

## **Meeting Summary with Sacramento County Planning July 21, 2022**

Rancho Murieta Community Services District (RMCS D) met on July 21, 2022 with Chris Pahule and Jessica Brandt of the Sacramento County Department of Planning and Environmental Review (Planning). Present were CSD General Manager, Tom Hennig, Director of Operations, Michael Fritschi, and CSD Director, John Merchant. The meeting was organized by Planning to discuss the preparation of a new Integrated Water Master Plan (IWMP) for RMCS D, and the eventual issuance of a Water Supply Assessment (WSA) for Rancho Murieta Properties LLC (RMP).

On May 6, 2022, RMP received an “Incomplete Notice” from Planning for its March 20, 2022 Amended Rancho North Development Application. This notice included a list of “Additional Materials to be Required.” It requires RMP to work with RMCS D to commission a new IWMP. Additionally, RMCS D will be asked to provide Planning with an updated WSA. The WSA must guarantee, over a 20-year period, an adequate water supply to support the RMP development of 697 residential homes. This is a two phase, eight villages development proposed for Rancho Murieta North. The WSA will also be subject to a peer review of its findings.

RMP disputes the requirement that a new IWMP must be prepared prior to beginning its Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Planning met recently with the Sacramento County Legal Council, who confirms that Planning lacks authority to require an IWMP before it begins to prepare the EIR. *However, Planning does have authority to request a Water Supply Assessment as described in the Notice of Incomplete Application. This WSA will be ordered by Planning and prepared by RMCS D once the development application is ruled complete. Unlike the IWMP, a WSA must be completed before the EIR can begin.* Data reported in the WSA is critical to preparation of the Environmental Impact Report.

**RMCS D made it clear in this meeting that it WILL NOT issue a WSA until RMCS D fully understands and mitigates the critical issues that can only be defined in a new IWMP.**

**This plan is currently un-budgeted and there is currently no timetable for its completion. Financial responsibility remains unassigned.**

We have listed the most critical issues that are presently undefined or obsolete in our 2010 Integrated Water Master Plan. Many were discussed in our meeting:

1. The impact of the climate and air temperature on reservoir evaporation must be re-calculated. The climate change assumptions in the 2010 IWMP are obsolete.
2. RMCS D will re-visit all of the 2010 hydrology assumptions; this is most important when considering below average rainfall and a snowpack which is 38% of average. Fire, and its potential impact on the Cosumnes watershed must now be considered as a new and significant threat to diversion and water quality (see: Caldor Fire 2022).
3. State water authorities have recently commented that *“California’s climate is changing rapidly, and historic data are no longer a reliable guide to future conditions,”* RMCS D’s new IWMP will require the data be more consistent with *recent* climate and drought conditions.
4. In 2022, RMCS D was ordered to curtail diversion of non-riparian water from the Cosumnes River. This action prevented the traditional “top off” of water that CS D conducts prior to the May 31 end of its diversion season. This is the first diversion curtailment RMCS D has experienced since the 1970s. In recent communications, the California Department of Water Resources has warned of further curtailments “should they become necessary.” *“A water right is no longer a guarantee against future diversion capabilities.”* The Board advises that water right holders and claimants should “prepare for reduced supplies, *“even if your water right is not presently curtailed”*. Rancho Murieta has a finite water supply and no groundwater resources. Timely, sufficient diversions from the Cosumnes River are the community’s most important resource.
5. The RMCS D has recently interviewed Mr. Richard Brandt. In 1984, Mr. Brandt negotiated the formation of RMCS D with the original owners, developers of Rancho Murieta South and the Eldorado Irrigation District. Mr. Brandt recalled intense discussions concerning the “rate of conservation” used to validate the water supply. As a compromise, 50% levels of conservation were declared sustainable and memorialized in the agreement. It was understood, however, that 50% conservation was not sustainable in Rancho Murieta. *Mr. Brandt, in his own words, describes these 50% conservation levels as “suicidal”*. The 2010 IWMP continues to use a 50%, conservation level to justify an

adequate water supply for future development. A new IWMP will solicit community input, conduct workshops and re-evaluate current levels of mandatory conservation that the community can tolerate. The Sacramento Tree Foundation recently advised that a 50% level of conservation would kill most non-native trees and landscaping in Rancho Murieta. The importance of new data cannot be over-emphasized as RMCS D attempts to measure its tolerance for drastic conservation levels on the community's quality of life.

6. RMCS D remains unclear of its role in establishing the ground rules for accessory dwelling units (ADU's). ADU's in the community will produce significant, (but presently unidentified) numbers of Equivalent Dwelling Units. *New state regulations governing ADU's are not considered in any previous IWMP.* ADU's create an unknown water demand which must be further understood.
7. RMP proposes a second phase of development in Villages D, E, F, G and H. Phase 2 proposes 131 residential dwellings surrounding the three RMCS D reservoirs. The 2010 IWMP estimates the contribution of rainfall and drainage to the water supply as 450 acre feet of water. After development, much of this rainfall and drainage will become urban stormwater and will be unavailable as a contribution to the potable water supply. This will increase demand on diversions from the Cosumnes River. Mis-measurement of the Calero Reservoir and this loss of drainage represent more than 20% of the RMCS D storage capacity. This shortfall is magnified when one considers water storage in Lake Clementia. Clementia is filled almost exclusively by drainage and remains the community "safety net" of backup storage.
8. Climate, temperature and evaporation will impact reservoir storage levels and impact water quality. A new IWMP must evaluate the seasonal, dramatic reductions in reservoir volume and the potential damage to the quality of our stored water supply.
9. RMCS D must, by agreement, guarantee substantial quantities of recycled water to the Rancho Murieta Country Club. The ability of the district to generate recycled water directly influences potable water demand. A complete assessment of future recycled water supplies will be included in a new IWMP and contribute to the accuracy of a new WSA.

The RMP development proposes to develop homes on the Eastern slopes of our reservoirs. This will require extensive terracing on steep slopes and will remove substantial amounts of native trees. Terracing, the removal of trees and the paving of streets, provide an opportunity for reservoir contamination that has never before been present. RMCS D continues to bring attention to *the finite quantity of our water supply*. Any interruption of our diversion process, caused by the curtailment of river flows, contamination or equipment failure may prove catastrophic.

RMCS D will soon meet with the State Department of Water Resources, The Regional Water Quality Control Board, and with water experts in the state assembly to express our concerns of liability as they relate commitments for future service. It is a significant concern of the RMCS D that the pressure to develop will exert significant pressure on the district to concur with developer assumptions that “there is plenty of water to go around”. Only an unbiased IWMP can answer these questions.

CSD will reach the threshold of 3000 residential connections as the developers build homes. Urban suppliers are required to submit an Urban Water Master Plan every five years. RMCS D plans to build its final IWMP consistent with the format of an urban plan. A new IWMP, in an urban plan format, will be easily transferred when RMCS D crosses the 3000 connection threshold.

It is necessary to mention that the RMP development application has been inactive since 2017 and recently has been amended. Most of the original technical studies, tree inventory, development schedules and the Water Supply Assessment are obsolete and invalid. Since receiving the “Notice of Incomplete Application”, RMP has provided almost nothing to support its amendments. The timing of this development application remains undefined.

***RMCS D contends that any attempt to use the 2010 IWMP or the 2016 WSA as a basis for a verification of its water supply would be a breach of its fiduciary responsibility. It would also do a disservice to its existing customers of the district whose water supply has been previously guaranteed.***