NIPOMO COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT



Michael S. LeBrun  
General Manager

Enclosure(s):

Exhibits: A – Depiction of Nipomo Mesa Water Conservation Area  
B – Key Wells Index/Spring 2011

EXHIBIT "C"

EXHIBIT LRP2005-00006:A

ORDINANCE NO. 3090

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING TITLE 22 OF THE  
SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY CODE, THE LAND USE ORDINANCE  
SECTION 22.112.020 RELATING TO THE  
NIPOMO MESA WATER CONSERVATION AREA

The Board of Supervisors of the County of San Luis Obispo ordains as follows:

**SECTION 1.** Section 22.112.020 of the Land Use Ordinance, Title 22 of the San Luis Obispo County Code, is hereby amended by adding new subsection E to read as follows and renumbering all figures as necessary:

22.112.020 - Area-wide Standards

- E. Nipomo Mesa Water Conservation Area. The following standards apply to all land in the Nipomo Mesa Water Conservation Area shown in Figure 112-4,

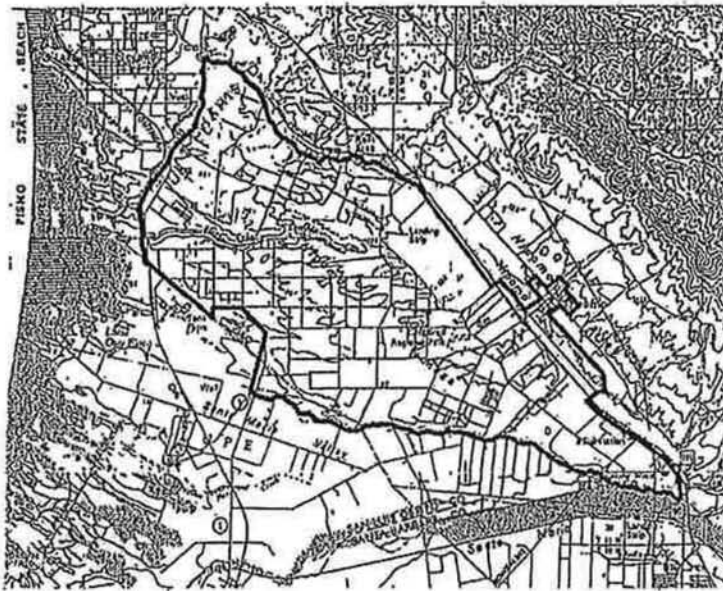
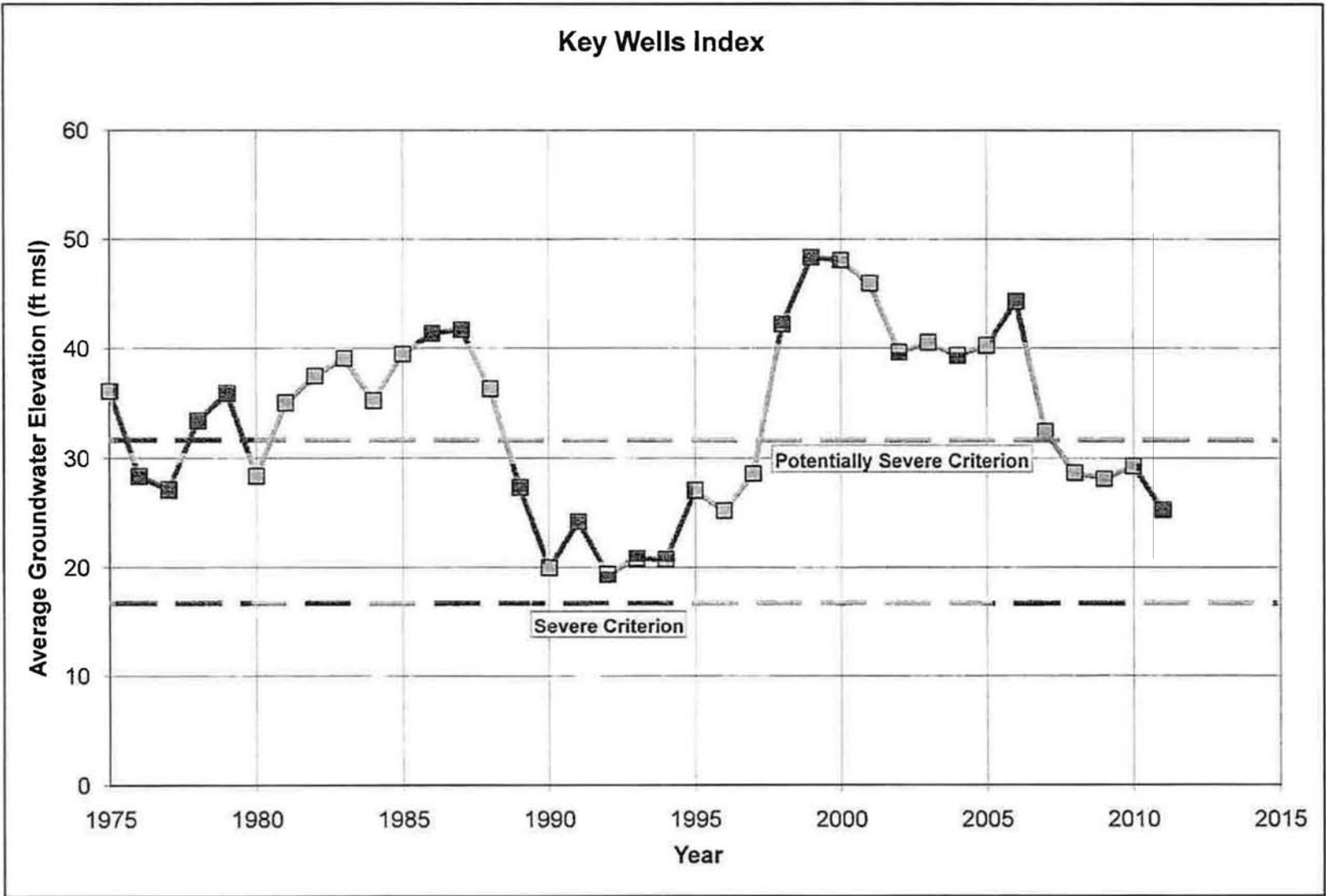


