

## News

# Key water-reuse plan in works

[Print Page](#)

By **Sandi Hansen** INDEX-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

Published:

Mon 8/18 6 PM

With water becoming more scarce - both above and below the ground - together with the escalating costs of obtaining water, stakeholders are looking at expanding the use of recycled water.

More people are understanding the importance of recycling paper, metal, plastic, glass and other reusables, and this mentality is spilling over to how we can keep from wasting one of our most valuable natural resources.

For this reason, five local agencies have formed the North Bay Water Reuse Authority with the purpose of creating a regional plan for its broadest and most beneficial use, according to Martin Rauch, who is working as a consultant to the group.

"The project has been underway for several years and the goal is to enhance the amount of recycled water being created and used in the North Bay," Rauch said. "By the agencies banding together with similar mandates the program will work toward developing cost-saving economies while qualifying for access to state and federal funding."

The agencies involved in the partnership are the Sonoma County Water Agency, the Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District - which is responsible for the Valley's treated wastewater, the Napa and Novato sanitation districts and the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District.

"From a prospective of a water utility person, the project is very exciting. It's five very individual agencies in three different counties that are miles and miles apart that are working together to come up with a solution in using recycled water. I think it's very exciting," said Pam Jeane, deputy chief engineer for the Sonoma County Water Agency.

As part of the water reuse plan, the Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District completed an Environmental Impact Report in 2007 for the Sonoma Valley Recycled Water Project which includes the City of Sonoma and the unincorporated portions of the county in the Valley of the Moon Water District.

The Environmental Impact Report for the Sonoma Valley project will be incorporated as a component to the overall water-reuse regional plan.

The Valley project involves extending pipelines from the Eighth Street East treatment plant to deliver recycled water to an increasing number of property owners in southern Sonoma Valley. According to water officials, currently, most water undergoes extensive treatment and is sent unused to rivers and the bay. By increasing treatment to "recycled water quality," this water can be reused productively rather than wasting it.

According to the draft EIR, it's anticipated that when constructed, the Sonoma project could provide up to approximately 2,750 acre-feet of water annually. (An acre-foot is nearly 326,000 gallons.) This would expand acreage currently being irrigated with recycled water from 3,600 acres of land to approximately 9,100 acres. Construction of storage reservoirs adjacent to the Eighth Street treatment plant and installation of approximately 34 miles of pipeline would also be necessary in this phase of the project in the Valley.

The Sonoma reuse project would not only provide additional recycled water to the Carneros grape-growing region, but also it would bring additional supplies to the City of Sonoma and Valley of the Moon.

Included in the overall recycled-water plan is another component - the Napa Salt Marsh Restoration Project which would restore tidal habitats and managed ponds in order to support populations of fish and wildlife in the 9,460-acre Napa River and marsh area near San Pablo Bay.

The Environmental Impact Statements and Environmental Impact Reports for all components of the recycled water plan should be completed by the North Bay Water Reuse Authority in the fall. The public will have a chance to respond to these reports by the end of this year.

After all environmental documentation is completed, along with public review and design, construction is expected to take place on the three-county project between 2009 and 2012. In the meantime, an active effort continues to support this regional project with significant federal-grant funding.

Copyright © 2008 - sonomanews.com

[\[x\] Close Window](#)