

WEST POINT GRANT STATUS AND IMPROVEMENT PLANS

WEST POINT – The Calaveras County Water District held a community meeting on Thursday, February 1, 2001 to present and discuss their plans for improving the public water systems in the West Point, Wilseyville and Bummerville area. Plans call for improvements to aging equipment, replacement of transmission pipelines and reconstruction and modification of storage facilities at a cost of just over \$12 million.

CCWD is seeking federal and state grant funding for the needed improvements. The feasibility study conducted to determine the necessary system improvements was funded by a \$500,000 grant from the California Department of Water Resources. Possible funding sources for implementation of the feasibility study projects include low income, small communities, and rural housing grants and/or low interest loans made available through allocations under Proposition 13 and other infrastructure improvement grant programs.

Leroy Fonceca, CCWD Board Director for District 2, addressed meeting attendees concerns that the improvements would result in increased user rates when he stated, "We have already been pretty successful in obtaining grants from both the state and federal government. The cost of these improvements will not be passed on to the consumer."

Recent improvements, many funded by grants and/or low interest loans, were highlighted at the meeting. In 1989, the \$1.0 million West Point-Wilseyville intertie linked two service areas together and utilized Wilseyville's water treatment plant as a backup raw water pump station. Grant funded modification and reconstruction of the West Point wastewater treatment plant, including replacement of a failing community leachfield, was completed in 1995. The upgrade of the West Point Water Treatment Plant, a \$1.43 million project funded by a combination of federal and state agency grants and low-interest loans, is currently under construction with an expected completion date of November 2001. The water treatment plant upgrade will improve drinking water and meet or exceed new drinking water standards.

Seven separate projects are outlined in the feasibility study, including:

- Assessment and reconstruction of Wilson Lake, a primary storage reservoir that is no longer functional (\$1.6 million)
- Removal of silt from behind Bear Creek Diversion Dam and replacement of decayed transmission pipes (\$2.0 million)
- Remediation projects on the regulating reservoir to improve water quality at this primary storage reservoir (\$1.0 million)
- Relocation of the Mokelumne River intake and pump station out of the flood plain, replacement of the raw water line to the treatment plant and modification of the existing river diversion structure (\$1.67 million)

- In the Bummerville Storage and Distribution System, replacement of small redwood tanks with a steel tank at a higher elevation to increase water pressure and replacement of old, small-diameter piping to improve flows (\$1.99 million)
- Replacement of the aging “backbone” transmission and distribution piping on the West Point-Wilseyville Distribution System, along with provisions for a second intertie between West Point and Wilseyville service areas, which will improve fire flow and system reliability (\$2.5 million)

“One of the most important parts of this grant request, besides clean healthy drinking water, is increased water pressure,” said Fonceca in reference to the proposed second intertie between West Point and Wilseyville. “These projects will also allow us to pump a cleaner water supply from Bear Creek, as opposed to the Middle Fork of the Mokelumne River, which gets hit with a lot of sun during summer months.”

“We’ve been keeping in close contact with the West Point Fire Protection District,” Fonceca said. He is a former Fire District member who still attends most of their meetings. “The only way we are going to get an improved fire insurance rating is to increase the flow to the meters to a minimum of 35 psi (approximately 1,000 gallons per minute).