

## Scotts Valley has water for sale

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SCOTTS VALLEY -- Here's one you won't see often in thirsty California -- the Scotts Valley Water District has more water than customers.

Well, not water for drinking, or even fighting.

In this case, the district has the capacity to produce more recycled water, used for irrigation, than it has customers.

The agency's recycled water plant can produce up to 1 million gallons per day, said Charles McNiesh, district general manager.

"The problem is, we can't sell all that water," McNiesh said.

The district currently has about 150 acre-feet a year of recycled water use, but projects its capacity to produce that kind of water at up to 535 acre-feet per year.

An acre-foot is generally enough water to fill a football field 1 foot high with water.

The agency has about 25 customers who use the recycled water to irrigate lawns, landscaping and sports fields. Clients include the city of Scotts Valley, Safeway and Longs, among others.

The aim is that using recycled water for yards and landscaping offsets consumption of precious potable water.

One of the new customers in the process of coming online is the Vineyard Homeowners Association. The 106-home association had the piping installed when built, but the district is helping it pay for the back-flow devices needed to use the system with a zero-interest loan. The recycled water will be used to irrigate common areas and front yards.

"This would be a way for us to control the water bill, and at the same time used recycled water," said Rene Keehn, president of the homeowners association.

Residents will save about 10 percent on water for the next 10 years, and about 20 percent after that when the loan is paid.

McNiesh said discussions are under way to add Pasatiempo Golf Club to water the fairways and greens. The golf course now uses potable water from the Santa Cruz Water Department.

"The water quality Scotts Valley produces is sufficient for us to grow turf," said club general manager Jay Walkinshaw. "It can provide a supply of water for the course in the

event of drought conditions."

Under the deal contemplated, McNiesh said there would be an exchange in which Scotts Valley provides recycled water to the course and in turn Santa Cruz provides a like amount of potable water to Scotts Valley.

That benefits the Scotts Valley district in getting more fresh water, the whole idea behind capitalizing on water recycling in the first place.

Scotts Valley Water District gets its water from the Santa Margarita aquifer. The recycling plant began operation in 2002 with the aim of using less water from the aquifer.

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