



Mendocino County Water Agency
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General Manager's Monthly Report – January 2010

(Prepared January 19, 2010)

Active Projects

Scout Lake Phase I Feasibility Investigation

A draft Partnership Agreement between the County, Water Agency and Boy Scouts has been prepared by County staff and is currently being reviewed by the Boy Scouts. Staff continues to compile the results of all field investigations and analyses conducted to date into a briefing document that will be used in subsequent discussions with the Water Agency Board of Directors, the Boy Scouts of America, and other interested parties. Instrumentation has been purchased and will be installed later this month to monitor and record outflow from Scout Lake.

Coyote Dam Feasibility Investigation

No significant activity within the last 30 days.

Mendocino County Water Conservation Practices Assessment

Staff is reviewing water use data provided by the Millview County Water District to identify water use trends and opportunities for implementing water conservation measures in the Millview County Water District. Preliminary results indicate that the Millview County Water District's current total residential water use is well below statewide and northern California averages and that a relatively small subset of residential users account for a disproportionately large fraction of the total residential water usage.

Mill Creek Dams

A "Gravel Augmentation Channel Capacity Assessment", a required mitigation measure (mitigation H-1B) pursuant to the Final Mill Creek Project Environmental Impact Report, has been completed. Information developed as a part of the Gravel Augmentation Channel Capacity Assessment will provide the basis for preparing a "Sediment Management Plan" and elements of the "Operations and Maintenance Plan" for the Mill Creek dams. Preparation of the Sediment Management Plan, as well as the Operations and Maintenance Plan, is required pursuant to the Final Mill Creek Project Environmental Impact Report. Unlike the Gravel Augmentation Channel Capacity Assessment, both the Sediment Management Plan and the Operations and Maintenance Plan will be prepared in-house and are scheduled for completion by June 30, 2010. Preparation of the Sediment Management Plan and the Operations and Maintenance Plan, along with implementation of the Feliz Creek Fish Passage Improvement Project (discussed below), constitute the last three major short-term mitigation measures to be implemented pursuant to the Final Mill Creek Project Environmental Impact Report. The only mid-term mitigation measure, completion of a dam safety engineering investigation, is on hold due to funding constraints.

Staff continues to work with representatives of the California Department of Fish and Game and the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the affected landowner, to finalize plans for the Feliz Creek Fish Passage Improvement Project. The proposed project involves modification of an existing 15-foot high

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concrete dam on Feliz Creek and the removal of trapped sediments. The project has proven to be more complicated than initially envisioned, necessitating collection and analysis of additional geotechnical and hydraulic data. Staff is preparing a Request for Proposals to complete the remaining hydraulic analysis and project design work. CALTRANS has expressed interest in the Feliz Creek Fish Passage Improvement Project and indicated that they may be willing to fund a portion of the remaining project design work and project implementation, in order to satisfy migration obligations incurred as a part of the Highway 128 Geyserville Bridge reconstruction project.

NPDES Storm Water Management Compliance

Staff conducted seven classroom presentations as part of the County's on going state and federally mandated storm water awareness public outreach effort, and has begun development of two "rainwater gardens", one at South Valley High School and the other at Community River School. The rainwater gardens are part of a grant-funded school curriculum developed by Water Agency staff to educate young adults on storm water management and water conservation issues.

North Coast Integrated Regional Water Management Plan

No significant activity within the last 30 days

Noyo/Big River Integrated Coastal Watershed Management Plan

No significant activity within the last 30 days. Staff will be meeting with California Department of Water Resources staff in late January to discuss potential scope-of-work revisions and opportunities to fund plan implementation.

Navarro River Agricultural Water Use Inventory Project

"Ground truthing" of GIS maps depicting irrigated acreage and crop type continues by staff and interested stakeholders. The study area has been expanded to include viticulture operations in the Garcia and Gualala drainages.

Greater Ukiah Valley Groundwater Study

Staff continues to compile hydrogeologic and groundwater elevation data on file with the Water Agency and Environmental Health into an electronic data base that will eventually be used to update a groundwater availability study published by the United States Geological Survey in 1986.

Inactive Projects

Calpella Reservoir Sites Phase II Feasibility Study

No activity due to lack of funding.

Mendocino College Reservoir Phase II Feasibility Study

No activity due to lack of funding.

Other Activities

SB 610 Water Supply Assessment for Ukiah Valley

Staff is reviewing a draft SB 610 Water Supply Assessment for the Ukiah Valley, prepared by West Yost and Associates. The document is intended to provide a “program-level” evaluation of available water supplies and projected water demands within the Ukiah Valley, and among other things, will provide the primary basis for evaluating the water supply impacts of Ukiah Valley Area Plan implementation. The Water Agency, on behalf of Mendocino County Planning and Building Services, has distributed copies of the draft report to all water districts within the upper Russian River drainage for review and comment.

Other Issues

Water Rights Decision 1610

On September 23, 2009 the Sonoma County Water Agency filed a petition with the State Water Resources Control Board to amend the Agency’s water right permits associated with Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma (water right permits 12947A, 12949, 12950 and 16351) – amend the permits to reflect the new minimum in-stream flow requirements specified in the National Marine Fisheries Service’s *Biological Opinion for Water Supply, Flood Control Operations, and Channel Maintenance conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Sonoma County Water Agency, and the Mendocino County Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation Improvement District in the Russian River Watershed* (Biological Opinion). On January 13, 2010 the State Water Resources Control Board issued a public notice in response to the Sonoma County Water Agency’s petition, outlining the scope of the petition and establishing a deadline of 4:30 pm on March 1, 2010 for interested parties to submit petition protests. Key issues to be reviewed and considered by the State Water Resources Control Board include the adequacy of the Biological Opinion – do the facts support the Biological Opinion’s conclusions – and whether or not implementation of the recommended in-stream flow requirements will adversely impact downstream water users and/or other aspects of the environment. The State Water Resources Control Board has the authority to not only amend the Sonoma County Water Agency’s water right permits, as requested by the Agency, but can also add additional conditions, in order to protect other water users and beneficial uses.