

# W District Update on a t e r

by Dick Little

The Soquel Creek Water District stated that their well supplies are still in excellent shape in spite of an increase of Salt Water found in monitoring wells along Aptos, Seascape and La Selva Beach coastlines.

The test results from the planning staff said an increase in salt water has been found in a monitoring well near the seashore in the Seascape area. The increase was first noticed by the Soquel Water District in August and described as "modest."

Soquel Creek Executive Director, Laura Brown, said the district has spent a million dollars monitoring the coastal aquifer, and has given the results to the county on a regular basis.

"We have had a model monitoring program since 1981," Brown said, "and we intend to continue the program." She said the well closest to the sea near La Selva Beach has shown an increasing amount of salty water in recent years.

"It's like a river changing course," Brown explained, "Because of falling water levels in the Pajaro Valley, the water stream in the Aromas Red Sands Aquifer (which feeds into the area) is now flowing in that direction (toward the Pajaro Valley), and away from the coast."

Water District consultant,

Joe Scalminini, claimed the problem is due to overdraft in the Pajaro Valley where supplies of water are being used up faster than they can be replaced.

"Brown went on to explain that the Pajaro Valley is the low part of the aquifer... (and, because of the overdraft) a salt water 'wedge' has developed... It poses no threat to (Soquel Creek) production wells," she said.

Supervisor Walt Symons added that, "I'm very concerned about the water problems in the Pajaro Valley. People along the coast have to be seriously concerned."

Watsonville city water is pumped to Pajaro Dunes, while Soquel Creek is supplying water to several other small coastal developments along San Andreas Road.

Brown said inferences that the Soquel Purisma Aquifer is in danger of salt water intrusion is overstated.

One third of the district's water supply comes from Aromas Red Sands Aquifer, while two thirds comes from the Purisma Aquifer that reportedly is a series of very large underground lakes that do not connect to the Aromas Red sands Aquifer.

Brown called the County's findings, "...Nothing new. We are currently in the pro-

cess of putting a plan together.

"We don't have a crisis," assured Brown. "Behavior in one aquifer is not a precursor to the other."

She emphasized that the two aquifers are not attached to each other. "They're not even in the same geological formation... The ground water is not the same," she added.

Symons said there is a possibility some or all of the problem has been caused by the shifting Eastern Pacific Plate. "We need to check out geodetic movement... Nobody has taken a look at these problems."

The Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency is considering a pipeline that would bring in water from an outside source to shore up the ground water supplies in their area. The Agency claimed that getting federal water from the San Felipe Project is at least ten years away.

The biggest drain on water that the county has to be more concerned about are the large housing projects that are proposed by the Redevelopment Agency, Symons pointed out. "All of the low income housing we are proposing will gobble up the water... How can you say there's no water and then say more affordable housing must be built!"