

Pipeline

A quarterly newsletter published by the Rancho Murieta Community Services District

Court Decision Affects Drainage Plan

by Mick Berkich

A Circuit Court of Appeals decision settling a lawsuit filed in Oregon regarding spraying herbicides on drainage ditches may change the way the District handles weed control next year. This decision (known as the Talent decision) is likely to add to the cost of maintaining the integrity of our system.

The court decision requires public agencies to obtain a special permit to spray herbicides and pesticides into any area where the runoff could enter water that eventually empties into a river. The State of California developed a permit procedure this summer and the District is now investigating these new regulations. Under the new permit, the District also is required to sample water around sprayed areas and to monitor any levels of chemical discharge into the water.

All of the herbicides and pesticides used at Rancho Murieta are approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and personnel performing the application are certified through the Department of Agriculture. The new regulation adds another layer of safety, as well as another layer of cost.

(see *Drainage*, page 2)



(Below) Utility workers manually "weed-wack" vegetation to clear the ditches of weed overgrowth.

(Above) Up to July 1 of this year, utility workers sprayed EPA approved pesticides and herbicides over the lakes to control weed overgrowth. Now, utility workers rely on manual methods to control algae and weed overgrowth.



Traffic Impacts Studied

by Ed Crouse

Recently, the Rancho Murieta Homeowners Association and the District partnered to commission a traffic study, performed by KD Anderson of Granite Bay. The study evaluated how new development will impact traffic volume on the existing road system and made recommendations based on street

capacities. The study evaluated the true carrying-capacity of the streets, using benchmarks determined by the Institute of Transportation Engineers, a national organization.

Additionally, Sacramento County has a rule of thumb for quality of life road capacity; therefore, the consultant also

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Drainage

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Most of the District's herbicide use is to control algae bloom in the lakes. The District is already taking a more manual approach to controlling algae blooms. These manual methods proved successful this year in controlling troublesome areas, like Lost Lake.

The maintenance staff used pool skimmers to capture algae, especially during windy days when the algae accumulated in one spot and could be removed more easily. Our inventive staff also built a boom, made out of a hose and some Styrofoam insulation, which is dragged along the surface of the lakes to gather duckweed.

Herbicides are seldom used in the drainage ditches, where weed-wacking is the preferred method to control plant growth. Keeping the weeds under control, but alive, maintains their root structures, which strengthens the ditches.

The new permit requirements will affect how frequently the District can afford to spray to control algae bloom. The costs of the permit, sampling, and potential increased use of manual labor will be addressed in the budget for our next fiscal year.

Commitment to Communications

by Ed Crouse

The ad hoc Communications Committee of the District's Board of Directors was made a

permanent standing committee this year, with Don Cravens and Bill White serving as members. The change marks the Board's intention to increase community outreach to provide District residents with information about CSD operations.

The committee monitors the content and continually evaluates the effectiveness of all the District's communication systems, including *Pipeline*, informational bill stuffers, Channel 5 appearances, a brochure distributed to new members of the community, the web page, personal appearances, and field trips and open houses at the District's facilities. The standing committee meets monthly and works closely with District staff. In response to requests from residents, the communications program is developing a community map. Currently, the maps of Rancho Murieta do not relate to the overall community boundaries. The new map will show District boundaries and the development areas north and south of the Cosumnes River.

Live On Five

Chief Jim Noller is hosting a series of live television programs on Rancho Murieta's cable Channel 5.

Chief Noller's guests have included Sacramento County Supervisor Don Nottolli and Captain George B. Anderson from the Sacramento Sheriff's Department. The focus of the show involves more than law enforcement, incorporating issues such as

fire safety, RMA compliance, and the Highway Patrol. Chief Noller and his guests welcome and respond to calls from viewers.

The 30-minute show, entitled "It's Your Call," airs at 7 P.M. on a variety of dates. Check the cable listing and tune in to learn more about your community. Future shows are scheduled for October (Fire Safety) and November (Fish and Game Department).

Traffic Signal Delayed But Begun

by Ed Crouse

Although developers Reynen & Bardis had expected work on the traffic signal on Highway 16 at the South Gate to start in July, some delay occurred due to material deliveries and SMUD's inability to provide electrical service.

The District office has geared up for the project. Fencing in front of the CSD building was taken down during the summer in anticipation of the installation of the new traffic signal. The fence was removed to open the entry, provide more visibility for the community building, and ensure enough room for workers to install the traffic signal poles.

District staff also met with the California Department of Transportation to discuss roles, responsibilities and schedules for implementing the traffic signal. The poles themselves arrived this summer and are being stored on District property. In short, everything was ready for work to

DID YOU KNOW?

