

Nipomo district to revise water rules

By Todd Cralley/STAFF WRITER

With no signs of supplemental water coming soon to the Nipomo Mesa and the dry, summer months here, the Nipomo Community Services District is beginning to implement strict water conservation measures.

At its monthly meeting today, the NCSO board is expected to reduce the amount of water it will provide annually to residential projects by about 33 percent.

Board members are also scheduled to amend the district's assumptions about customers' water consumption to make them more closely match what people are using in various types of developments.

In some cases, the amount of water used was actually less than the district had assumed. In other cases, it was much more.

“We did an analysis of consumption over the past year of our customers,” said Bruce Buel, general manager of NCSO. “This is the amount of water typically used.”

A typical multifamily dwelling unit is using 0.33 acre-feet per year, 83 percent more than the 0.18 acre-feet of demand listed in the current district code. The proposal is to change the code to reflect that multifamily units approved in the future will need 0.33 acre-feet of water annually.

Water use for duplexes and secondary dwelling units was 0.24 acre-feet per dwelling unit, less than the 0.3 acre-feet currently estimated.

Similarly, the amount used by a house on a parcel between 4,500 square feet and 10,000 square feet, including landscaping, will drop to 0.39, down about 13 percent from the 0.45 acre-feet per year allocated in the current code.

Homes on parcels larger than 10,000 square feet are currently set at 0.55 acre-feet per year, but NCSO's analysis showed that actual use was 25 percent more, at 0.69 acre-feet.

An acre-foot of water is about 326,000 gallons, or the amount of water generally considered to supply the annual needs of four to 10 people in an urban environment.

In a related move, the board is scheduled to reduce the amount of water available each year for residential projects from 51 acre-feet to 34.3 acre-feet.

The district's staff is also recommending rejection of an application by Wingerden Nursery to annex its property at 790 Live Oak Ridge Road and 775 Willow Road until the NCSO has developed a supplemental water source.

The bid for annexation by the nursery's owners is essentially a move to replace a well with NCSO water in order to secure a more reliable source for a greenhouse operation.

“We'll do fine,” said René van Wingerden, who owns the property. “We have wells, of course.”

Annexation into the NCSD is an insurance policy. Wells dry up. It would be nice not to have to take water from the wells and have a more reliable source of water.”

According to the application for annexation filed by van Wingerden, his well is 352 feet deep and pumping water at a depth of 318 feet.

Although staff recommends the NCSD board turn down his application for annexation, van Wingerden agrees that bringing in supplemental water to Nipomo is important.

“I think it's important to have a dependable source for supplemental water,” he said.

The NCSD board will meet at 9 a.m. today at the NCSD Building, 148 S. Wilson Street in Nipomo. For more information, call 929-1133

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June 13, 2007