

Crisis - 1977

Board Zeroes In On Water Plan

By PAUL BEATTY
Sentinel Staff Writer

An all-out effort for the county government to take a leadership role in water conservation during the coming summer—a season expected to be drier than a Temperance Union meeting—was launched by supervisors Tuesday.

The board directed that county staff put aside as much of its present workload as will be necessary to develop programs which could include the the local government buying water saving devices for every household in the county.

Purchase of the devices and the use of federally-paid workers to install them was recommended by Supervisor Gary Patton.

Patton laid the issue of drought solidly before the county board in a memo Tuesday morning that recommended the board take sweeping action to do everything it can to conserve water and re-examine the county's position on land use to make it consistent with the amount of water available.

His recommendation included the preparation of a "balance sheet" to determine the supply-and-demand status of water in the county and on that basis the county should determine if its zoning approvals were allowing population to outstrip the natural resource of water.

County Administrator Ted Durkee was directed to report back to the board with whatever information his office could gather in one week and with his recommendations on water saving proposals.

Supervisor Cecil Smith told Patton that his recommendations came at a time when he also was working on a program for the county to meet the continuing drought.

During Tuesday's action, the board requested Gov. Edmund Brown Jr. to declare this county a drought disaster area to get federal grant monies for its crippled cattle industry.

Smith said his program included many of Patton's suggestions, and that he also wanted the county to look at the problem on both a short-range and long-range basis.

To implement the short-range attack, Smith said, the county should set up a task force of county employees to implement Patton's and his recommendations, and the

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City Wants More Water From River

By BILL NEUBAUER
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The prospects of a grim water shortage in the months ahead led the Santa Cruz City Council Tuesday to vote unanimously to ask the state to let the city water department take more water from the San Lorenzo River while that water is still available.

Jim Hammond, chairman of the city water commission, told the council the city system faces a frightening shortage projected as severe as about 2,900 acre feet for the rest of this year. An acre foot contains about 324,000 gallons.

Hammond said that, barring heavy rains, the only way the city can now add to supplies stored at Loch Lomond is by heavier use of the city's rubber dam and waver diversion station in the river out of Felton.

Currently, the city cannot draw water from this source unless streamflow is 20 cubic feet per second or more, Hammond said.

He requested the council to ask the state to set a lower limit at which the city may pump water from the river to Loch Lomond.

"If we can do this," Hammond said, "we may be able to get 2,400 acre feet of water into Loch Lomond and thus begin our heavy use period in no worse shape than we were last year."

Councilman Larry Edler pushed promptly to accede to the approach to the state, with strong backing from Councilman Bert Muhly. Edler agreed to a request by Councilwoman Sally DiGirolamo that Mayor John Mahaney or some other council member join the negotiations with the state, but he balked when DiGirolamo sought to include the county supervisors.

"Not the supervisors," Edler said. "They were the ones who wanted to shut our dam down when we had water."

Edler's allusion was to supervisorial protests that the city was taking too much water from the river when the dam was in its early phases of operation.

Edler and Muhly did agree that Ron Johansen, the county watershed manager, should be included in talks with the State Water Resources Control Board.

Hammond's bid for more river water stems from long discussions by the water commission on steps to be taken this year to get the city and its customers through the shortage. One suggestion has called for a complete ban on exterior watering by residential property owners.

Edler also urged the city staff now investigate ways that the government can help people protect the millions of dollars invested in parks, gardens and the like. He said it might even be well to use pumper trucks to get treated sewer water for irrigation of parks and other properties.

Water Ban

informed that in the week before the ban was declared, some 50 water meters had been sold. Normally, only about 100 meters are sold annually, Hinds added.

Hinds said people who rushed in to buy meters in anticipation of the ban in effect probably caused the ban to come sooner than may have been estimated.

He said the 30-day limit was imposed to give the district time to test two new potential well sites. The manager predicted that if the Carbonera Creek test well behind the district office and a test well at Lochness Lane and Scotts Valley Drive prove successful, he would recommend to the board at its Mar. 7 meeting that the ban be lifted.