

Public's Help Needed In County Erosion Law

Enforcement, public education and assistance are being used to make the county erosion control ordinance serve the purposes for which it was written, the city of Santa Cruz Water Commission was told Monday.

But John Ricker, senior analyst on the county watershed staff, stressed that while the ordinance gives the staff clout, the staff is seeking to use public education and assistance to eliminate erosion problems in the watershed areas.

The clout, Ricker said, is: violators may be threatened with criminal or civil prosecution; the county may do the erosion control work and then bill the property owner; the county may issue citations; the staff may delay signing off building permits for new projects.

"We have a good ordinance," Ricker said, "that gives us broad authority to control and review new developments. We can get in on the planning stage and get a good handle on problems or potential problems."

Ricker revealed that the staff has made an inventory of the more significant erosion problems in the San Lorenzo Valley watershed and elsewhere in the county. Considerable time is being spent on problems in the lower part of Newell Creek, in the Rancho Rio area out of Ben Lomond and in the Love Creek area.

The public education includes giving flyers to contractors and people who want permits, giving them job sheets on how to handle excessive run-off and other problems and helping to develop erosion control plans.

The public assistance program includes a state-funded means for helping property owners resolve erosion problems created by bad drainage, poorly graded roads and

the like. While some people could be forced to clean up the problems, Ricker said, the state money is used to provide 50 to 75 percent funding to get the job done more quickly, with the property owner paying for the rest.

Ricker said the city could make such funding available in its watershed for the same purpose.

For major problems requiring much labor, he added, the county can draw on the California Conservation Corps.

In another presentation, William Lovvorn detailed the water conservation program he is preparing under city of Santa Cruz funding for classroom use this autumn in Santa Cruz City Schools and private schools.

The programs will be designed for groupings of kindergarten through grade three students, grades 4 through 6 grades 7 and 8, grades nine through 12.

The materials will be shown to school principals this August, Lovvorn said, and will then go into workshops for teachers.

"Our objective is to make sure the materials are put into the hands of people who will make sure they are used," Lovvorn said.

The city has embarked on the program to get the aid of young people to conserve water "as a way of life." Lovvorn, a former principal of San Lorenzo Elementary School, originated the program for the Soquel Creek County Water District and the city of Santa Cruz is using the program in cooperation with the water district.

The program will be aided by tours of the city water treatment plant and Loch Lomond, by speakers, films and filmstrips, Lovvorn said.