

# Squaw Valley Mutual Water Company Newsletter

Fall 2006

P.O. Box 2276, Olympic Valley, CA 95730

## Annual Meeting

About twenty people attended the annual meeting of the Mutual Water Company on September 2, 2006. There were three main topics of discussion; financing of the water system, well-creek interaction study, and the Resort at Squaw Creek Will Serve Application.

Members held a lengthy discussion on the issue of pay-as-you-go and borrowing to handle the financial needs of the Mutual. Pay-as-you go would require dues increases and or special assessments (see article page 3).

Squaw Creek continues to dry up in August and the question is whether pumping groundwater from the aquifer is influencing if, and when, the creek dries up. A report from the well creek interaction committee of Les Wilson, John Chisholm and Margot Garcia can be found on Mutual's web page at [www.svmutualwater.com](http://www.svmutualwater.com).

The Resort at Squaw Creek (RSC) has applied to the Squaw Valley Public Service District (PSD) for a letter stating that the District will deliver water to Phase II of the RSC. The Resort estimates their need at 40 gal/min. RSC has re-drilled an irrigation well, 18-3R, so that it will meet potable water standards, and it will be donated to the PSD. Well 18-3R can deliver 150 gal/min thereby giving the PSD a new source of water. The RSC will also move its other irrigation wells back from the

creek, decrease the amount of water used on the golf course, follow the PSD's irrigation ordinance, and institute a fee on all sales of Phase II condos. The proceeds from that fee will be given to Squaw Valley for its betterment.

The members at the meeting passed the following motion:

"That in view of the fact that a Groundwater Management Plan (GMP) is being prepared, it is the Mutual's recommendation that no further major developments in Squaw Valley be approved until the Groundwater Management Plan is complete and approved by the State."

Ninety three proxies were sent with 90 proxies to be voted by Adriani, Day and Wilson. John Chisholm, Terry Deveau, Bill Hutcheson, and Bruce McCubbrey were elected for a two-year term as directors commencing immediately.

At the 1:30 Board meeting, Bruce McCubbrey was elected President, Terry Deveau Vice President, Liz Day Treasurer, and Les Wilson Secretary.

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## Groundwater Management Plan (GMP)

The stakeholders meeting of October 11, 2006 dealt with elements, those actions required to bring about the goals and objectives (see last newsletter for these).

Nine elements have been developed with supporting action items. The implementation plan will follow at a later date. The elements are:

1. Groundwater monitoring
2. Surface water monitoring
3. Subsidence monitoring
4. Interagency and ongoing stakeholder coordination
5. Manage groundwater pumping
6. Develop and support ordinances for well abandonment
7. Water conservation and public education
8. Enhance groundwater basin management tools
9. Wellhead protection measures

Most of the action items in the elements are common sense and follow naturally from the goals and objectives. Four action items are of particular interest to Mutual members.

1. An action item calls for combining data from all the wells in the valley, including Mutual's wells, into a single coordinated groundwater monitoring program and data base. This unified program will be designed to monitor both groundwater levels and quality throughout the basin. A unified data base will allow for a more comprehensive water use trends analysis and as input into the groundwater computer model.
2. An implementation group will be developed to accomplish interagency and stakeholder coordination. This group, yet to be defined in terms of membership and rules of operation, will meet at least annually to help create and oversee the projects, programs, and policies established by the GMP. The annual data analysis of ground and surface water

quantity and quality will be reported to this group. They will use this information to make decisions.

3. Water conservation measures include education, water use audits, and metering water use at all service connections. Installing water meters for Mutual customers would be a change in policy.
4. The GMP also urges all groundwater pumpers to adopt water conservation measures. The measures mentioned include implementing an increasing tiered water pricing system. Such a water rate policy is not currently in place for Mutual members.

The next step is a meeting tentatively set for January 10, 2007 to discuss and refine the action items in the elements.

The GMP will be brought to the PSD Board for possible adoption. The plan, if adopted, does not require other water pumpers in the valley to comply with it. As Mutual member Russell Poulson likes to remind people, it is an opportunity to cooperate and preserve the Squaw Valley we all love. The effort is being made to write a plan that all the pumpers can operate with and that will protect the Valley and its ecosystems.

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## **Lower Squaw Creek Restoration Plan**

PWA, a consulting firm hired by Placer County, has submitted a draft plan with four alternatives to restore Squaw creek to a more natural state. PWA primarily looked at the Creek where it crosses the meadow.

