

Notice of Preparation Subsequent Environmental Impact Report

September 15, 2006

State Clearinghouse Number 1998092032

To: State Clearinghouse
Sonoma County Clerk
Responsible and Trustee Agencies
Interested Agencies and Parties

From: Camp Meeker Recreation and Park District
P.O. Box 461
Camp Meeker, CA 95419

CAMP MEEKER/OCCIDENTAL WASTEWATER RECLAMATION PROJECT

The Camp Meeker Recreation and Park District (CMRPD) is preparing a Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (Subsequent EIR) for the Camp Meeker/Occidental Wastewater Reclamation Project (Project). The Subsequent EIR will be prepared in accordance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines. The CMRPD will be the Lead Agency pursuant to CEQA and hereby requests comments from the public and public agencies as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to the public and to agencies having statutory responsibilities associated with the proposed project. Public agencies will need to use the Subsequent EIR prepared by the CMRPD when considering any permits or other approvals for the project. All comments from responsible and trustee agencies, property owners, and interested persons and parties regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the Subsequent EIR will be considered.

The following sections provide information regarding project location, background information and previous environmental documents, project description, issues to be addressed, and the public comment period.

PROJECT LOCATION

The community of Camp Meeker is located approximately 12 miles westerly of Santa Rosa, California. The town of Occidental is located approximately one mile south of the community of Camp Meeker along Bohemian Highway. The Russian River Wastewater Treatment Plant is located at 18400 Neeley Road, approximately 1,500 feet north of the Russian River at Northwood Heights, south of Guerneville (Figure 1).

BACKGROUND

Camp Meeker and Occidental have been seeking solutions to their wastewater problems since the mid-1990s, both individually and collaboratively. Two previous environmental documents have been prepared to analyze the environmental impacts of potential solutions. To date, a feasible alternative has not been analyzed that was both affordable to the communities and that regulatory agencies would permit. This current alternative is aimed at satisfying regulatory requirements and lowering capital and operating costs over previous alternatives. The following provides a background of the two communities and past efforts to solve wastewater issues.

Camp Meeker is a rural residential community of approximately 349 homes. There are presently no public wastewater collection, treatment or disposal facilities serving Camp Meeker. All houses utilize individual septic systems, typically constructed prior to the enactment of modern septic system codes.

The town of Occidental has historically served as a business and social center for the surrounding countryside. There are approximately 45 dwelling units, approximately 30 business and commercial

establishments, and two churches in the town. Sewer service was first provided to Occidental in the 1940s and treatment has evolved over the years from an Imhoff Tank to the current secondary disinfected treatment system that utilizes Graham's Pond for storage and reclamation via irrigation and a one percent discharge to Dutch Bill Creek.

The system is owned by the Occidental County Sanitation District (OCSD) managed by the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA), and operates under an existing National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit. In January 1997, the Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) issued a Cease and Desist Order against the OCSD for violation of the Waste Discharge Requirements set forth in its permit. In 2005, the Regional Board adopted Order No. R1-2005-0086 that resulted in the most recent Time Schedule requiring EIR certification for a project to address current violations by December 30, 2007 and completion of the capital improvement program projects by June 30, 2010.

Based on the 1997 Cease and Desist Order, the SCWA and Occidental Citizens' Advisory Committee proceeded to develop three alternatives for a long-term solution to violations. The alternatives were: treatment plant upgrade and construction of a new effluent storage pond off Bones Lane outside Occidental; a pipeline to the Russian River County Sanitation District (RRCSD) wastewater treatment plant (WWTP); and, a community leachfield. The first alternative was eliminated due to strong opposition from portions of the community regarding a pond and irrigation in the Bones Lane area.

An EIR evaluating the remaining two alternatives was then prepared and the draft issued for public comment in July 1999 (Occidental County Sanitation District Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Upgrade Project Environmental Impact Report (1999); State Clearinghouse Number 1998092030). The preferred alternative identified in the EIR was the community leachfield, to be sited on the hill above and westerly of Camp Meeker (the Aho site). The second alternative evaluated in the EIR, a pipeline to the RRCSD WWTP, faced public opposition and was not pursued at that time. The EIR was never certified.

