



Staff to circulate Urban Water Management Plan

NCSD sets flow level for pipeline assessments

Staff report | Posted: Monday, February 7, 2011 12:00 am

The Nipomo Community Services District will use a flow of 2,000 acre-feet per year for the basis of assessments to pay for the supplemental water project, directors decided recently.

Also at the Jan. 26 meeting, directors authorized the staff to circulate the district's 2010 update of its Urban Water Management Plan.

After reviewing a status report on the pipeline project, board members voted to use 2,000 acre-feet although the pipeline's capacity remains 3,000 acre-feet per year, said Michael LeBrun, interim general manager.

The pipeline will bring surplus water purchased from Santa Maria to the Nipomo Mesa to replace water being pumped from the groundwater basin.

The estimated total cost of the project is \$25.3 million.

The County Board of Supervisors, which will handle the assessment proceedings for NCSD as well as Golden State Water Co., Rural Water Co. and Woodlands Mutual Water Co., is expected to call for an engineering report at its Aug. 23 meeting.

The report is required to establish the rates for property assessments to pay for the project.

LeBrun said at present, NCSD is estimating properties within the district to be assessed about \$250 per benefit unit for developed property.

The estimated assessment for undeveloped property would be about \$350 per benefit unit, based on its development potential under the County General Plan, he said.

A "benefit unit" is roughly what would be assigned to a single-family home on an urban lot, LeBrun explained.

Larger lots with more development, or the potential for more development, would be assigned more than a single benefit unit.

Estimated assessments for the Mesa's three other water purveyors are different, based on a number of complex factors.

Current estimates per benefit unit are \$125 for Golden State, \$200 for Rural Water and \$400 for Woodlands Mutual.

However, all estimates will change based on refinements to the project and the engineer's report, LeBrun said.

NCSD will discuss assessments several times in regular meetings and in special public outreach activities prior to the supervisors' Aug. 23 meeting, LeBrun said.

He said he expects the Board of Supervisors' final assessment hearing will be in October.

Construction on the pipeline project is scheduled to begin in January 2012, with completion targeted for May 2013.

LeBrun said the goal is to return the Nipomo Mesa groundwater basin to a long-term balance, improve the reliability of NCSD's water supply and support development allowed by the County General Plan.

Bringing supplemental water to the Mesa was mandated by a settlement reached several years ago in the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin lawsuit.

The supplemental water project is included in the updated Urban Water Management Plan now being circulated by the district, LeBrun said.

The state requires the comprehensive water supply planning document to be updated every five years, and the district's third version is the most comprehensive yet, he said.

Citizens can view the plan at www.ncsd.ca.gov. Copies also are available by contacting the NCSD office at 929-1133.