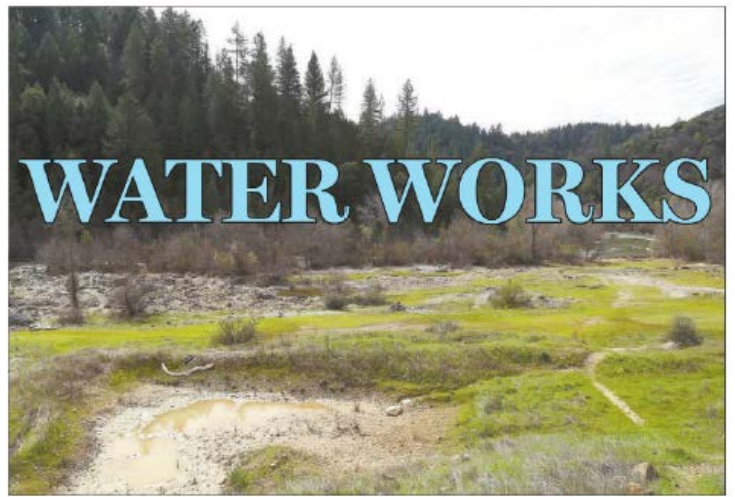


THE UNION

Wednesday, March 2, 2016

FOUNDED IN 1864 TO PRESERVE THE UNION ... ONE AND INSEPARABLE



LAURA BARNETT/OLYMPIA PHOTOGRAPHY

Site for the top of the Centennial Reservoir project off Taylor Crossing and Dog Bar Road in Grass Valley.

Nevada Irrigation District seeks community input on new reservoir

By Alan Riquelmy
Staff Writer

The Centennial Reservoir project is years from having the first shovel hit dirt.

The time to give your opinion on the new reservoir, however, is right now.

The project, with an estimated cost of \$200 to \$300 million, would place a new reservoir on the Bear River, between the Rollins and Combie reservoirs. Expected to hold 110,000 acre-feet of water — or almost 36 billion gallons — the reservoir would be ready by 2023.

"This project is best suited here because it's located between two operational reservoirs," said Rem Scherzinger, general manager of the Nevada Irrigation District.

NID currently is conducting its public scoping for an Environmental Impact Report, a document necessary for the project to advance.

People can submit their written comments through March 17 to NID board secretary Lisa Francis Tassone, 1036 W. Main St., Grass Valley, CA 95945.

Caleb Dardick, executive director of the South Yuba River Citizens League, said a 30-day extension to the public comment period has been requested.

"SYRCL's position is that in a time of record drought and climate change, we need creative solutions to address our local water needs, and big, expensive dams are mostly a thing of

KNOW & GO

What: Public scoping meeting about Centennial Reservoir

When: 6 to 8 p.m. March 9
Where: Grass Valley Holiday Inn Express, 121 Bank St.

What: Second public scoping meeting

When: 6 to 8 p.m. March 10
Where: Forest Lake Christian High School, 12515 Combie Road

the past," Dardick said in an email. "That's why we are focused on water conservation and restoring headwater forests and meadows, which act like a sponge to hold clean water.

"Although SYRCL does not yet have a formal position on Centennial Dam, we are very concerned about it and have many questions about its potential negative impacts on the Yuba River," Dardick also states.

People who want to give their comments in person have two chances in March.

A public meeting is scheduled from 6 to 8 p.m. March 9 at the Grass Valley Holiday Inn Express, 121 Bank St. A second meeting is from 6 to 8 p.m. March 10 at Forest Lake Christian High School, 12515 Combie Road, in South County.

"It informs the EIR process," Scherzinger said of public input.

Comments are compiled into the EIR, which must be approved by the NID board before construction



SUBMITTED BY NEVADA IRRIGATION DISTRICT

This is what the Centennial Reservoir is projected to look like when completed.

begins. A board vote is 18 months to two years away.

"That's when the rubber meets the road," Scherzinger said.

Project funding will come from the district's hydroelectric revenues. NID makes money from selling energy, which will help pay for the reservoir. Other funding will come from state water bonds and potentially a local bond issue from the district itself.

The reservoir and surrounding land would encompass over 1,000 acres, Scherzinger said. NID documents state over 60 percent of that land is publicly owned.

According to Scherzinger, some property owners have approached NID asking if the district would buy their land for the project.

"Some people see this as

NID

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a huge benefit for them," he added.

Scherzinger doesn't yet know if the district will need to use eminent domain to acquire property for the reservoir, though he called it a possibility in any project.

Officials won't know if eminent domain is needed until after the EIR's approval.

"That's not what the district would prefer," Scherzinger said.

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