

Ashley Overhouse & Melinda Booth: A new beginning for NID

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Well, it's been a rough few years. Challenging a massive infrastructure project backed by an agency essential to life in Nevada County wasn't easy.

As Nevada Irrigation District (NID) pushed the Centennial Dam project forward starting in 2014, the South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL), supported by a group known as the Dam Watchdogs, stood up for the integrity of our community and formally opposed the dam.

When it came to Centennial, NID couldn't justify the need nor provide a transparent funding plan. NID wasted thousands of staff hours and millions of dollars on a project that provided no public benefit for the Yuba and Bear watersheds. Along the way the District lost public trust and its financial reserves, while neglecting the aging infrastructure under its care. Though it will never get back the \$14 million spent on this boondoggle, NID now has a chance to find 21st century solutions for a sustainable water future.

On May 29, NID's general manager, Remleh Scherzinger, resigned. In response, NID appointed Greg Jones on June 11 as the interim general manager and formed an ad hoc committee to begin the search for a new GM.

While NID transitions to new leadership and adapts to the impacts of the COVID-19 emergency, it has the opportunity to thoroughly investigate the current fiscal health of the organization with a District-wide audit. The NID Board needs to know where they stand objectively in order to move beyond the Centennial Dam project and truly evaluate and prioritize critical watershed needs.

NID has a long history of providing essential services to Nevada County. SYRCL wants to see NID transition into a 21st century water purveyor and make decisions that reflect the positivity of their own newly revised mission statement “[t]he District will provide a dependable, quality water supply; continue to be good stewards of the watersheds, while conserving the available resources in our care.”

That is a mission SYRCL can stand behind. Despite our recent differences, SYRCL intends to work with and support NID moving forward wherever possible. We look forward to a new chapter for our community. One of transparency, stewardship, and fiscal responsibility.

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