The Camp Meeker Recreation and Park District (CMRPD) originally formed to provide maintenance for various recreational facilities. The CMRPD took over ownership and operation of Camp Meeker's community water system in 1994, and accomplished construction of a completely new water supply and distribution system. The CMRPD subsequently sought and was conveyed sewer powers as the logical entity to tackle the community's wastewater problems.

The environmental review process for a wastewater treatment system in Camp Meeker commenced in 1997, when the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors designated the CMRPD Board of Directors as the Citizen's Advisory Committee to provide input to the County regarding development of a sewer system. The CMRPD took the roll of Lead Agency, with principal responsibility for preparing the CEQA documents and approving and carrying out the wastewater reclamation project. As a result of complications associated with the separate, but parallel, OCSD environmental review process occurring at that time, progress on the Camp Meeker project was delayed.

The CEQA process was restarted in January 2000 and the CMRPD ultimately certified the EIR in March 2002 (Camp Meeker Wastewater Reclamation Project Environmental Impact Report (2002); State Clearinghouse Number 1998092032.). The EIR identified a preferred project and six alternatives, including alternatives that would serve the combined needs of both Camp Meeker and Occidental. The preferred project included: a new collection system in Camp Meeker with a force main to Occidental's existing lift station, combined wastewater treatment at a new treatment facility on the existing OCSD site; storage in the existing pond; and, disposal via irrigation or discharge from polishing wetlands at five percent of the flow of Dutch Bill Creek. Alternatives included: a variation of the preferred project featuring one and two percent discharges resulting in increased irrigation area demands; a combined Camp Meeker/Occidental system with treatment at Alder Creek Ranch featuring a one or five percent discharges; and, a Camp Meeker only treatment system at Alder Creek Ranch with a one percent discharge.

It has subsequently been determined that none of the alternatives analyzed in the 2002 EIR are affordable to the communities, due largely to the extremely limited availability of grant funding. Design of the wastewater treatment plant portion of the preferred project had begun in 2004. USDA indicated that it would not fund construction of a collection system for Camp Meeker and, without Camp Meeker participation, OCSD ratepayers could not afford the new system. As a consequence, the Occidental community asked SCWA to explore other options for Occidental, expressly construction of a pipeline to convey Occidental wastes to the RRCSD. The USDA and the Regional Board expressed support for the concept of a regional approach and Camp Meeker has chosen to participate in the project in continued efforts to solve its wastewater issues.

Prior Environmental Documents

- Occidental County Sanitation District Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Upgrade Project Environmental Impact Report (1999); State Clearinghouse Number 1998092030. Prepared by Winzler & Kelly Consulting Engineers. The EIR was never certified.
- Camp Meeker Wastewater Reclamation Project Environmental Impact Report (2002); State Clearinghouse Number 1998092032. Prepared by Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers. The EIR was certified in March 2002.

Project Description

The proposed project would convey sewage from Camp Meeker and Occidental to the RRCSD WWTP. A new collection system would bring Camp Meeker sewage to a central transfer station. Occidental would continue to use its existing collection system, which is scheduled for renovations that will occur under a separate project. The existing Occidental lift station would be reconfigured as a transfer station to direct sewage into the transmission main to Camp Meeker. Combined Camp Meeker/Occidental sewage would flow through a transmission main to the RRCSD WWTP. The main would be constructed along Bohemian Highway, cross the Russian River mounted under the Monte Rio Bridge, follow Highway 116 past Northwood, pass under the Russian River through an existing pipe casing, and terminate at the RRCSD WWTP near Vacation Beach. Camp Meeker and Occidental wastewater would be commingled with other wastewater collected by the RRCSD system for treatment, storage, reuse and discharge.