Squaw Creek forms from the confluence of the South and North (Shirley Canyon) Forks by the Squaw Valley Chapel. This area was originally a large gravelly alluvial fan. In August it is here that the creek dries up - the water probably going underground. The creek moves into a straight, deep, trapezoidal channel designed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and built by the State of California as part of the development for the Olympics. This channel was built because the historic stream bed went where the parking lot and later InterWest are built. The channel banks are stabilized as willows and other plants have grown along them. However, in the spring, the bottom of the channel is five to six feet lower than the watertable, so water is most likely flowing out of the aquifer into the creek at that point. (Water flows downhill, except when it flows uphill to money.)

Below the trapezoidal channel, the creek used to meander more and in the spring overflow its banks, watering the meadow, which allowed for water storage and aquifer recharge. In the middle of the meadow is an upwelling of water and this feeds the creek in the summer, so that in late July and early August there is usually water in the creek as it passes under the bridge at the main road and on down to the Truckee River.

Four alternatives have been proposed that deal with the creek below the trapezoidal channel.

1. Historic Channel: This alternative will partially restore Lower Squaw Creek by re-establishing a geometry similar to conditions that we can infer existed prior to the 1800s. Such

a channel would be highly sinuous, low-gradient and relatively shallow.

2. Modified Historic Channel: This alternative would restore existing historic channels, but would retain the existing mainstream channel in areas where the old channel is not clearly evident.
3. Floodplain Channel : This alternative would restore habitat and functions primarily through restoring and enhancing floodplain channels. Bed and bank stabilization strategies and mainstem flow diversion would be used to improve existing channel conditions, prevent encroachment on existing land use, and restore natural floodplain conditions.
4. Existing Channel Enhancement: This alternative focuses on improving the existing channel condition by preventing future bank erosion and bed incision.

Placer County is accepting comments on these ideas, and looking toward a more detailed plan that would include costs of each alternative, as well as permits required and other details.

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## **Mutual's Finances**

As a mutual company, the funding for operating the company, including investments in the wells, pumps, and pipes, come from dues and assessments. Several years ago the Board changed its policy from building up a capital projects reserve, to using that reserve for needed capital improvements. Roger Hall, then President of the Board, argued that the Mutual was not in the business of investing money, but rather of providing high quality water to its members. The Mutual has used up that approximately \$100,000 reserve in pipe

replacement and well repairs. As a result, there has been no rate increase in about 10 years.

Now the reserve is gone, and the Mutual is taking out a \$170,000 loan and a \$110,000 line of credit in order to finance the Sandy Way pipe replacement project - one that might have been done over three years, but was done in one year in order to save money by being more efficient (digging up the street only once) and proactive regarding the increasing cost of pipe. The loan will now need to be paid off.

In addition, there is an outstanding loan from the state of California (7.4%) used to build the steel tank. The Mutual pays off the loan at \$21,760.96 a year including interest. The Board has been discussing paying off this loan by assessing each lot about \$475. This would be a one-time assessment that would then free up about \$20,000 to be used for operations and maintenance.

In light of these matters, the Board has directed the General Manager, Les Wilson, to develop a 5-year financial plan. The plan should include projected costs for replacing the redwood tank, finishing the replacement of the substandard galvanized pipe and potentially installing water meters. Your comments are welcome. Send to [SVMWCMgr@aol.com](mailto:SVMWCMgr@aol.com).

## **Squaw Valley Mutual Water Co.**

### **Board of Directors**

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VP Terry Deveau

Treasurer Liz Day

Sec Les Wilson

Directors: Alisa Adriani, John Chisholm, Margot Garcia,

General Manager: Les Wilson

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Comments and ideas for articles are always welcome.

## **Water Conservation Tips**

Replace your old toilet, the largest water user inside your home. If your home was built before 1992 and the toilet has never been replaced, then it is very likely that you do not have a water efficient 1.6 gallon per flush toilet. You can check the date stamp inside the toilet by lifting the lid and looking at the back of the toilet at the manufacturer's imprint of the make, model and date of manufacture.

Grab a wrench and fix that leaky faucet. It's simple, inexpensive and can save 140 gallons a week.

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## **History of Squaw Valley**

The continuation of this article found in the last newsletter will be in the next newsletter.

*Squaw Valley Mutual Water Company*

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