

Scotts Valley - 1990

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Next SV water move: vote on \$50,000 study

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SCOTTS VALLEY — City Council members weren't charting new territory when they decided this week to develop a plan that will require new developments to somehow replace the water they take from the aquifer.

In fact, the decision was reminiscent of one they made late last year when the council demanded developers Kaufman and Broad pay the Scotts Valley Water District \$50,000 for a study on potential water-recharge sites in exchange for permission to build 190 houses at the old Skypark airport site.

The city had initially demanded that the Skypark developers provide land in exchange for a water-recharge basin. They later deemed it was not in the city's best interest and charged the \$50,000 fee.

Water district officials told the council last fall that the ground under Skypark was made up of formations that might prevent water from seeping back into the Santa Margarita aquifer in adequate amounts.

The recharge fee came on top of a city demand that the Skypark developers pay the water district \$2 million to build a well that would enable officials to "rest" one that

had dropped precipitously during the drought.

These are the kinds of fees Vice Mayor Joe Miller appeared to have in mind when he successfully engineered a motion Wednesday night that is expected to create a fund to ensure there is enough money to pay for water-recharge projects as the city grows.

The \$50,000 fee that Kaufman and Broad paid the water district will pay for a study of potential water-recharge projects. The board of directors is scheduled to decide March 9 whether to approve the study.

Jon Sansing, water district manager, said Friday that the board must approve adding \$25,000 of district funds if the \$75,000 study is to get off the ground. If approved, the study would be conducted by Todd Engineering a Berkeley and EOA Inc. of Oakland.

Sansing said the study will evaluate such options as recharging the aquifer with treated water from the planned \$800,000 tertiary treatment facility to be built at the city's sewer plant.

In addition, consultants will try to map acceptable recharge sites, as well as study whether injection wells to shoot water back into the aquifer.

Once the study is finished, said Sansing, money from developer

fees being considered by the city could be used to pay for water-recharge projects, including buying land to use as small basins.

Sansing said the projects won't be limited to Scotts Valley. The district wants to work with San Lorenzo Valley and Lompico water districts to ensure the best recharge sites are selected.

Mayor Michael Shulman, who voted with Councilman Bart Cavalario against Miller's idea, countered Schmidt's statement, noting that the city "can't look at that as the only issue....I don't think we can stop everything because maybe in 2005 if bad things happen maybe we're going to have a water problem."

Shulman said he relies on the water district's information that the city can continue its build-out plan through 2005 and have enough water.