

# Ground water recharge projects get green light

By FAITH RAIDER  
STAFF WRITER

WATSONVILLE — The Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency Board of Directors voted last night to move ahead with testing for two ground water recharge projects by authorizing two board committees to negotiate terms of property access with affected landowners.

The projects are designed to replenish underground basins in the College Lake and Pajaro Dunes areas.

The Board authorized chairman Ed Kelly and board director Bill Jensen to research the feasibility of performing an injection-well test on privately owned property just south of College Lake.

The \$193,500 pilot project will help the consulting company, CH2M Hill, gauge whether water can be injected into the ground during the winter when it collects in College Lake. If the test is successful, the project will allow water from the area to be pumped out in the summer when water is scarce.

The project was prompted by the community's recognition that having too much water in the winter and too little water in the summer makes no sense.

"The community has realized it's a terrible waste of water," said Charles McNiesh, the board's water resources specialist.

The board authorized directors Jack Edsberg and Brad Bennett to

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'The community has realized (runoff) is a terrible waste of water.'

— Charles McNiesh,  
water resources specialist

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negotiate with landowners to allow testing on their properties for a similar project in the Pajaro Dunes area west of Watsonville.

One landowner is willing to allow CH2M Hill perform a \$9,500 percolation test on his farm land near the dunes, McNiesh said. The test will yield information on the amount of water that could ultimately be recharged into the area during the winter and pumped out during the dry months, he said.

Some directors said they were reluctant to go ahead with the test until the board had ascertained whether the owners of agricultural land in the area were willing to sell the 35 acres needed for the complete percolation project. Others argued that until the test is completed, the board won't know how many acres will be needed for the project.

The projected maximum engineering and permitting costs for

See WATER / back of section ▶

## WATER

▶ From Page 1

the College Lake injection project and the Pajaro Dunes recharge project are \$390,000 and \$320,000 respectively in fiscal year 1995-'96. Both projects should be operational in the winter of 1997, McNiesh said.

The two-week Pajaro Dunes percolation test, like the College Lake injection test, must be performed before May 1, when water will be pumped out of the two areas.

In other action, the Board:

- Proclaimed May 1995 Water Awareness Month.

- Approved an agency work plan for 1995 that authorized under \$30,000 worth of small projects ranging from well monitoring to meter report auditing projects.

- Discussed amending the augmentation charge ordinance before June 30 to increase the augmentation charge from \$30 to \$35 per acre-foot for fiscal year 1995-'96. The Board would then review the charge in June 1996.