

Big Basin Out Of Water; Limitation Plan Urged

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The Big Basin Water Company, serving about 360 housing units in the Big Basin area above Boulder Creek, is close to running out of water.

Fifth (San Lorenzo Valley-Scotts Valley) District Supervisor Ed Borovatz this morning issued a plea for all customers of the water company to limit themselves to 50 gallons per household per day immediately. "Even with such a limitation, there will be a 50 per cent deficit between water used and water produced by springs and wells of the system," Borovatz said.

Water Company President Kermit McGranahan said this morning that "we'll very definitely run out in the next few days if we don't get help somehow." He said the company probably will start turning off water to customers for several hours a days next week.

McGranahan explained that the company had plenty of water up to 10 days ago when the hot weather hit. As of this morning, the Jamison Creek Reservoir was down to one foot in depth, he added.

McGranahan requested earlier this week that the San Lorenzo Valley County Water District share water

with his company, but his request was turned down by the board.

An emergency meeting was ongoing this morning at presstime among McGranahan and Co-owner Mahlon McPherson, Borovatz and numerous county officials and San Lorenzo Valley County Water District Board Chairman George Spiegelberg. McGranahan said he hoped the county could do something to force the SLV district into giving Big Basin some water.

However, Spiegelberg was adamant that his district just didn't have enough water to share.

"I made a rather impassioned plea to the board and to the people to deny selling them any water because we have no excess water," Spiegelberg insisted. "We have no water to sell. If we had excess water, we would want to give the people in our taxing district the first crack at it."

"It is their (Big Basin's) responsibility for them to plan and supply their customers with water," Spiegelberg added. "It is simply a poor planning situation. Big Basin Water Company is notorious for poor planning. They kept building and hooking up. They have not practiced a reasonable amount of rationing over the years."

McGranahan, however, believes that the San Lorenzo Valley County

Water District has other unspoken reasons for not granting Big Basin's request.

"They do have water," McGranahan claimed. "Because we deannexed, they're not looking at our request favorably."

The water company was once part of the SLV county water district, being taxed as part of the district, but not receiving water. The company pulled out of the district in 1976.

The company and the district locked horns last summer after Former District Manager Bill Winner transferred 500,000 gallons of water to the company for fire protection without board authorization. Winner, in part, was fired for this act.

The district has not all but forgotten the neighboring water company. The board is working up a intertie arrangement with McGranahan that would set a water-sharing policy in time of emergency "provided that water of the supplying agency is available."

The water shortage apparently came as a surprise to everyone involved. A report by the County Environmental Health Department in June on the water supplies of the company stated, "... it will be noted that water production is substantially greater than current consumption."