

Frequently Asked Questions

Augmentation Well(s) Project

Over 25 years ago, the Rancho Murieta Community Services District (District) identified the need for an augmented water supply during times of extreme drought or emergency. At that time, the District began the planning process for drilling and constructing a groundwater well in or near the District's service area. Over the years, many studies were completed and several test wells were drilled to identify potential well sites.

1. Why does the District need to drill groundwater wells?

Currently, Rancho Murieta relies on a single source of water; the Cosumnes River, for its potable water supply. The augmentation well(s) are needed to provide a second source of water in emergency situations, such as a failure of the water treatment plant that prevents production of potable water. In addition, the groundwater well(s) may be used to augment the District's water supply during extreme drought events that prohibit the District's ability to pump water from the Cosumnes River.

2. Are these wells being drilled to support water for the forthcoming development?

No. These augmentation wells are necessary with or without development to support existing and future residents in the event of an extreme drought or other water supply emergency. These wells are not being drilled as a new water supply for development.

3. How long will the District's water supply last during extreme drought without the use of groundwater?

The recently completed Water Supply Assessment (January 2016) projects that the District's stored water supply is sufficient to last three (3) years at projected full build-out during extreme drought conditions under a 50% conservation curtailment. (Click here www.rmcsd.com for a link to the Water Supply Assessment.)

4. How much will the groundwater well(s) cost? Where will the money come from to drill the augmentation well(s)?

It is estimated that a single groundwater well will cost approximately \$1.2 mm to drill and equip.

The well(s) will be paid for using developer fees (the Water Supply Augmentation fee) and Prop 84 grant funds. Developers pay a Water Supply Augmentation fee to the District at the time the water permit is issued for the lot being developed. The Water Supply Augmentation fees are designated for projects like the groundwater well(s) and recycled water infrastructure that augment the District's water supply. The District will collect over \$5.0 mm in future Water Supply Augmentation fees from developers for the remaining undeveloped property within the community, which when added to the February 2016 Water Supply Augmentation reserve balance of \$2.2 mm totals over \$7.0

mm in Water Supply Augmentation funds. The District also has approximately \$500,000 in Prop 84 grant funds for the construction of the groundwater well(s).

5. What is the Prop 84 Implementation Grant Project and how does it relate to the District's augmentation well(s)?

In September 2012, the District entered into an agreement with the Regional Water Authority (RWA) as an approved project under the Proposition 84 Implementation Grant application. The application was submitted for approximately \$500,000 of grant support to develop the groundwater well(s). Initially, the District and Omoichumne Hartnell Water District (OHWD) were partners in the project with the District constructing a groundwater well, which has dual purpose of providing augmentation of the District's surface water supply in times of drought and providing for an emergency backup supply to the District's single source of supply (the Cosumnes River). OHWD's portion of the project plans for the construction of a recharge basin (which is an area that has been tested and proven to allow percolation of water through the soil and into the underlying groundwater basin), including the pumps and necessary infrastructure for diversion of river water, that would accept excess surface water available under the District's primary water right during wet years to recharge the groundwater basin. However, the project was split into two projects when OHWD encountered difficulty in securing the lease for the original identified recharge basin. Even though the projects have been separated, the intent is for both projects to be completed.

6. How much groundwater does the District expect to the augmentation well(s) will provide?

Even though the 2016 Water Supply Assessment projects that groundwater is not needed at full build-out during extreme drought with 50% conservation restrictions, the District's goal is to achieve 600 AF/year from the groundwater well(s) as recommended in the 2010 Integrated Water Master Plan Update ([2010 IWMP Update](#)).

7. What recent activities have occurred on the groundwater well(s) project?

In 2013, Dunn Environmental (now NV5) prepared a Technical Memorandum for the District that identified two potential areas for groundwater wells to meet the District's need. The first location (Testhole A) is located near Cantova Way in the open field across from the FAA Building. The second location (Testhole B) is located on Anderson Ranch property west of the Airport runway. A test well was drilled at each location to validate the initial findings. The Technical Memorandum is available on the District's website (www.rmcsd.com) for those interested in more detailed information.

8. What is the current status of the well drilling project?

Based on the positive results of the Dunn Environmental study and testhole drilling, the District plans to drill one, possibly two, groundwater wells. The first production groundwater well is planned at the Testhole B site since that location potentially has the groundwater yield to fully meet the District's need. If the production well yield at the Testhole B site does not prove to meet the District's need, a second production groundwater well is planned at the Testhole A site. The District has released Request for Proposals (RFP) twice soliciting bids for well drilling

(in May 2014 and in March 2015) but due to the high demand for well drillers due to the 2013 - 2015 drought no bid responses were received. The District will be releasing another RFP in April 2016 to seek bids for the project.

9. Has the District entered into any agreements with the property owners?

The District and the property owners of the testhole locations must negotiate and enter into easement agreements for locating the wells on their property. The terms of these agreements are yet to be determined. As the RFP and bid is received after April, these negotiations will begin.

10. How will the groundwater wells and recharge basin be operated?

The planned operation of the groundwater well and the recharge basin would be managed as follows:

1. During normal or wet years, the District will pump/divert an amount of water from the Cosumnes River into the OHWD recharge basin. The amount pumped will be determined each year considering the amount of water flowing in the Cosumnes River and the amount of water the District has remaining from its primary water right. The District has to apply to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) for a new point of diversion under our primary permit prior to making any diversions to the recharge basin.
2. The diversion to the OHWD recharge basin is not expected to occur each year and there is no guarantee of the amount of water that will be diverted to the recharge basin (the Rancho Murieta community's water need takes first priority).
3. The amount of water diverted to the OHWD recharge basin will be metered and the amount will be reported to the SWRCB annually.
4. The amount of water diverted to the recharge basin will be kept in a "water bank" from which the District can withdraw groundwater when needed to meet the District needs (i.e., in extreme drought or as an emergency supply). It is expected that the District would need to operate the groundwater well(s) to meet District needs once in every 25 years or so, if that often. However, they will be tested on a periodic basis to ensure the pumps and water processing is functioning correctly.