

# Lockheed May Build Two North County Dams

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Lockheed Missiles and Space Co. is proposing that a hydroelectric power plant be established near Bonny Doon through the damming of Big and Boyer creeks.

The hydroelectric facility is proposed to be located within Lockheed's plant at the end of Empire Grade Road, and would involve some surrounding private properties.

But, according to Acting Plant Manager Vern Smith, Lockheed isn't planning on supplying the Santa Cruz plant with power and water through the proposed hydroelectric facility.

Lockheed could sell the power generated to the PG&E and sell the water provided to local water agencies, Smith explained.

Lockheed recently applied to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for a preliminary permit for the hydroelectric facility. If granted, the permit would give Lockheed three years to prepare technical, environmental and engineering studies on the proposal, according to George Mulhern, Lockheed's director of public information.

After these studies are completed Lockheed could apply to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for a license to operate the hydroelectric facility.

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According to Lockheed's application, the company is proposing to build two earthen dams, a 7,000-foot-long pipeline, a powerhouse and a 3.5-mile overhead power transmission line from the powerhouse to an existing transmission line.

The system, Mulhern said, would generate an estimated 9 million kilowatt-hours of electrical power annually.

By comparison, PG&E statistics show that the average urban household in this area used 528 kilowatt-hours of energy in the month of January.

The main dam would be built at the confluence of the two creeks, would measure 400 feet in height and 1,200 feet in length and would hold about 27,000 acre feet of water, according to the application.

It would be larger than the Zayante Dam being proposed by the city of Santa Cruz to hold about 24,500 acre feet of water on Zayante Creek.

"What this dam would do would be to form a storage reservoir in the upper reaches of Big Creek basin," Mulhern explained. "The water would be released from the reservoir and would flow through a 26-inch pipe to the powerhouse a little over a mile downstream.

"The reservoir would be at an elevation of 1,300 feet above sea level and the powerhouse would be at 200 feet. So, there would be quite a drop in the water coming down and, therefore, quite a lot of power generated," Mulhern said.

Once the water is used to generate electricity, it would go to a second reservoir. The second reservoir would be formed by the construction of a 75-foot-high, 200-foot long dam and would hold approximately 500 acre feet of water, according to the application.

This water would be available to sell to local water agencies, Mulhern explained.

He stressed the plans are very preliminary and could be changed while Lockheed is preparing the necessary

studies.

Anyone wishing to comment on the proposal has until April 15 to submit comments to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and any agency wishing to file a competing application for a preliminary permit has until May 17 to do so.

Smith said if a lot of controversy is generated by the application, the company will drop any plans for the project.

"The first resistance or negative thing heard about it will cause Lockheed to knock it all off because we are not in the business of providing power or water," he stated.

Lockheed, Smith explained, got involved in the project at the request of the California Energy Commission.

The Energy Commission was looking into resurrecting former power stations and asked Lockheed to participate in a study of whether the old Big Creek Power Station could be revitalized, Smith related.

This power station began operation in 1896 and closed in the 1940s after it became economically infeasible to run small, privately-owned power stations, Smith explained.

"We participated in the state study to resurrect the old power station, but found in doing the study that it wouldn't generate enough power. That's when our engineers came up with the idea to build a dam," Smith stated.