

# Squaw Valley Mutual Water Company Newsletter

Winter 2006

P.O. Box 2276, Olympic Valley, CA 96146

## SUMMARY OF ANNUAL MEETING

A large part of the annual meeting was dedicated to a discussion of the Squaw Valley Mutual Water Company Plan for 2015. The draft plan provides background information and described important issues driving critical decisions facing the Mutual.

Water metering for mutual members brought up the usual debate. Those favoring metering thought it would encourage water conservation and would be fairer for part-time residents. Those opposed felt the current system treated all members equally and brought in enough money to handle expenses and capital improvements.

Members thought that the current pipe replacement system was going well and should continue as currently scheduled. There was no need to speed up the process.

A lengthy debate occurred about the relationship between pumping of the Squaw Valley aquifer and the volume of flow in Squaw Creek. A number of studies indicate that Squaw Creek is connected hydrologically to the Squaw Valley aquifer. (see article on page 2 that explores this topic in more detail). In general the members supported preserving the creek and encouraged the board to participate in an aquifer-creek interaction study being proposed by the Squaw Valley Public Service District. Whether preserving the creek or keeping Mutual's dues low should be the major goal was left undecided.

Conservation was also a hot topic of discussion. A few Mutual members have been watering outdoor lawns and gardens during the summer months. The pay no more for water than people of equivalent size houses without a garden. August and September are the driest months and when the aquifer has the

least amount of water. The question left unanswered was whether the Mutual should undertake a mandatory conservation program, continue to encourage conservation as a voluntary program, institute metering and a conservation-encouraging water rate structure, or some combination of these approaches.

One of the members brought the filters he has been using to clarify his water before it enters his house. The filters were covered with a red-brown sediment. Water company staff were unable to say what the material was, but agreed that it shouldn't be showing up.

Winning election to the board for a two-year term beginning immediately were incumbents Liz Day, Les Wilson and newcomer Alisa Adriana. Bruce McCubbrey was elected as President, Terry Deveau as Vice President, Liz Day as Treasurer, and Les Wilson as Secretary.

*From the President Bruce McCubbrey*

As many of you know, the amount of water being drawn from the valley's aquifer by existing development, combined with future demands by planned development is a cause for concern. Whether the Mutual should take an active role in addressing such concerns, and just what that role should be is a topic on which the board would like the members' input. Accordingly, we will be scheduling a special meeting in the next few months specifically devoted to a discussion of this topic. All members are encouraged to take part and express their views. Notice of time, date, and place will be mailed out in March.

## SVMWC CONCERNS ON OVERDRAFTING THE AQUIFER

The Squaw Valley groundwater basin consists of a glacially carved valley filled with unconsolidated sediments. All water supplied to the residences and businesses in the valley come from groundwater within Squaw Valley. Groundwater is expected to be the sole source of supply well into the future, though there is a possibility of water reuse.

The groundwater basin is shallowest at the western end and deepest at the eastern end. There are four faults that cross the valley from north to south and it is along these faults that water upwells as seeps and where water production wells are most successful.

Current thinking is that the aquifer fills with water from the snowmelt that flows down the north fork and Shirley Canyon Creek (south fork) and into the Squaw Creek channel seeping down through the sandy and gravelly creek bottom. In addition, snowmelt percolates into the thin mountain soils, meets bedrock, and travels through the soil to the creeks or into the valley itself. So, the amount of aquifer recharge is dependent on total precipitation.

Several new developments are proposed for Squaw Valley and they are requesting water from the aquifer. The following information is taken from Environmental Impact Reports (EIR)s and plans.

### 1. PlumpJack Expansion

PlumpJack is proposing to add 43 multiply family units and 28 lockout units. PlumpJack proposes to convert an existing irrigation well on its property to a water supply production well. The new water well would be built to the specifications of the Squaw Valley Public Service District (SVPSD) and then given to them in exchange for supplying PlumpJack with water. The EIR states that the "well, serving this project only, will have negligible impact on existing water supply, Squaw Creek or other wells in the area" (pg 129).

### 2. Squaw Creek Resort Expansion

The Resort is moving forward with development of Phase II (219 units). To secure a water supply to meet the demands of Phase II, the Resort has drilled a new production well in Squaw Valley. The Resort plans to transfer operation of the new well to the SVPSD. The new well replaces 18-3, one of its irrigation wells, leaving two (18-1 and 18-2) still in operation to water the golf course and for snow making.

### 3. The Estates at Squaw Creek (PSUB T20050813)

This 16-unit subdivision at the east end of the valley has requested from the PSD a letter stating that there is sufficient water to supply these residents. Such a letter is necessary before Placer County will permit development to proceed.

