

# Glenn Supervisors Support Plan

By CHAL GREEN

(Enterprise-Record Staff Writer)

WILLOWS — Glenn County supervisors yesterday wasted no time in joining a drive for \$2.5 million in federal funds with which to drill deep wells to save the 850-member Orland Unit Water Users Association from economic disaster.

Supervisors hurriedly approved a resolution calling on Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr. to lead the move for federal

assistance as the record-shattering drought entered a second year.

Board members also appointed board Chairman George Edwards and Supervisor Steve Blacet, both of Orland, to represent the panel at a conference in the governor's office Thursday.

The delegation from the county also will include three association officials — Vice President Harvey Moranda, manager Merv Freeman and engineer Gene Ringel

of Chico.

Others in the group will be Glenn County Farm Bureau President Jim Aguiar and Orland Mayor Eleno Marquez. Aguiar also is a member of the association Board of Directors.

There was little discussion by supervisors of the well-drilling plan, which they were aware of before the meeting.

This was in contrast to a question-and-answer view of the proposal during an

Orland City Council meeting Monday night when Freeman, Aguiar, Ringel and the latter's associate, Jon Anderson of Chico, appeared to seek council support of the effort.

The plan proposed by Ringel calls for drilling 30-70 wells 300 feet deep into the Stony Creek Alluvial Fan, largest underground freshwater source in California.

Pumping from 30 wells by May 1 is the goal of the association. The fan extends from near Corning to an area near Willows and eastward from Black Butte Dam (west of Orland) to the Sacramento River.

Glenn and six other northeastern counties have been declared disaster areas by former President Gerald Ford.

With the water storage levels at the association's East Park and Stony Gorge Dams hovering just above the mud puddle stage, only one lean irrigation is upcoming and federal and state forecasters see no promise of rain to raise the levels to any extent.

Association members irrigate 15-20 times during a normal season.

The resolution calling on Brown for leadership was read aloud to supervisors by Moranda, who drew a swift, simple response from Codora Supervisor Keith Hansen.

"I concur," he said.

"It's a system that could be used now and later," said Supervisor Dave Soeth of Clarks Valley. "We're in a desperate situation. It might even be well to send somebody (local representative) to

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determined. Anderson said underground formations southwest of Orland "would be a place to avoid."

The council's main concern was that the proposed wells might endanger five city wells which reach depths of 150-200 feet. Orland city Engineer Ellis Rolls and Ringel agreed that any problem could be worked out and that domestic water would have priority over irrigation.

"Close cooperation," Ringel said, "is the answer to the situation. Support by the Orland community of the move for federal funds and the well-drilling plan is vital."

Edwards said his concern was possible lowering of wells in Orland and in areas outside the city. He said the water to be pumped from new wells would belong to the association and that there was a possibility Southern California districts would want to buy some of it.

Rolls asked what effect the new system would have on wells 50-150 feet deep.

"We have only rough estimates," Anderson said. "In Thermalito Basin areas, a well two miles away from such a system would drop perhaps half a foot."

Anderson said that if the wells weren't drilled, farmers would drill their own wells

that," Ringel said. "This might have to be an ongoing thing. Without wells, crops will be lost."

"We may have to try some innovative ideas as to obtaining federal funds because there is no existing program designed to help out in situations like ours."

Describing the fan, Anderson said it was a "dynamic system, moving through the valley, or downward, and the water is lost."

Ringel pointed out that it is recharged from a vast area "up back of Black Butte Dam." The quality of the water would be the same as Orland city water, he said.

Under the recent DWR proposal to drill 500 deep wells in the Thermalito Basin and the fan, 200,000 acre feet of water would be pumped annually during dry years.

This is a small amount to be taken from a storage of 13 million acre feet, Anderson said. He added that there would be "problems" in the Thermalito Basin because storage is low as the result of soil texture.

He and Ringel expressed indebtedness to the DWR for its data on the fan. "Otherwise," Anderson said, "all we could do would be to go out and punch holes."



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Washington, D.C., in this effort."

Blacet emphasized that "this water will stay here. It will not go southward," he added pointedly.

"It will take many years for losses in the county to be recovered," Hansen noted.

Orland council members were told by Ringel, former engineer for the city, that East Park and Stony Gorge have only 12,000 acre feet in storage.

"Of this, 6,000 acre feet will be lost by evaporation and transmission," Ringel explained.

The fan and the Thermalito Basin in Butte County have a combined capacity of about 13 million acre feet, according to the state Department of Water Resources (DWR), Anderson said.

He and Ringel said it was possible that some of the wells would be drilled to a depth of 600-700 feet.

They would yield 2,000 gallons a minute and would be spaced about one-fourth mile apart on association properties and possibly on public lands and those of some association members.

Exact locations have yet to be

determined. Anderson said underground formations southwest of Orland "would be a place to avoid."

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"We have only rough estimates," Anderson said. "In Thermalito Basin areas, a well two miles away from such a system would drop perhaps half a foot."

Anderson said that if the wells weren't drilled, farmers would drill their own wells deeper. This could mean one deep well on each 40 acres. With 20,000 acres in the Orland Project, the result would be 500 wells.

"However, we're talking about 10 per cent of this," Anderson said.

"Ten per cent?" Rolls said. "No owner would pump 2,000-2,500 gallons a minute 24 hours a day, which is the amount that would be pumped under the proposed new system."

Rolls also wanted to know if the system would be in use during dry years only.

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that," Ringel said. "This might have to be an ongoing thing. Without wells, crops will be lost."

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