

South County news

Annexation proposal fuels Nipomo water

By Jerry Bunin
Telegram-Tribune

NIPOMO — A proposed annexation is further clouding the already complex May 19 election on bringing the State Water Project to this community.

State water opponent Paul Luiz said the Nipomo Community Service District plan to annex the Summit Station area, doubling the size of the district, proves Nipomo has enough water for the future without state water.

NCS D Manager Ryder Ray disagrees.

The district has enough water capacity now to serve about 200 homes in Summit Station, he said, but not enough to serve 16,000 more people expected to live in the district in 30 years.

The district is trying to be "good guys," helping neighbors in need, Ray said. At a recent public meeting, he said plans for a private water company in Summit Station

have evaporated.

Private water developers Vern Rauch and Arthur "Hap" Brenizer disagreed.

NCS D, they said, doesn't need to worry about Summit Station because it is close to finishing plans for a private water company to serve the area.

Two Summit Station residents said their neighborhood desperately needs water and would rather get it from NCS D than from the proposed Summit Water Company.

Nancy Ybarra and Gene Kaye objected to water company plans to charge \$25,000 per house to join and buy the system that they will then have to pay monthly service charges to maintain.

"Nobody I'm familiar with wants their service," said Ybarra, who rode around on horseback getting all her neighbors to sign a petition asking NCS D to annex the area.

"There is no guaranteed water, and \$25,000 is too much," said Ybarra, who lives in the

district but wants to build a new home on 13 acres she owns on Summit Station.

The \$25,000 figure, Brenizer said, is just an estimate. "Hopefully, we can get the price down."

More definite cost figures will be available soon, he said, since his company has submitted plans to the county and the Public Utilities Commission, which regulates private water companies.

NCS D submitted a formal application this week to the Local Agency Formation Commission, which regulates annexations in the county.

Summit Station would be the first annexation to NCS D since 1984. It is one of two annexations the district is applying for. Together they'd double the current district area.

NCS D now covers about 2,300 acres and serves about 1,850 hookups. The Summit Station area includes 2,200 acres. The second

annexation area is about 430 acres.

The second area involves transferring a self-contained sewer and water system around BlackLake Golf Course from the county to NCS D.

The district stopped annexations eight years ago because the county said there was a water shortage. NCS D is now restarting them because the county says there is enough water.

However, LAFCo Executive Director Paul Hood said the county could have problems with the annexation application.

Summit Station, he said, is outside the area the county calls the "urban reserve line" and county General Plan guidelines oppose annexations unless they are inside the lines.

Nipomo might consider serving the area on an emergency basis, Hood said, instead of a permanent annexation.

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vated an already difficult water situation in Summit Station.

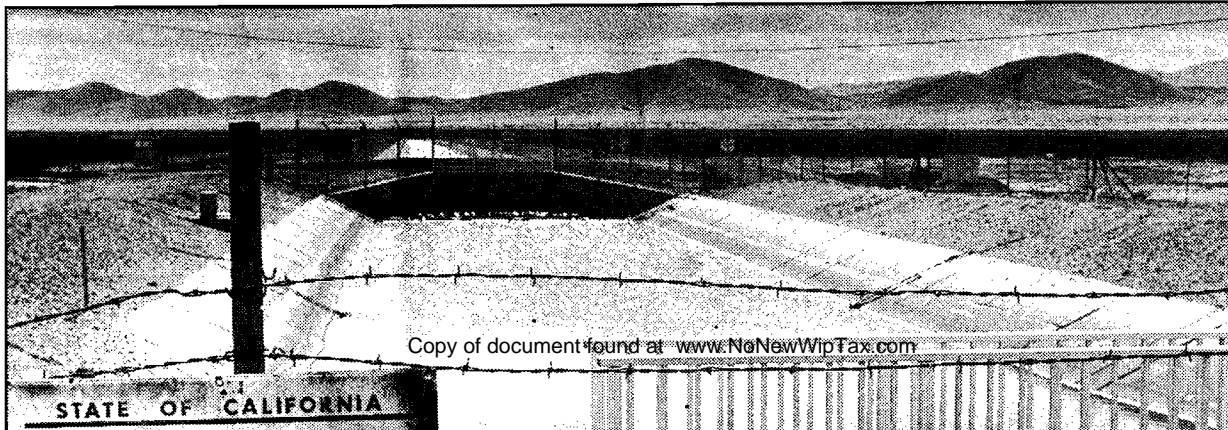
"The water situation here has always been bad, even in wet years," said state water supporter Kaye, "but at least we had water."

Ybarra, who opposes state water, said some people on Summit Station are paying \$65 to \$150 every three weeks to have 2,500 gallons of water hauled in because their wells have dried up.

"We could deliver water there by August," Brenizer said. "NCSO doesn't have to worry about annexations. The district just needs to tell people the facts."

The main thing about annexations that worries district officials is that people will think this is setting a precedent.

Summit Station and the golf course are special cases, district officials said, and don't mean NCSO will support any other annexations or will agree to serve any new homes built there.



Digest

Ecological activism

Longtime Nipomo environmentalist Bill Denneen will speak to the Sierra Club on environmental activism Thursday, May 14.

Denneen is known for leading hikes and horseback rides through the Nipomo Dunes. He has started a new group called Citizens For a Vehicle Free Nipomo Dunes to fight off-