The transmission main from Occidental to Camp Meeker would consist of two pipes approximately 3 inches in diameter. The transmission main from Camp Meeker to RRCSD would also consist of two pipes, with diameters in the range of 4 inches to 6 inches. Total transmission main length would be approximately 8.5 miles. A third redundant main would be constructed in both sections, for emergency back-up and to allow continued operation during maintenance and cleaning. In most conditions, only one main would be utilized, and no pumping would be required (i.e., gravity flow). A single main would be capable of transferring average wet weather flows without use of transfer pumps. The two mains together would be capable of transmitting the peak wet weather flows. Flow in each main would be regulated by a control valve at its outlet. Construction of the transmission main would involve trenching and installation of piping. Trenches would be backfilled and road surfaces repaved.

The transfer stations would be located at the existing Occidental lift station and in Camp Meeker at the end of Mill Street (the stub street just southeasterly of Anderson Hall). Each transfer station would include pumps, screening and grit removal equipment, flow measurement, facilities for cleaning the pipelines, high flow storage, odor controls, sound attenuation, electrical and control equipment, emergency power, and alarms. Screenings and grit would be washed, dewatered and collected in a receptacle for landfill disposal. Pumps would be operated during high flows and for a few hours daily to produce pipeline velocities to resuspend solids that may settle in the piping.

Sewage would commingle with existing Guerneville flows for treatment at the RRCSD treatment plant. Due to biological conditions that would typically develop in the long transmission main, wastewater would be pre-aerated at the WWTP prior to being mixed with wastewater from the RRCSD. As at present, all wastes would

be treated to disinfected tertiary standards. Effluent would be irrigated in the dry season and discharged to the Russian River in the wet season. The RRCSD is currently analyzing the impacts associated with the construction, operation, and maintenance of its Equalization Basin Storage Project and Irrigation Reliability and Beneficial Reuse Project to address past water quality violations and allow the WWTP to operate at full design treatment capacity. The WWTP was designed to treat an Average Dry Weather Flow (ADWF)¹ of up to 0.71 million gallons per day (MGD). The treatment plant currently treats an ADWF of approximately 0.35 MGD. Connection of Camp Meeker and Occidental would increase the ADWF by approximately 0.07 MGD, to approximately 0.42 MGD.

Issues to be Addressed in the Subsequent EIR

The Subsequent EIR will address the potential environmental impacts associated with the project. Specific areas of analysis will include: aesthetics, agricultural resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation and traffic, utilities and service systems.

Additional project alternatives will be limited to those analyzed in the 2002 CMRPD EIR and will be incorporated by reference. As a Subsequent EIR, this EIR will build upon the analyses of the earlier 2002 EIR in order to assess potential environmental impacts associated with the newly proposed alternative.

Public Comment Period for the Notice of Preparation

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, responses must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 45 days after receipt of this NOP. **The public comment period for this NOP ends at 5:00 pm on October 30, 2006.** Public agencies should indicate the name of a contact person when responding to this NOP. Please send responses to the NOP to the address shown below or email responses to witt@brce.com:

Brelje & Race Consulting Engineers
5570 Skylane Boulevard
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
Attn: Justin Witt

A Scoping Session will be held on Saturday, October 14 at 10:00 am at the Camp Meeker Volunteer Fire Department Firehouse located at 5240 Bohemian Highway, Camp Meeker (between the Post Office and Recreation Center). The public and public agencies are invited to attend the Scoping Session to provide comments regarding the scope and content of the Subsequent EIR.

Documents and files related to this project are available for review at the office of Brelje & Race, 5570 Skylane Boulevard, Santa Rosa. If you have any questions related to the project, please contact Justin Witt at (707) 576-1322.

Mailed to Office of Research and Planning: September 15, 2006

Posted at County Clerk and Mailing Date: September 15, 2006

¹ ADWF is the lowest 30-day average flow during the year and is used to determine system capacity requirements.