

Dam would be in Santa Cruz County

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SANTA CRUZ — A dam which Monterey County wants to build on Pescadero Creek near Aromas has turned out to be in Santa Cruz County — not Santa Clara County, as Monterey supervisors had believed.

Monterey County supervisors were unaware the dam site is in this county when they applied last week for water rights on the creek, according to Monterey County Supervisors' Chairman Marc Del Piero.

The federal topographical maps used by the county in putting together the water rights application hadn't been updated to show that Santa Cruz County had obtained the creek from Santa Clara County in 1972, Del Piero said.

The creek is located in the south county about three miles northeast of the community of Aromas, and shouldn't be confused with the creek by the same name in northern Santa Cruz and San Mateo County.

County Counsel Clair Carlson told The Sentinel the boundaries between Santa Clara and Santa Cruz counties were redrawn in 1972, with Santa Clara County getting Mount Madonna Park and Santa Cruz County getting Pescadero Creek.

Del Piero said the fact that the creek is in this county won't stop his county from pursuing the water rights application made to the state Water Rights Board.

"We also plan to pursue a joint powers agency with the county of Santa Cruz. The water rights would then eventually be assigned to the joint powers agency," Del Piero stated.

He said he will be meeting with Santa Cruz Supervisors' Chairwoman Robley Levy Friday to begin discussing the joint powers agency.

"Hopefully, it will work out amicably and Monterey County and Santa Cruz County will be able to form an agency to come up with a solution to the water problems in the Pajaro Valley," Del Piero added.

The Pajaro Valley is located in both counties.

Although Del Piero sounds optimistic, local supervisors Tuesday weren't quite sure what to do about the situation.

They unanimously requested that various county departments take a look at Monterey County's water rights application and report back on whether the county should file a competing application or should protest Monterey County's application.

In voting for this report, Fourth (Pa-

jaro Valley) District Supervisor E. Wayne Moore Jr. stressed that he believes the dam proposal is "a good thing" and doesn't want to throw a roadblock in front of Monterey County's efforts.

But Levy, who proposed the report in a letter to fellow board members, cautioned against jumping into one solution to the Pajaro Valley's water problems without looking into other solutions.

Other solutions, she said, include recharge projects being looked into by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments and connecting into the federal San Felipe project which is being built to bring water to the Santa Clara County from the San Luis Reservoir in Los Banos.

There also are questions to be answered about the cost and the environmental effects of the proposed dam, she added.

"Clearly, the judgement that the Pescadero dam is 'the solution' is premature," Levy stated in her letter.

Among the water problems in the Pajaro Valley are saltwater intruding into the underground water source as well as costly, insufficient amounts available to residents and farmers, Levy said.

Supervisors will talk more about the proposal at their next meeting, on Tuesday.