

Water Supply 1970-79

SC Sentinel

9/21/72. p33

Sentinel Editorial

Area Water Development

The decision of the Local Agency Formation Commission to award the proposed Glenwood dam site to the Soquel Creek County Water District was correct although, unfortunately, it probably does little to resolve future water area disputes.

The decision gave the area of the proposed dam site to the Soquel District against the request of the Scotts Valley County Water District.

Scotts Valley officials indicated they plan to contest the decision before the now inactive County Water Committee.

The Scotts Valley representatives stressed that what they are most concerned about is the possible price that the smaller district might have to pay for water if the reservoir area was developed by another district such as the Soquel Creek County Water District.

The conflict is typical of previous disputes over water development in the County.

While the County Master Plan for Water Development was done several years ago, it has not really been implemented by final actions. As a guideline for future development, the Master Plan obviously serves a purpose, but it does not resolve the conflicts between existing water agencies.

It is our opinion that a far different approach to the entire problem is necessary, most essentially the consolidation of existing water service systems, at least, in the area of water development.

Water service, the distribution of water to customers, could be handled by the individual districts if they want to retain their independence although we don't believe such a plan would be as satisfactory as complete consolidation. However, it may be more politically pleasing.

The Glenwood site is a fairly good example of the problem as it exists today. The Scotts Valley County Water District doesn't have the funds to develop the site, nor is it likely that they will in the future. The Soquel Creek District doesn't have the funds either but they propose to submit a \$5 million bond issue to the people.

Whether the bond issue would be successful is a matter of conjecture at this time although there seems to be a growing number of people who are opposed to any major utility development on the grounds that it will only lead to greater growth.

Nevertheless, it is all too evident today that we face serious problems in water development within the County. The Soquel Creek District which has made a number of improvements in their distribution system, is totally dependent upon underground water supplies. Drought years such as the last two endanger the system's capabilities.

This is the reason the district wants to establish a reservoir for water storage.

For all practical purposes only the Santa Cruz City System is a total operation with

water storage, major transmission lines and water treatment facilities.

The Soquel District faces an eventual need for some type of treatment to eliminate the mineral problem in some underground supplies.

The same type of situation faces the San Lorenzo Valley County Water District where it is evident that better treatment will be necessary to handle water in some areas.

The Scotts Valley District is also dependent upon wells and lacks any storage facilities except for pressure tanks.

We believe that the ultimate answer lies in a complete consolidation of effort to develop adequate water supplies plus storage facilities to aid the area during dry years. The additional treatment costs will also up the total cost of water to customers.

Yet if consolidation is not politically possible, then the next best approach would be a cooperative program in which one system could handle water storage and treatment and sell the water to the other districts.

It would be ridiculous to attempt to duplicate facilities. The cost of inter-district sales could be determined by relatively simple systems, based on total cost factors.

While we're sure the program would never satisfy every potential customer, it certainly should be a boon for better service at a more reasonable cost.