### 4. Existing undeveloped lots in the Mutual and District's water service area.

The Mutual currently has 20 undeveloped lots in its service area. These owners have been paying annual dues in anticipation of being served water from the Mutual when the lots are developed. The District has 80 undeveloped lots whose owners expect to be able to get water when they are developed. The District has stated it "does not have the legal right to reserve water for future customers. District ordinances state that we will issue permits on a first-come first-served basis" (Oct 5, 2005 memo to Placer County Planning Department).

Les Wilson, Mutual's Manager has calculated that to supply all of the above new development will result in a demand of 98,350 more gallons per day than the District and Mutual can currently supply, or an additional 146.392 acre feet per year (AF/Y) more than is currently pumped.

According to the 2005 West Yost Report, total sustainable yield from the aquifer is 870 AF/y. (This number includes the 261 AF/y that is used for watering the golf course and snow-making). Pumping by the District and Mutual

combined has ranged from 464 AF/y to a high of 540 AF/y. In the year 2003, a total of 513 AF/y; the 11 year average is 496.3 AF/Y. Adding the numbers together (av 496.3 + 261 = 757.3 AF/y) shows that the additional 146.4 AF/y needed will make water pumping higher than sustainable yield (757.3 + 146.4=903.7 and 903.7 is larger than 870 AF/y).

Thus, there is a problem with how much development can proceed given the current information about the aquifer and current customer demand.

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## WATER QUALITY

### Coliform Bacteria and Boil Water Notice

Our water system did not meet the drinking water standard for total coliform during the month of January. Two samples showed the presence of coliform bacteria. The standard is no more than 1 sample per month testing positive.

Laboratory tests showed the presence of E. Coli and total coliform in the 1/3/06 samples collected from Squaw Summit subdivision. A sample from the lower part of the Mutual system did not show the presence of total coliform or E. Coli bacteria. A "Boil Water Notice" was issued to all residences in the Squaw Summit subdivision.

- On 1/6/06 four samples were taken from the subdivision; 3 were clear of bacteria, one sample showed the presence of total coliform.
- On 1/9/06 six samples were taken; 3 from residences in Squaw Summit subdivision, 1 from residence in lower part of the system, 1 at the steel tank, 1 at the redwood tank. All were clear of coliform bacteria.
- On 1/9/06 the steel water tank, which serves Squaw Summit subdivision was chlorinated.
- On 1/10/06 seven samples were taken; 3 from residences in Squaw Summit subdivision, 1 at residence in lower part of

Mutual, 1 at steel tank, 1 at redwood tank, 1 at West Horizontal Well. All were clear of coliform bacteria

- 1/24/06 Mutual, in consultation with the California Department of Public Health, rescinded the "Boil Water Notice."

People with severely compromised immune systems, infants, and some elderly may be at increased risk. General guidelines on ways to lessen the risk of infection by microbes are available from EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.

### Lead

During routine random testing of residential taps in the Squaw Valley Mutual Water System, levels of lead have been detected that are of concern. Because water can leave the water tank free of lead, yet lead shows up at the tap, EPA requires that test for lead be made at both places. In the "teacup" test, some homes in the community have lead levels above the state and federal action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb). The cause most likely is lead solder in pipes in the home or lead leaching from old faucets. Mutual has implemented a corrosion control treatment that minimizes the leaching of lead from pipes and faucets.

Mutual encourages customers to run their water for 15 to 30 seconds before filling a glass for drinking or using the water in cooking, especially if water has not been used for more than 8 hours. Try not to cook with, or drink water from the hot water tap. Hot water can dissolve more lead faster than cold water. For questions about how Mutual is carrying out the requirements of lead regulation, please call Randy Dresselhaus, Maintenance and Operations Manager, at 520-582-7099. The Placer County Health and Human Services at 530-546-1970 can provide information about the health effects of lead and how you can have your child's blood tested for lead levels.

## PIPE REPLACEMENT AND YOU!

The Mutual is planning to replace large sections of street main in the Christy Sandy/Apache area using a new pipe replacement technology. A powerful hydraulic ram is used to pull the old steel pipe out of the ground and pull the replacement HDPE pipe in behind. This avoids trenching the street. If this technology proves successful, Mutual will use it to replace laterals from the main to the service box. The Mutual would like to offer members the opportunity to replace their part of the lateral from the service box to the home using the same technology. This would minimize damage to landscaping and may avoid the necessity of trenching in/under the home. The principal difficulty seems to be pushing the pull wire through the old pipe as there may be zigzag sections. If the pull wire cannot be inserted, trenching may still be necessary. If your home is in the replacement area and you are interested in this program please call Shawn McLaughlin at 530-583-1253.

## **Squaw Valley Mutual Water Company Board of Directors**

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