

WASHINGTON COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION

The Nevada County Grand Jury received a citizen complaint regarding the Board of Directors of the Washington County Water District (WCWD) and the delivery of water by the District to the town of Washington.

PROCEDURE FOLLOWED

The Grand Jury interviewed the complainant and reviewed several documents and letters provided. Also interviewed were Jeanne Godfrey, President of the Board of Directors of WCWD, and Keith Knibb, P.E. of Sauers Engineering, Inc.

FINDINGS

1. The WCWD flume system is damaged, and it is reported to be in danger of collapse. The Board had not informed its customers of the condition.
2. The U. S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Agency has given the WCWD a \$97,000 forty-year low-interest loan and a grant of \$294,415 to replace the old wooden flume with a steel one.
3. The District has recorded easements adjacent to the present flume system. Such easements are needed to complete the flume replacement project.
4. WCWD uses a chlorinating process to insure potability of its water. The system allows 300 feet of travel before chlorination is complete. Customers who draw water before the completed process have been advised to boil their drinking water. An engineering study is underway to determine if this can be corrected.

CONCLUSIONS

1. There appears to be a lack of communication between the Board of the Water District and its customers.
2. Funds are available and easements are in place to proceed with the rebuilding of the flume system.
3. The ability for customers to draw drinking water prior to completion of the chlorinating process is a hazard that could be avoided.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The WCWD should develop an informational program for its customers.
2. The flume replacement project should proceed as outlined in the USDA grant and loan.
3. The chlorinating process should be revised so that all customers have access to potable drinking water.
4. The WCWD should work with the Nevada County Department of Environmental Health to insure that safe drinking water is available to the town of Washington.

RESPONSES

Washington County Water District Board of Directors due by August 12, 2002

8/1/02

WASHINGTON COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
WASHINGTON, CALIFORNIA 95986

To: The Honorable Ersel L. Edwards
201 Church Street
Nevada City, CA 95959

From: The Board of Directors
Washington County Water District
P.O. Box 10
Washington, CA 95986

Subject: Responses to findings and actions on recommendations pertaining to the Nevada County Grand Jury Investigation of the Board of Directors of the Washington County Water District and the delivery of water by the District to the town of Washington.

FINDINGS AND RESPONSES

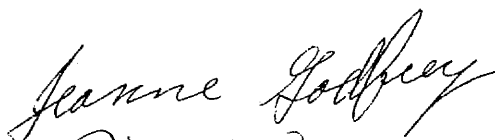
1. **The WCWD flume system is damaged, and it is in danger of collapse. The Board had not informed its customers of the condition.** The respondent disagrees partially with the finding. The flume system is very old and in need of replacement. The flume system had been damaged on at least two occasions by falling trees, and said damage had been repaired on a temporary basis pending flume replacement. The condition of the flume system was addressed to the town population and customers by means of ; a public meeting of concerned citizens and citizens whose property is crossed by the flume right of way and whose property could be impacted by the flume replacement project, posted and published agendas and posted minutes of the meetings of the WCWD Board of Directors meetings, newspaper articles in the Union Newspaper and a television news broadcast which spoke to and televised the condition of the flume.
2. **The U. S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Agency has given the WCWD a \$97,000 forty-year low-interest loan and grant of \$294,415 to replace the old wooden flume with a steel one.** The respondent agrees with the finding.
3. **The District has recorded easements adjacent to the present flume system. Such easements are needed to complete the flume replacement project.** The respondent disagrees partially with the finding. The District has easements along a line which the existing flume system occupies. The district has right of way as required in order to maintain and replace the flume. This right of way was the subject of a lengthy and difficult dispute with some of the citizens whose property is crossed by the WCWD flume easement and right of way.
4. **WCWD uses a chlorinating process to insure potability of its water. The system allows 300 feet of travel before chlorination is complete. Customers who draw water before the completed process have been advised to boil their drinking water. An Engineering study is underway to determine if this can be corrected.** The respondent disagrees partially with the finding. The system requires up to 5000 feet of travel before chlorination is complete during periods of very cold water temperatures.

RECOMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

1. **The WCWD should develop an informational program for its customers.** The recommendation has been implemented. The last two WCWD Board of Directors Meetings 5/21/02 and 6/18/02 have been preceded by special meeting for public comment on items of expressed public concern or items with need for public hearing. The agendas and minutes of WCWD Board of Directors meeting and now posted at the Washington General Store bulletin board in addition to the Post Office bulletin board, and the Volunteer Fire Department bulletin board. In addition the WCWD Board of Directors Meeting agendas are sent to the Union Newspaper and Radio Station KNCO for publication and broadcast.
2. **The flume replacement project should proceed as outlined in the USDA grant and loan.** The recommendation is being implemented with a anticipated completion date of 10/01/02
3. **The chlorinating process should be revised so that all customers have access to potable drinking water.** The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. An engineering study as to the most practical process revision is in process and funding to implement that process revision is being sought through Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. The anticipated process revision completion date is 6/1/03.
4. **The WCWD should work with the Nevada County Department of Environmental Health to insure that safe drinking water is available to the town of Washington.** The recommendation has been implemented. The WCWD has been and will continue to work very closely with the Nevada County Department of Environmental Health on an ongoing basis. The WCWD has recently engaged the services of a State of California Department of Health Services certified grade II drinking water treatment system operator as required pursuant to the chlorinating process revision plans along with upgrading the status of the distribution system operator to grade I certification.

Respectfully

Director Jeanne Godfrey



Director Pat McIntosh



Director Linda Krausch



Director George Price



Director Hank DeCorte



John Stark, Secretary WCWD

