



NEWS RELEASE

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Water district's new watershed management plan now on-line

Part One of SLV Water District's comprehensive new watershed management plan, describing 2,200+ acres of District-owned land supplying water to more than 22,500 people, is now available on-line at the District website <http://www.slvwd.com>.

"Clean water and properly recharging aquifers depend on healthy watersheds and uncompacted soils," said Dr. Betsy Herbert, District environmental analyst and editor of the document. "This report helps us to see where natural ecosystems are functioning well to supply and store the best quality water, and where we need to improve conditions," she said.

The District is fortunate to own a large portion of the forest land around the springs and creeks that supply the District's surface water. "When you own the land around your water sources, you have the greatest opportunity to protect those sources," said Herbert. The District owns 1,623 acres of second-growth forest land on Ben Lomond Mountain, and another 252 acres adjacent to Fall Creek State Park.

Since 1976, the District has managed its forest land toward old-growth conditions. According to Herbert, old-growth forests supply the highest quality water, and sequester the most carbon. In 2007, Herbert published peer-reviewed research on forest management by public water utilities.

The report describes natural resource conditions and issues that affect District-owned lands and throughout the San Lorenzo River watershed. An entire chapter is dedicated to climate change and its impacts to local water resources. Additional chapters address biotic resources, fisheries, hydrology and geomorphology, fire management, recreational, historical and educational resources.

The District also owns approximately 160 acres surrounding its Olympia well-field, the District's primary source of ground water. This property is especially important to the District. Its sandy soils are ideal for aquifer recharge, and it is home to the rare sandhills and sand parkland communities, where endangered species such as the Zayante band-winged grasshopper reside. The report describes this special property and some of the issues that currently threaten it, including trespass and invasive species.

The District is now working on Part 2 of the watershed plan, which will prescribe management scenarios to address the issues identified in Part 1.

The District approved its initial watershed management plan in 1985. Work began on the current document in 2004. In 2007, the District distributed a public review draft, and received extensive comments from government

agencies, scientists, and local citizens. “Evaluating and incorporating those comments was lots of work, but we believe the document is much improved because of the public input,” said Herbert.

“This document is a great resource for the San Lorenzo Valley and the entire community,” said Fred McPherson, President of the Board “We all have a stake in keeping these public watershed lands healthy and protected,” he said.

(See photo on last page)

District forest land supplies high-quality drinking water to the San Lorenzo Valley



Photo: Betsy Herbert, 2006

Caption: The San Lorenzo Valley Water District owns 1,875 acres of forest land that supply high-quality drinking water to the San Lorenzo Valley, including this creekside property on Ben Lomond Mountain.