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Stimulus funds aid water recycling in Novato

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Posted: 05/15/2010 09:21:51 PM PDT

Plans for an expansion of Novato Sanitary District water recycling facilities got a boost with the arrival of \$1.5 million in federal stimulus money.

The North Bay Water Reuse Authority - which includes Novato Sanitary and the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District - received \$7.3 million last week for construction of projects that will expand recycled water use in the region.

Recycled wastewater - which has not been fully treated and can't be used for drinking - is already in use for irrigation throughout the North Bay region, as well as elsewhere in the state and across the nation.

Novato Sanitary, which will have its facilities expanded with the help of the federal dollars, already supplies the StoneTree Golf Course with recycled water - 500,000 gallons a day between mid-April and late October.

Now it will use the money to fund a project with the North Marin Water District to help bring the water to Valley Memorial Park Cemetery. The expanded system will have to be finished by August 2011.

"It will help save Novato water that otherwise would have to come from the Russian River, a supply which is limited," said Beverly James, Novato Sanitary District's manager.

Also included in the funding is \$700,000 for the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District, which will use the money to expand its recycling operations to include landscape irrigation at Hamilton Field and the Coast Guard housing area there.

"Recycled water is an important part of the solution toward

developing sustainable water supplies for the North Bay," said Chuck Weir, program manager for the North Bay Water Reuse Authority. "These funds will allow many years of planning to become a reality as construction begins."

In all, \$25 million in federal funding could come to the region over a 10-year period, but local agencies have to come up with \$75 million in matching dollars, which could come from the state, officials said. Novato Sanitary will tap the state's revolving loan fund for its match.

The North Bay Water Reuse Authority has another application out that would bring it another \$18 million, officials said.

In all, 744 acre-feet of recycled water would be added to Marin's 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.

The \$7.3 million will create approximately 372 jobs during the construction of various projects in the region, officials said.

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