

Scotts Valley, San Lorenzo Valley Water Districts Head Back To Court

The out-of-court agreement between the Scotts Valley and San Lorenzo Valley water districts over the drilling of two new wells in Scotts Valley has fallen apart and the two water districts are headed back to court Thursday.

Bob Haight, attorney for the Scotts Valley County Water District, said today that due to a misunderstanding over the proposed agreement, the San Lorenzo Valley Water District has decided to seek an order from the court restraining Scotts Valley from doing any work on the wells.

San Lorenzo Valley directors want work stopped on the two new wells until Scotts Valley does initial studies on the environmental impacts that could be caused by the wells.

SLV directors particularly are concerned that the two wells, one located off Mount Hermon Road and the other next to Scotts Valley City Hall, could draw water from SLV's nearby Estrella Well and from other nearby private wells.

Scotts Valley directors originally declared they were exempt from doing the initial environmental studies because, under the California Environmental Quality Act, the studies don't have to be done in the case of a water shortage emergency.

In the out-of-court agreement announced last week, the SLV district agreed to drop the case and allow the SV Water District to draw 200 gallons per minute (gpm) of water from the City Hall well. In the meantime, the SV Water District agreed to do the initial environmental studies.

According to the agreement, the well off Mount Hermon Road — known as the Businessmen's Well — wasn't to be used until after the studies were completed.

The agreement did state, however, that if there was a serious water shortage before the City Hall well is completed within the next few weeks, the SV Water District could temporarily use the Businessmen's Well, Haight explained.

"The problem area in the agreement was that well no. 10 (the Businessmen's Well) still had to be connected to the district's system," Haight said. "We presumed that San Lorenzo Valley knew that because what good is it going to do to put a pump in (for use during an emergency) if it's not connected to the system?"

The SLV Water District reportedly doesn't want the Businessmen's Well connected to the Scotts Valley system, so it's back to court Thursday.

SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL
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