Figure 112-4 - Nipomo Mesa Water Conservation Area

1. General Plan Amendments and land divisions. Applications for general plan amendments and land divisions in the Nipomo Mesa Water Conservation Area shall include documentation regarding estimated existing and proposed non-agricultural water demand for the land division or development that could occur with the General Plan Amendment. If this documentation indicates that the proposed non-agricultural water demand exceeds





5/1/12 Pain comments  
EX. B.



8. **Grant Award (Receive and File)** Announcement of new grants.
9. **Proposed FY 12/13 Program Objectives and Budget (Action Item - Roll Call Vote)** Review and adopt the program objectives and budget for FY 12/13.
10. **Legislative Update (Action Item - Voice Vote)** Update on pending legislation.
11. **Election of Officers (Action Item - Voice Vote)** Election of Officers for FY 12/13.
12. **Cancellation of July 11, 2012 Meeting. (Action Item - Voice Vote)** Consider cancelling the July 11, 2012 Board Meeting.
13. **Member Comments and Future Agenda Items.** Discussion by Members regarding future agenda items and dates.
14. **Adjournment.** The next meeting is scheduled for **July 11, 2012** at 1:30 p.m. in the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisor's Chambers, County Government Center, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408.

# Water pipeline dreams revived in the desert

While the San Diego County Water Authority increases the capacity of the San Vicente Reservoir, it also is studying the possibility of piping water from Imperial County to the lake. — John Gastaldo

Written by

**Mike Lee**

noon, April 29, 2012

Eager to diversify its water supplies, the San Diego County Water Authority has resurrected a long-shot plan that could top \$2 billion to build a pipeline for importing water directly from Imperial County. At the same time, it's trying to cement a long-term deal for desalinating seawater in Carlsbad.

Both moves are part of an initiative to further reduce reliance on the Metropolitan Water District of Los Angeles, which once delivered nearly all of the county's water but today provides less than half. The two titans are on increasingly bad terms, and the water authority is scouring every possibility for greater independence even though such efforts threaten to peel scabs off the wounds of past water wars.

"We are going to assess all of our options, even the ones that have previously been dismissed or ones that have previously been thought to be infeasible," said Vincent Mudd, who represents San Diego city on the water authority board. "We are acting like a region that is in the mode of becoming self-sufficient. Now, we have to take the next step."

That could mean gambling on more costly projects. The water authority recently decided to spend about \$400,000 analyzing a concept that was last assessed a decade ago: delivering water from Imperial irrigators to San Vicente Reservoir near Lakeside. The idea is to bypass Metropolitan's pipes for part of the local supply, though San Diego still would rely on MWD to make deliveries from other sources.

