



- ① **Calero Reservoir water quality issues**
- ② **Calero Ranch lease issues**
- ③ **Fellows Dike pre-project study**

What is Calero Reservoir used for?

Of the Water District's 10 local reservoirs, Calero Reservoir is one of four (Calero, Anderson, Almaden, and Coyote) that provide water directly to the District's drinking water treatment plants. The District uses the locally captured rain water in addition to imported water from the Sacramento - San Joaquin rivers delta to provide drinking water to most of Santa Clara County's more-than 1.7 million residents. In addition, Calero Reservoir provides recreational activities, stores water for groundwater recharge at the percolation ponds, and provides a level of flood protection by holding back peak rain flows. Protecting drinking water from potential contamination sources is a primary mission of the Water District. The Water District is also studying alternatives to restore the water storage capacity (currently under state mandated restriction) in Calero Reservoir.

① **What is the water contamination issue with Calero Reservoir?**

As a condition of its permit from the California Department of Health Services to operate Calero Reservoir as a drinking water reservoir, the Water District is required to take regular bacteriological samples of runoff from the stables facility. Regular storm sampling of Calero Ranch Stables runoff on Oct. 19, 2004 showed very high bacteriological levels being discharged to Calero Creek and Calero Reservoir. Bacteriological levels leaving the ranch were as much as 60 times higher than levels in the upstream portion of Calero Creek. Upon receiving the sample results, the Water District immediately notified the California Department of Health Services, the Santa Clara County Parks Department, the Calero Stable Ranch, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board of the significant levels. As a result of the contamination event, the Regional Board issued a notice of violation to the ranch, County Parks and the Water District.

① **What's the notice of violation about?**

The notice of violation required immediate action be taken to reduce contaminated runoff. The notice of violation determined that the ranch facility 1) does not adequately contain animal waste and storm water runoff flowing through the area where manure is present; 2) does not adequately divert clean storm water runoff away from manured areas; 3) does not have a retention pond or other suitable waste containment structure and 4) does not have proper disposal practices to prevent surface runoff or minimize percolation to groundwater as required.

As a result, Calero Ranch was required to:

- 1. Develop a Water Quality Action Plan to immediately reduce pumping discharges, address the water quality of the concrete canal discharge, and to improve water quality of surface runoff at Calero Ranch. The Action Plan addressed immediate implementation measures to be put in place by March 31, 2005, and conceptual plans for constructing a suitable containment basin system by October 15, 2005.*
- 2. Submit a Report of Waste Discharge and Action Plan to the Regional Board by March 11, 2005.*
- 3. Submit a detailed design for a suitable containment system by June 1, 2005.*

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① What did the ranch do to answer the notice of violation?

In anticipation of the construction of approved measures to prevent water contamination, the District permitted County Parks to grant a five-year lease extension through Nov. 1, 2010. The ranch was unable to construct an approved containment basin by the Oct. 15, 2005 deadline and requested an extension from the Regional Board to June 1, 2006. The extension was granted as long as a contingency plan was in place to handle contaminated runoff for the 2005/2006 winter and the ranch committed to build the containment basin by the summer of 2006. The ranch proposed a contingency plan that included capturing and recirculating, via irrigation, contaminated runoff on-site through the ranch area. The plan was implemented throughout the extremely rainy 2005/2006 winter and successfully protected Calero Creek from contaminated runoff. Based on the effectiveness of the contingency plan, the ranch requested that it be allowed to use the capture and recirculating process to meet the notice of violation in-lieu of building a large containment basin. The Regional Board and the Water District agreed to allow the contingency plan, going forward with some additional modifications to further protect water quality and ensure against property flooding. This contingency plan was approved to satisfy the notice of violation and to specify operating procedures for the stables for the duration of the lease through 2010.

Questions regarding the Calero water quality, the notice of violation and the contingency plan can be directed to: Bruce Cabral, Water Quality Unit Manager, at (408) 265-2607, ext. 2796 or e-mail at bcabral@valleywater.org.

② What is the status of the ranch's current lease?

The current, extended lease for the stable operations expires on Nov. 1, 2010. On Jan. 25, 2006, the Water District, County Parks and the ranch met to discuss progress on compliance with the notice of violation and the future of the stables operation. At this meeting, the District and County Parks made it clear that a horse stables operation is not compatible with Department of Health Services Guidelines nor District policies. As such, it was agreed by County Parks and the District that a new lease for the horse stables beyond Nov. 1, 2010 would not be entertained.

