

# Monterey Bay Water Plan Hearing Monday

A voluminous plan may be the key to keeping the Monterey Bay Area from becoming a land of polluted rivers, lakes and wells by the year 2000.

This Area-wide Water Quality Management Plan will have its first test Monday when it is put to a public hearing in front of the state Water Quality Control Board.

The hearing will be in the city council chambers at Seaside City Hall, 440 Harcourt Ave., at 1:30 p.m. The state board will decide after the hearing whether to accept the plan put together by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments.

The plan must be approved by both the state and federal governments in order for it to go into effect.

But what would happen if the recommendations in this \$850,000 plan never went into effect? A picture of doom is painted in the plan if nothing is ever done.

"By the year 2000, we will be faced with a variety of undesirable water quality situations if this plan is not implemented. Generally, existing problems - some which already are severe - will worsen.

"Several coastal lakes having high recreational values will become marshes, largely as a result of man-induced pollution. Many rivers and streams, not yet polluted, will become unsafe for use by humans and wildlife.

"Existing surface and underground water volumes will decrease as a result of continuing

erosion and sedimentation, over-drafting (drawing out too much water) and loss to urbanization of natural recharge areas (where water can soak into the ground.)

"In some locations . . . there will be insufficient drinking water sources to meet municipal demands. Vegetation dependent upon natural water resources will be endangered.

"Nitrate pollution of groundwater in the Pajaro and Salinas Valleys will most likely increase, to the extent that numerous wells will exceed health standards and be forced to close.

"In the Pajaro Valley . . . seawater pollution of groundwater aquifers will also force closure of water supply wells and loss of some coastal agricultural lands.

"Finally, increased septic system failures will occur as rural populations and septic system densities increase . . . Public and private costs to remedy the above problems will be high - much higher than if corrective and preventative steps had been taken earlier."

These steps are what are detailed in the plan.

As for septic tanks, the plan zeros in on the San Lorenzo Valley. Because of its terrain, sewers are impossible for most of the Valley, the plan notes.

It suggests an onsite wastewater disposal zone be established in the Valley by a public agency to inspect, maintain and repair septic systems.

It also recommends the county establish a one-acre min-

imum lot size for new septic systems, a step the county already has taken with regards to new lot splits.

The plan further states that the county should pass an ordinance requiring inspection of a septic system before a building is sold.

"Another problem is that north Santa Cruz County has no convenient disposal sites for the solids which must be regularly pumped from septic tanks," the plan states. It suggests that independent septic tank pumpers house find their own sites and that appropriate sites should be pinpointed in the ongoing San Lorenzo Valley sanitation study.

Also suggested are a training program for septic installers, new design standards and a county record of failing systems.

"Dirt . . . is a major cause of water pollution when it runs off

## Lowell Hunter Opens Campaign For Governor

Santa Cruzan Lowell Hunter officially began his write-in campaign for governor Friday in San Francisco's Hunter's Point area.

Hunter late last week filed his write-in candidacy for the governor's race, and his votes will be counted throughout the state, according to the county Elections Office.

Hunter, an unsuccessful candidate for Santa Cruz County sheriff in the June primary election, spoke to Hunter's

land into surface water bodies," the plan reports.

One local solution suggested is for the county to buy two vacuum street sweepers for the Live Oak and Capitola areas which drain into Corcoran and Soquel Creek lagoons and into Schwan and Moran lakes.

Other recommendations locally are for ordinances, adequate staff, a training program for the staff, technical assistance and long-range plans to control the problem.

The ability of water to soak into the ground to replenish the groundwater is being affected by urban development, particularly in the Pajaro and San Lorenzo Valleys, the plan points out.

Recommendations include the protection of groundwater resources from urban development, more research on the problem and modification of development practices to retain runoff and promote soaking.

It further suggests modification of existing subdivision ordinances to require protection of recharge areas and development review procedures.

The saving of recharge areas can serve as justification for flood plain zoning, open space,

setbacks, clustered development and location of future development, the plan says.

Pajaro Valley's groundwater is being polluted by nitrates and saltwater, the plan reports. The nitrates are coming largely from irrigated agricultural areas and saltwater is seeping in as more water is drawn from the ground.

Reduction in nitrates can be brought about by more irrigation and more efficient use of

fertilizers, the plan suggests. It further recommends that the county give farmers more information on water use and provide the government with more data on the problem.

As for saltwater intrusion, the plan suggests looking for other water sources besides groundwater and says that local governments should do a study to discover if pumping water into the ground will keep seawater out.

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