



Water Drops

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Sebastopol Water Information Group / 707-829-9393



NEWS

2006 Water Forum set for October 14

A community forum titled “**Our Water-Our Future,**” is scheduled for October 14, 2006, 2 PM to 10 PM, at Sebastopol’s Veteran’s Hall.

Forum co-sponsors are the Sebastopol Water Information Group, O.W.L. Foundation, Sonoma County Water Coalition, Atascadero-Green Valley Watershed Council, and Blucher Valley Watershed Council.

A grant from the Northern California Environmental Grassroots Fund allow free admission to the 8-hour forum. Food will be available for purchase.

The Forum’s objective is to further knowledge about our

shared water supply and dwindling clean drinking water resources and inspire community actions for sustaining Sonoma County’s clean water supplies.

The forum will employ “The World Café” method for sharing knowledge, stimulating innovative thinking, and exploring action possibilities around real life issues and questions, in small and larger-group discussions (www.theworldcafe.com).

The organizers can think of no “real life issue” more important than the abundance and safety of our water supply.

The forum will feature lectures by: Dr.Fred Corson, an expert on

many aspects of drinking water safety; and Ed Casey, water attorney knowledgeable in state water law and Sonoma County water supply issues.

Water always is a political issue. Since **Our Water-Our Future** will take place only a few weeks before the November, 2006 election, the final forum discussion will consist of a Question and Answer session, between forum attendees and candidates running for local and State legislature offices.

Other Water Forum Features:

Water fun with comedian Eliot Fintushel

"Water-tasting" by well-known wine tasters

A water quiz, with prizes for people who can answer all questions correctly

Winning student videos entries to the recent Russian River Watershed Association contest on storm water runoff topics.



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*SWiG:
Finding & sharing
information about a
clean and sustainable
water supply*

We're on the Web!

See us at:

[http://www.owlfoundation.net/
swig.html](http://www.owlfoundation.net/swig.html)

OWL Foundation wins lawsuit vs Rohnert Park

For 2 years, Penngrove residents and the OWL Foundation pursued a lawsuit against Rohnert Park's water supply assessment, written to support the City's eastward expansion and proposed addition of 3,600 new structures. Plaintiffs argued that Rohnert Park's WSA didn't meet the requirements of SB 610, state legislation now required to support development plans involving more than 500 new homes.

On May 31 of this year, Sonoma County Superior Court Judge Noel Owen decided for the plaintiffs, holding local governments to strict standards for determining the adequacy of water supply for new development. *The Judge required Rohnert Park to consider the impacts of its groundwater withdrawals on the whole water basin when determining whether there is an adequate supply of water for the people already here and also for new residents, both inside and outside of*

city limits.

One of the main proponents of the 2001 legislation was the East Bay Municipal Utility District. Randy Kanouse, a lobbyist for East Bay MUD and the bill's main architect, told the Press Democrat: "Everyone involved in writing the bill would tell you that (cities) could never satisfy obligations by looking at just their own wells. That's too narrow." The intent of the bill was for cities to look at the impact on neighboring communities "that have a 'hydrological continuity' to their pumping activity."

Sebastopol needs to examine this question of "hydrological continuity."

Sebastopol lives on well water, withdrawn from a shared groundwater reservoir, the Wilson Grove Highlands aquifer, which underlies the Laguna de Santa Rosa from Cotati to Windsor. The other Santa Rosa Plain cities--Cotati, Rohnert Park, Santa Rosa, and Windsor--all are drilling or planning wells because

the Sonoma County Water Agency, their main supplier, is limiting deliveries. The Water Agency itself pumps enough water to supply a city 5 times larger than Sebastopol from the Laguna, very close to Sebastopol and close to 3 of Sebastopol's wells.

As it infills, Sebastopol is planning to add several hundred new residences, without understanding how its shared water supply is connected to the SCWA wells, or to the other cities' wells. And also without knowing how City wells affect neighboring rural well owners.

Judge Owen has sounded the knell for the idea that cities are self-contained when it comes to water supply and development. If cities do not seek an understanding of their water connections, the future could be one of eventual groundwater depletion and ruined lives. More likely, they will face protracted litigation or even groundwater adjudication. This is not something any of us desires.

About Our Organization...

SWiG: Gathers and analyzes groundwater supply and water quality information
Establishes credible volunteer well monitoring programs
Organizes community forums on water concerns
Advocates for sustainable local and County-wide water management in public forums
Interacts with local landowners, City Councils, County and State water agencies, and scientific organizations.

SWiG is a project of the O.W.L (Open space, Water resources, and Land use) Foundation, a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization.