

Local Water Supplies Debated

By Marcia Bradford

An EPA investigation of Scotts Valley's water supply that spanned five years, culminated Tuesday in a public hearing which drew very few local citizens.

At issue was the EPA determination that Scotts Valley receives its drinking water from a single source. According to a Safe Drinking Water act of 1974, this could result in a public health hazard if the source is contaminated.

If upheld, the ruling could jeopardize federal funding of any future projects in the area.

The EPA decision and documentation were debated in an afternoon and evening session.

District Manager John McGuire announced that the

Scotts Valley Water District is opposed to the determination of the Santa Margarita Sandstone formation as the single source of drinking water for the city.

"This panel should be aware that there are five distinct aquifers, not one," he said.

In addition to the Santa Margarita formation, McGuire cited the Monterey, Lompico and Purifima formations as well as fractured granitic structures as potential water sources.

This information was later supported in a letter written by Geoconsultants, Inc., of San Jose, which has performed studies in the area for several years.

The letter, presented by Noor Billawala, a landowner and developer in Scotts Valley,

states that the additional water sources mentioned are geologically older formations located at various depths within the Scotts Valley area.

These have the potential for high yields of acceptable quality water, the letter said.

It also states that the withdrawal of the Santa Margarita formation is substantially lower than the amount of recharge.

McGuire listed other water supplies which could be developed, if necessary. These include diversions from Zayante and Bean Creeks and from part of Soquel Creek.

He explained that Scotts Valley owns property in the proposed site of the Glenwood

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Dam on Soquel Creek. He added that this water would be subject to water rights and in-stream uses for wildlife.

Another alternative, not extensively explored and termed by McGuire as very expensive, is the possibility of an intertie with the city of Santa Cruz.

Russell R. Husted, Chairman of the San Lorenzo Valley Water District, disagreed that the other formations could provide water to the city.

He said the Monterey Shale formation is a tight formation with almost no movement and that any water in this strata is probably water drained from the overlying Santa Margarita aquifer.

"If indeed there is another strata below the Santa Margarita and if it has unique properties, it really doesn't matter," Husted contended. "Any pollution which enters the ground will go down into the Santa Margarita and contaminate into the Monterey layer."

"We are not looking at two separate aquifers," he said. "They are two separate strata, but one supply, and all will be

polluted."

Husted also voiced doubts that granitic structures could provide water, claiming that there is not enough information to make this assumption.

He added that the possibility of interties with the city of Santa Cruz seemed unlikely, because Scotts Valley has failed to develop limited growth plans.

"I don't see any probability of the city of Santa Cruz helping out," he said.

David Bockman, of the Sierra Club, said there would be substantial competition for any water diverted from creeks in the county.

He questioned a finding of the EPA report, listing land use in Scotts Valley as primarily residential. He said that there are large amounts of commercial and industrial growth in the city, causing many recharge areas to be paved over as well as increasing runoff.

City Manager Bob Rockett, testifying on behalf of the City Council, pointed out that the document incorrectly states that municipal sewage effluent is being discharged into an abandoned quarry.

"Our municipal sewage effluent, since Jan. 1, 1981 has been diverted to the Pacific Ocean through an effluent discharge line," he said.

He added that the quarry referred to in the report is only used on an emergency basis.

"We would like to thank you for the effluent discharge line to the ocean, which your department funded," added Rockett.

L.D. Resneck-Sanns, San Lorenzo Valley Water District director, testified that two wells in his district, which adjoin the Scotts Valley Water District, have had to be closed down because of nitrate contamination.

Husted said that the nitrate pollution seems to be advancing to the center of the water-basin and warned that there is a potential for a large chunk of the aquifer to be wiped out.

"We would like to see Scotts Valley come to grips with what we feel is a very serious problem," added Husted.

He later concluded that the city is on the edge and someday most of the salvaged by would stretch county, vigorously.

He said that 11 wells in the area have been monitored the past eight months and only the Camp Evers well field has showed contamination.

He attributed this contamination to the use of septic tanks in the Pasatiempo Pines area and said these are being phased out by sewer systems.

Vernon Hart, of Scotts Valley, expressed concern about the city dumping sewage

sludge in several areas, including the location of the Plumb Valley Well. He said this is an unsafe practice because the sludge can penetrate the water supply and contaminate it.

It was later pointed out that this sludge is now being transported out of Scotts Valley, to the Marina Dump.

Other concerns were expressed about the growing electronics industry in Scotts Valley, and the potential pollution of toxic wastes.

Charles Hoover, 312 Southwood Drive, said he is concerned because there is over one million square feet of industrial development in progress and Scotts Valley has no toxic waste management plan.

He said he was appalled at the lack of turnout and asked why there have been water restrictions on the city since 1977 if there is a sufficient water supply.

Jean Renaud, of the Manana Woods Mutual Water Co., said the level of water in a well they have used since 1948 has dropped approximately 15-20 feet in the last two years.

Matthew S. Walker, who presided over the proceedings for the EPA, said all information received by Oct. 12 would be reviewed by the director and a decision announced publicly and published in the Federal Register.

An appeal would be possible through the Federal Courts he said.

Any information pertinent to the decision should be mailed or hand delivered to 215 Fremont St., San Francisco, 94105.