

Soquel Creek district may use creek water

Soquel Creek could provide one-fourth of the water supply needed by Soquel Water District customers if a proposed water diversion project is approved by directors.

"If directors would approve the project now, and we moved along very rapidly on this, it would be about five years before we would consider building a treatment plant," district manager Bob Johnson said today. "(Consideration of) this project actually started in the early 1970s."

The district uses no water from Soquel Creek at this time, but gets its supply from a system of 15 wells. Johnson said the district directors are not worried about the supply diminishing, but said "there are limits."

Johnson said the number of new customers coming into the district is expected to increase, and the consideration of developing both Soquel and Aptos creeks as water sources is in anticipation of the growing population.

If the Soquel Creek project is undertaken, customers in the Capitola, Opal Cliffs, Soquel, Aptos and Seascapes areas would be served by that source. There are now nearly 10,000 water users in that combined area.

Montgomery Engineers, of Walnut Creek, engineering consultants to the district, presented a draft of a feasibility study on the Soquel Creek project to directors at their meeting Monday night. According to the study, the least expensive way to use Soquel Creek water would be to build a storage and treatment plant on the east side of the creek in a gully near Fairway Drive. Creek water would be diverted into a storage pond, then moved to a treatment plant where it would be made suitable for human use.

Cost of the project has not been determined, but after reading the proposal, director Dan Kriege commented, "What this tells us is that water won't be cheap."