② What are these health service guidelines?

The notice of violation (from the State Regional Water Quality Control Board) addressed the immediate water contamination issue, but does not address stable operations at the site. The State Department of Health Services oversees the quality of water going to drinking water treatment plants and has set draft, "Guidelines for Evaluating Applications for Recreational Use Permits at Domestic Water Supply Reservoirs." The document sets guidelines for various activities such as equestrian facilities, swimming, boating etc. around domestic reservoirs. The guidelines state the following regarding equestrian stables or corrals:

Stables or corrals should not be located on the reservoir watershed. If this is not possible, the following restrictions apply:

- These facilities must be set back at least 1,000 feet from the high water level of the reservoir.*
- The maintenance program for stables and corrals must provide daily collection of manure at all corrals and stable areas, and transportation to a storage or disposal area off the watershed.*
- Storm water drainage from stables and corrals must be prevented from entering the reservoir insofar as feasible. Storm water from adjacent areas should be diverted away from stables and corrals.*

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The current ranch stables location is well within the 1000' set-back area and thus, does not comply with the guidelines. However, the Department of Health services guidelines do not require immediate termination of the stable lease. In light of the likelihood that the guideline will become a requirement and in order to protect Calero Creek and Reservoir from the threat of contamination, County Parks and the District made the decision to not entertain a new lease beyond 2010. This decision was made well in advance of the end of the lease in 2010, so that the stable concessionaire and horse owners would not be left with inadequate notice.

② Can there be equestrian use past 2010?

② Can there be future summer camp use?

Yes!, the Water District and County Parks support continued day-use of the trails within the park (where feasible) and will consider proposals for equestrian use as long as they meet the State drinking water guidelines and Water District policies.

Additional questions regarding equestrian use of the property beyond 2010 should be directed to Mark Fredrick, Santa Clara County Parks Manager, (408) 355-2210 or e-mail at mark.fredrick@prk.sccgov.org

③ What is Fellows Dike and why is the Water District studying it?

Fellows Dike is an older earthen dike (or small dam) located on the southern-most section of Calero Reservoir and protects Calero Ranch Stables and the historic Bailey-Fellows House from inundation from the reservoir water. The dike is under the jurisdiction of the state's Division of Safety of Dams and has been determined to be in a deteriorated condition. The state has restricted the Santa Clara Valley Water District from impounding water against the dike and has indicated that it is not acceptable to leave the dike in its current condition. This operational restriction has resulted in a reduction of 2,000 acre-feet of water storage capacity in Calero Reservoir. The Water District is conducting a study of Fellows Dike to determine alternatives to remove the current restriction on storage capacity for Calero Reservoir.

③ Why is the study necessary?

The District is undertaking the planning study to resolve the restrictions imposed by the state because of the deteriorated condition of Fellows Dike. The study will identify alternatives that optimize the water storage in Calero Reservoir in a cost-effective manner while considering stakeholder interests that are consistent with District policies.

Calero Reservoir is an important component of the District's water supply planning efforts. Because Calero can be filled with imported water and can also accept transfers of water from another watershed, it plays an important role for planning flexibility, especially in drought years. Through the planning study, the Water District has identified alternatives to bring the allowable storage level in Calero Reservoir back to the design capacity.

③ What are the alternatives?

The study has developed four conceptual alternatives that may resolve the dike issues. One of the alternatives would repair the dike to state-certification requirements.



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The remaining three alternatives remove the dike from state jurisdiction by reducing the dike height, breaching the dike or completely removing the dike. The selection of a recommended alternative will be based on engineering and environmental studies, and input from community and regulatory partners.

③ **What is next?**

The Water District's planning process includes several steps to solicit community, regulatory and other stakeholder input. A public meeting for the study is scheduled for July 24, 2006, to present the alternatives and solicit feedback from the community. Following the meeting, the District will complete a detailed feasible alternatives analysis. A second public meeting (tentatively scheduled for late 2006) will be held to present the results of the analysis and seek additional community input.

Questions regarding the Fellows Dike Study can be directed to Donna Collins, Senior Project Manager, (408) 265-2607, ext. 2572 or e-mail at dcollins@valleywater.org.