The strategy would require lengthy environmental reviews and approvals from landowners along the path, not to mention ongoing energy costs for moving water more than 70 miles. Water brought from the desert would involve a combination of tunnels, pipes, canals and pump stations at a cost that was pegged at up to nearly \$2 billion a decade ago.

Pipeline dreams were considered in the mid-1990s and then again in the early 2000s, when the water authority was completing a landmark agreement to buy water from the Imperial Irrigation District. The agency developed several binational options to pipe water from the All American Canal to San Diego and Tijuana. A final report in 2002 noted the difficulty of navigating the extensive federal land holdings and the potential ecological impacts. County water officials said they ultimately decided to focus on desalination instead.

But now, Mudd and his colleagues want updated construction costs for two U.S. options so a decision can be made based on the current situation. "We can't just believe that some good things are going to happen to change our circumstances," he said. "We have to deliberately develop options. ... I think the public should expect (that)."

Meanwhile, the future of the Carlsbad desalination plant -- on the drawing board since the late 1990s -- is uncertain. Terms of a water-purchase agreement still are being debated by water authority staff members and Poseidon Resources, the company planning to build and finance the facility.

Negotiators have held a handful of face-to-face sessions, but some water board members voiced unease at a recent meeting that they have few specifics about financial arrangements such as how costs will be divided among local agencies. Details likely will emerge over the next several months.

The anticipated contract will be among the most important decisions of the decade for the water authority. It's expected to last for 30 years, and it would commit the agency to purchase supplies that are expected to be far more costly than water from Metropolitan.



If the plant is completed, it would produce enough “drought-proof” water for roughly 112,000 homes each year — equivalent to about 8 percent of regional supply. However, the water authority said late last year that wholesale water prices could rise by up to 11 percent, forcing officials to once again weigh the value of incremental independence from Metropolitan.

That process started during drought of the early 1990s, when San Diego leaders feared getting shorted precious supplies and pledged never again to be so tied to “Mother Met.” New sources eroded Metropolitan’s control over water imports and fractured the relationship between San Diego and the rest of the region because of concerns that the water authority was essentially going into competition with Southern California’s largest supplier. Tensions were so high that when Jeffrey Kightlinger, now the general manager at Metropolitan, started with the agency in 1995 one of his first tasks was to see if San Diego County could be kicked out of the alliance of water districts. He found that the water authority couldn’t be forcibly removed.

“It would probably make my life easier, so there is a little temptation on my side,” Kightlinger told the U-T San Diego editorial board on Wednesday. “But all it means is we would probably be in court suing each other over our contracts with each other as opposed to our relationship with each other. ... Unless we totally replumb the state ... we are going to have some sort of relationship and make that work.”

Animosity is peaking again following a 2007-10 drought that put pressure on water agencies and helped to drive up prices. MWD this month raised its average rates by 5 percent each of the next two years with no end in sight to the increases. The water authority sued Metropolitan in 2010, saying MWD’s rates were structured in a way that illegally penalizes San Diego County for moving water through MWD pipes and subsidizes water customers elsewhere. In March, local officials launched a campaign to publicly discredit the Los Angeles-based agency.

Two Riverside County water agencies on Monday fired a counteroffensive against the county water authority when they issued a study by the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp. about San Diego’s water costs.

“What the San Diego water leadership doesn’t want to admit is that they’ve already spent \$200 million more than they should have in the first seven years of their arrangement with Imperial,” said a statement by Paul Jones, general manager at the Eastern Municipal Water District.

The \$50,000 study was paid for by Eastern and several other water agencies who are part of Metropolitan.

“I think decisions were made in good faith seven, eight, nine years ago (in San Diego County), that there is going to be a lot of growth and we are going to sell a lot of water — and even if we make a lot of expensive decisions, it’s OK,” Kightlinger said. “The world changed. We are not selling a lot of water. There is not a lot of growth. The economy is hammered. People are screaming about water rates and those very expensive decisions made down here (in San Diego) for independence are coming home to roost. And they are coming home in a big way.”

At water authority headquarters, assistant general manager Dennis Cushman said Metropolitan and others are trying to divert attention from the real issue.

“What does the price the water authority pays for its independent transfer supplies have to do with whether or not MWD’s (water) transportation rates are legal?” Cushman asked. “The answer: nothing. ... We’re not suing IID over the prices we are paying for their supplies. We are suing MWD over the illegal rate they are charging us to transport those supplies.”