



Reclaimed water would go from hospital to Hagen Road

Supervisors OK plan for MST pipeline

By **KERANA TODOROV**, Register Staff Writer | Posted: Sunday, December 20, 2009 12:00 am

Napa County officials this week endorsed studies to supply recycled water to vineyards and other properties in the parched watershed of Milliken, Sarco and Tulocay creeks.

On Tuesday, the Napa County Board of Supervisors approved in-depth environmental studies to build a reclaimed water pipeline to east Napa, where private wells have been running dry.

The vote to approve the pipeline was 4-0. Supervisor Diane Dillon was not present.

“This is a big step forward,” said Napa County Supervisor Keith Caldwell, whose district includes the area known as the MST.

On Wednesday, the Napa Sanitation District unanimously endorsed the project, including reserving up to 1,000 acre-feet per year of recycled water for it.

Felix Riesenberg, Napa County deputy director of public works for flood control and water resources, estimated construction of the pipeline will cost between \$10 million and \$12 million. Two options, pipelines either 3.5 or 5.5 miles long, are under consideration.

The proposed pipeline would run by Napa State Hospital all the way to the Napa Valley Country Club on Hagen Road.

“We have more than enough water to supply the areas that we’re talking about,” said Michael Abramson, general manager of the Napa Sanitation District.

“The biggest challenge,” Abramson said, “is the enormous expense.”

The next step is to pursue state and federal funding. The regional recycled water project is part of the North Bay Water Reuse Authority, a multi-regional agency that includes Napa Sanitation District and water agencies in Sonoma and Marin counties. Napa County began to pay into the program in 2007.

Riesenberg said 15 to 20 vineyard owners are interested in getting the water. Residential property owners interesting in connecting to the main line would need to pay for the hook-up, and it is unclear how much it would cost to do so.

Napa County will continue to collaborate with water agencies in Sonoma and Marin counties to seek the funding from Washington, D.C., and Sacramento.

About half of the funding to build the pipe would come from state dollars, according to the authority. Federal funding through the Bureau of Reclamation would cover 25 percent of the pipeline’s construction costs while local funds would cover the rest.

“It’s very promising,” said Ginger Bryant, a project consultant for the authority. “It’s a good project.”

Napa Sanitation pays \$90,000 next year to retain its membership with the North Bay Water Reuse Authority, the multi-agency group spearheading the regional pipeline project.

The Board of Supervisors have agreed to continue to pay half of the district’s dues — or \$45,000.