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San Rafael and Novato water recycling plants get funding help Marin Independent Journal, 2011-08-20

By Mark Prado, The Marin Independent Journal, Novato, Calif.

Aug. 20--Two new water recycling plants in north San Rafael and Novato that will help save millions of gallons of fresh water got a financial boost from the state this week.

"Recycled water benefits the entire region by bringing jobs and an environmentally sound, cost-effective and a drought-proof water supply for irrigating agriculture and large landscapes, so potable supplies can be conserved," said Bill Long of Novato, chairman of the North Bay Water Reuse Authority, which received a \$2 million state grant this week.

The state Department of Water Resources provided the money to the authority to be divided among two projects in Marin and one each in Sonoma and Napa counties.

The authority is dispersing the money to the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District, Novato Sanitary District and the North Marin Water District to help pay for the two new Marin projects.

The Las Gallinas district expects to open construction bids early next month for a \$5.6 million recycling plant capable of handling 700,000 gallons of water a day.

The plant will send water north for landscape irrigation at Hamilton Field, including the Coast Guard housing area. The plant is expected to be finished by the end of September 2012.

"This is a great source for water and water that shouldn't be wasted," said Mark Williams, Las Gallinas general manager. "We are very committed to recycling water."

The Novato Sanitary District received the grant money for

a new recycling facility now under construction, a \$5.2 million, 1.7-million-gallon plant. The project should be finished by June 2012.

That system will provide recycled water to large landscapes, including the Fireman's Fund Insurance Co. and Valley Memorial Park Cemetery sites in Novato, as well as commercial users west of Highway 101.

"It is great to get the grant, it's not easy to do so these days," said Beverly James, Novato Sanitary's general manager.

The North Marin Water District is a partner in both projects, providing a distribution system. Ratepayer fees and other state and federal dollars are combining to pay for the projects in addition to the grant.

Once completed, the projects will add 744 acre-feet of recycled water to Marin's irrigation water supply system

annually, saving more than 240 million gallons a year, enough to supply about 2,200 single-family homes with water for a year.

Long noted more than half of the water used in the North San Pablo Bay region is for outdoor irrigation and that the new projects will cut into that use.

"Many people worked very hard and we are grateful to have gotten to this point," he said.

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