

PCWD

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loans for the construction of the project, another part of the agency has not approved the transfer of recycled water to Foster Lake and is now questioning IWD's intent to pursue the project.

"We haven't received anything on Idyllwild's proposed recycled water-distribution system yet. The June 2016 report just had info on the proposed treatment plant and that Idyllwild wanted to use a tank at the [Idyllwild] Pines Campground to store recycled water in," wrote Erica Wolski, associate sanitary engineer with the Recycle Water unit of the SWRCB. "We haven't heard anything else since we gave them comments on the report in August. I'm not sure if they still plan to pursue the project now that management has changed."

In early August, Wolski provided comments to IWD's consultant on its latest report. Regarding the use of Foster lake to store recycled water, she wrote, "Above ground storage would be preferred to impoundments. Any impoundments proposed need to have an impermeable liner to avoid recycled water discharge to the aquifer."

Questions over the use of recycled water near local wells have been raised before. In 2005, the San Jacinto Mountain Area Water Study Agency, which was a joint powers agency composed of Fern Valley, Idyllwild and Pine Cove water districts, had a contractor — Albert A. Webb Associates — prepare a joint water management plan.

As part of the plan, the consultant assessed the possibility of a groundwater recycled reuse project. Webb and Associates contacted the state Department of Public Health and in March 2005, Steven Williams, the district engineer, replied to the questions about the "... the use of reclaimed secondary effluent from IWD wastewater treatment plan for ground water recharge."

Since the three districts obtain most of their water from "wells drilled into this fractured rock aquifer," the DPH was concerned about the lack of any studies or other proposed or operating groundwater recharge/reuse project in fractured-rock aquifer zones.

Consequently, any proposed project would have to undergo a thorough evaluation, according to Williams. "The project proponents must demonstrate, through modeling, tracer studies, or other means the ability to accurately predict and track the movement of any recharged recycled water once it leaves the recharge site."

Hollbber told the board he requested studies of this nature in 2010 and has not received any reports — final or draft — discussing how the water travels beneath the surface.

"Recycled water recharge with secondary treated wastewater effluent is prohibited and the project proponents would need to upgrade the wastewater treatment plant to an approved disinfected tertiary treatment process," Williams concluded in his letter. IWD's proposed recycling plant is a tertiary treatment process.

If IWD is prohibited from moving water from the recycling plant to Foster Lake, its success will depend largely on how much of the recycled water is used for irrigation. But that has a negative consequence on the district's revenue, since recycled water cannot be sold for as much as potable water.

Earlier in December 2010, an internal IWD assessment deemed the project too costly for its limited purpose — reducing demand for potable water for irrigation use. But Webb and Associates had already opined that "the Idyllwild communities do not have a large number of heavily irrigated areas... and residential irrigation is seasonal."

In 2012, the IWD evaluation assumed Idyllwild Arts would use 450,000 gallons for irrigation, and residents and commercial customers would use about 185,000 gallons. Ordinance 61 requires mandatory recycled water use for landscape irrigation.

Former IWD financial officer Jim Ludy reviewed the consultant's report, which was sent to the state, and wrote, "This report is inaccurate and not in the best interest of the District or its customers." The former boards never discussed this difference of opinion publicly.

In June 2012, the district dismissed Ludy for malfeasance.

Get free help with your Medicare

BY CATE KORTZEBORN
MEDICARE'S REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR FOR ARIZONA,
CALIFORNIA, HAWAII, NEVADA AND THE PACIFIC
TERRITORIES

When someone with Medicare finds his or her way to my office phone, it's often because of a complicated and snarly issue that's going to take time to fix.

However, it's sometimes a Medicare beneficiary who found my number somewhere and called for some basic help in understanding their coverage. I love those calls because I have a quick and easy answer for folks like that.

I refer them to the State Health Insurance Assistance Program, or SHIP. There's a SHIP in every state in the country. I have phone numbers for the ones in my Medicare region written on a card right next to my phone, and I refer to it often. The California SHIP phone number is 800-434-0222.

SHIPs are nonprofit organizations that help people with Medicare understand their benefits better. The counseling is personalized and it's absolutely free.

SHIPs aren't connected to any insurance company or health plan, so they're not trying to sell you any kind of product. If you're eligible for Medicare, you're eligible for assistance from your local SHIP. You can talk to a SHIP counselor over the phone, or go to your local SHIP office for face-to-face assistance.

The quality of the counseling is terrific. Many SHIP counselors have Medicare themselves and they're well-trained to answer your questions. They know all the ins and outs of the program, whether you have Original Medicare (where you choose the doctor or hospital you want and the government pays your providers directly) or Medicare Advantage (in which private insurers offer health-care services through a specific network of

doctors, hospitals and other providers). SHIPs also can help with Part D prescription drug insurance.

A SHIP counselor can help you with billing problems, complaints about your medical care or treatment, how to shop for a Medicare Advantage health plan or Part D prescription drug plan that meets your needs; how to appeal if you disagree with coverage or payment decisions by Medicare or your Medicare plan and many more.

Of course, there are other ways besides SHIP to get information about Medicare. One excellent resource is the "Medicare & You" handbook, which is mailed to Medicare beneficiaries every fall. You can find the latest edition of "Medicare & You" online at: www.medicare.gov/Pubs/pdf/10050.pdf

Help also is available through the Medicare customer service center, at 800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227; TTY users can call 877-486-2048). The call center is open 24 hours a day, including weekends.

Another helpful resource is the official Medicare website, at www.Medicare.gov.

Free Medicare 101 class at library

As a new year approaches, so do the annual Medicare sign-ups. In this free workshop, Charise Karjala will guide you through the process of registering for Medicare and explain any changes that may have occurred to these benefits. Anyone with questions is encouraged to attend this workshop.

The workshop is from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 25, at the Idyllwild Library. For more information, call Karjala at 760-831-2736.

Ludy then sued the district. He contended his dismissal was because of his comments and review of the recycled water project. Less than two years later, IWD settled the suit.

Cost of recycling plant continues to grow

2013 estimate	\$1.3 million
2015 funding approval	\$2 million

In November 2015, after receiving funding approval from the SWRCB in the spring of 2015, IWD contracted with Separation Processes Inc. to develop specifications for the plant, called the preliminary design report. While these were expected within months, the final report has yet to go to the board. This may increase construction estimates.

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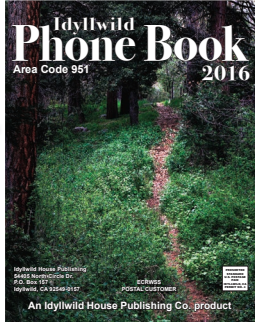
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