

Pollution Control Board Seeks To Protect Water

Restrictive measures aimed at loggers to protect the quality of Marshall creek west of Ben Lomond from future pollution were adopted by the Central Coast Regional Water Pollution Control board Friday afternoon in the city hall council chambers.

The board, in its long afternoon review of the Marshall creek problem, also adopted resolutions and measures that may set future policy in community-logger relations.

All points voted in by the board were accepted as tentative and subject to review and revision at a later meeting.

May 24, Mrs. Alice E. Wilder contacted the pollution board regarding a water-quality matter on the south fork of Marshall creek, a two-mile tributary to the San Lorenzo river, which joins the river just north of Ben Lomond.

Logging operations about one mile west of Ben Lomond in rather steep terrain toward Empire grade on the south fork of the creek were alleged to be causing an unnatural turbid condition in the stream.

In order to log the area, it was necessary to prepare a road suitable for log trucks and loading areas. During the construction of these facilities considerable dirt was placed in the stream.

According to the pollution staff's report, the logging operation has placed considerable slash and other debris directly into the stream. It appeared that bulldozers entered or crossed the stream on a number of occasions.

The south fork of Marshall creek is the source of domestic supply for a small water company known as the "Wilder system," which services 12 families; for Lawrence W. Rawson, deputy sheriff, who lives on the creek, and as a summer supply for the Citizens' Utilities company, serving Ben Lomond and other communities.

The staff report also added:

April 30, water obtained from the creek by Mrs. Wilder was noted to be "dirty." She reported that it has been necessary to remove silt, dirt and other fine-grained materials from the water system since April.

Quality has been such that use has been abandoned for human consumption. Bacteriological tests taken by the Santa Cruz county health department indicate water has at times exceeded US public health standards.

June 6 Mrs. Wilder reported that the water supply was still "dirty." Logging operations are reported to have been discontinued,

and it is expected that the water quality will improve.

However, normal winter rainfall can be expected to carry slash, bark and sawdust resulting from the logging operations into the stream.

Friday afternoon, Mrs. Wilder, armed with "tattle-tale" gray clothing and several samples of Marshall creek water, headed a small platoon of complainants who came to back up the staff's report.

The loggers involved in the problem are Don Benjamin and John Davis, both of Felton, who are contracted by the Standard Lumber mill to cut timber, which is hauled to the mill in Scotts Valley. The mill is controlled by Bruno Grossman from San Mateo. They were cutting on the property of Mrs. Rose Kerr until the controversy arose. The loggers have since abandoned work there and are cutting on property nearer the Empire grade.

At the start of the meeting several complaints were voiced concerning property damage and violation of private property. However, A. L. Ferrini, pollution board chairman, indicated that only complaints involving water pollution could be discussed and acted upon. Other complaints, he said, were matters for the district attorney.

Mrs. Wilder said that the stream pollution caused about \$1500 in expenditures to creek-side residents.

Rawson told the board how the problem had cost him \$97 for a new pump, half of which was remunerated through small claims court. He is pumping from another small creek which, he says, will go dry in August.

J. W. Mendenhall, district manager of the Citizens' Utility company, said some 2600 people used its service during the summer.

"This pollution has not caused a serious problem up to now, but the stream furnishes the system's supplemental supply and as more people move to the valley, we will be more dependent on it," he said. "The water is unfit for human consumption now and so much soil has been disturbed near the creek that future rainfalls will keep it dirty."

Benjamin told the board he resented all the personal attacks during this controversy. "I have been available to answer complaints, and I am very much in favor of working out this problem. The property owners should have discussed this thing with us around a table," he said.

(Continued on Page 9)