

## A positive side of the earthquake

McCLATCHY NEWS SERVICE

The Northern California earthquake of Oct. 17, 1989, wreaked havoc in nearly every community it rumbled through, but one environmental geologist maintains it may have produced some beneficial effects in this time of drought: more water.

In Santa Clara County, stream flow for Steven's Creek increased by 50 percent, and in Santa Cruz County, Wilder Creek also doubled its flow, according to Robert Curry, who is with the Environmental Studies Board at UC-Santa Cruz.

Now, Curry has begun a study to determine if the earthquake increased the flow of water in springs and streams throughout the region affected by the earthquake.

"We want to demonstrate where the extra water is coming from and what it means for the future of the regional groundwater supplies," Curry said.

Geologists have noted increased water flows after earthquakes but have never studied the phenomenon. Curry's study is a one-year program funded by the United States Geological Survey, to note water changes in the areas effected by the quake.

Curry is hoping to receive people's observations about changes in water-well levels, and spring and stream flows before or after the earthquake; data on rainfall in rural areas since the earthquake; and samples of water or beverages made with water before the earthquake, if the exact source of water is known.

While he wants specific information, Curry also wants to hear from people with casual observations.

"If anybody has any ice cubes or lemonade left over from before the earthquake, I'll take that too," Curry said.

Water used from wells before the quake may show a different mineral content than water after the quake, he said.

"The chemistry of the water may tell us where it's coming

from," said Curry.

Teddy Morse, spokeswoman for the Santa Clara Valley Water District, said that some stream flows have increased, but the amount is "insignificant" as far as the drought is concerned.

Steven's Creek Reservoir gained 6 acre-feet of water more than normal because of stream flow increases, said Morse. The reservoir holds almost 4,000 acre-feet.

REFERENCE

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