District residents used just under 80 million gallons of water in July 2001, up from 77 million gallons in July 2000. The increase is attributed to growth in population.

begin whenever SMUD's schedule would enable the utility to get their facilities into the ground. Recently, the conduits were placed. Poles will be erected shortly. The contractor's goal is to complete the project by the end of October.

Traffic

(continued from page 1)

evaluated the roads using these measures. The study determined that stretches of certain roads and certain flow patterns would be impacted from a quality of life standpoint, although not necessarily from a carry-capacity standpoint. The study made recommendations, including the use of roundabouts and chokers that narrow intersections in an effort to slow down traffic at select points in the community.

The District and RMA wanted a baseline traffic study to compare to the traffic studies prepared by the developers. The baseline study will enable the community's representatives to make sure that the developer's recommendations are compatible with the independent analysis and recommendations of our study. This "checks and balances" approach will help the District and RMA secure traffic mitigations so that the quality of life now enjoyed at Rancho Murieta will not be reduced by future development. The goal of the District and RMA is to ensure that all future development pays its fair share for necessary improvements and not burden current residents.

New Sludge Disposal Plan

by Mick Berklich

The District received a letter from the Regional Water Quality Control Board approving our sludge management plan. Under this plan, a new procedure for sludge disposal will be implemented in 2002.

Almost all of the sludge in the District is dead algae removed from the storage reservoirs at the wastewater treatment plant. Some sand from the sludge drying beds in the wastewater treatment plant also finds its way into the piles. Over the past years, sludge has been stockpiled in a mulch bed behind the wastewater treatment plant. The Regional Water Quality Control Board now requires that sludge be removed every two years to prevent it from potentially affecting groundwater.

The cost for removing the District's sludge pile will be part of the budget for the next fiscal year. The sludge will be removed in late summer of 2002. Then, every year or two from now on, the District will haul out the sludge. Meanwhile, a small shelter will be built to prevent rainwater from entering the stockpile and running off into the groundwater.

Accentuate Your Address

A clearly visible address on your home makes it easier for

fire, security and medical vehicles to find your house quickly in case of an emergency. The Rancho Murieta Homeowners' Association requires every house to have a lighted or visible address. The fall pruning season is a good time to make sure that the landscaping around your home does not obscure the address. So prune for safety and make sure your address is illuminated at night.

Fall Driving Tips

by Jim Noller

With fall rains on the way, it's important for drivers to remember to slow down when the roads are slick and wet. More accidents occur on wet surfaces than during the dry season.

Power outages are always a potential, even without an energy shortage. Be prepared for the unexpected by having some extra batteries and flashlights in the house and in your car.

The green phone book supplied to every resident contains an emergency plan that shows the different roads to and from Rancho Murieta. It's important to familiarize yourself with an emergency road network so you can get into or out of the community during seasonal floods. And remember, in a heavy rainstorm, Deer Creek can overflow its banks, making Scott Road impassable.

WATER FACTS:

Water in the Cosumnes River was very shallow this August, running at about five cubic feet per second. Normal flow is about 40 cubic feet.

A government grant recently funded a Highway Patrol officer for rural roads in the Rancho Murieta area. The officer patrols Wilton, Sheldon and all the rural roads to the county line. The impact of this additional security is already being felt in the community. During his first few months on the job, the Highway Patrol officer helped the District dispose of abandoned cars and has written numerous tickets for vehicle code violations.

	July - Sept. 2001	July - Sept. 2000	Total 2000
Grand Theft	4	3	7
Petty Theft	16	9	39
Robbery	0	0	1
Vandalism	48	27	116
Trespass	132	117	347
<i>RMA Rule Violations</i>			
Speeding	38	59	216
Stop Sign	18	37	347
Street/Driveway Parking	101	82	599
North Gate Passes	38,922	2,995	129,084
South Gate Passes	9,605	7,530	27,375

RMCS D
Board Members:

James Lensch,
President

Don Cravens,
Vice President

Mary Brennan

Wayne Kuntz

Bill White

Rancho Murieta Community Services District
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The Community Services District, your local government, provides water, sewer, drainage, flood control, and security services. If you have any questions about the services, staff members will be available to assist you.

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 Camille Tavlian Executive Asst./District Secretary ctavlian@ranchohurietaesd.com

The District is governed by a five person Board of Directors elected by registered voters at Rancho Murieta. Monthly board meetings are on the third Wednesday of every month at 5:00 pm at the District office. All meetings are open to the public and residents are encouraged to attend. The agenda for the meeting is available at the District office.

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