

# VSPUD board considers new sewer plant

By Nick Baptista / The Valley Springs News / July 22, 2015

A public hearing concerning a proposal to relocate the Valley Springs Public Utility District's wastewater treatment plant is scheduled for 6 p.m. Wednesday, July 22 at the district office, 150 Sequoia Ave.

The proposed project includes modification to the existing Valley Springs wastewater treatment plant off State Route 12/26 next to the Valley Oaks Center, installation of approximately 1.5 miles of pipeline along public roads, and construction of a new treatment plant and associated facilities approximately one mile north of the Valley Springs on the Coe property off Paloma Road.

The district says the purpose of the proposed project is to reduce the risk of flooding and eliminate the potential for effluent spills into Cosgrove Creek at the existing treatment plant, reduce degradation and pollution of the shallow groundwater, and minimize the potential for nuisance odors.

The existing treatment plant was designed in the 1950s, according to VSPUD General Manager Mike Fischer, and is out of compliance with some modern wastewater treatment standards.

The district is seeking a \$6 million government grant and \$2.8 million in a low-interest U.S. Department of Agriculture loan to finance the project.

Construction is expected to last approximately a year and tentatively planned to begin in 2017 with completion in 2018.

The district's Board of Directors at Wednesday's meeting will consider comments received regarding the project's environmental document, certify the environmental document and mitigated negative declaration, and approve the project.

No significant environmental impacts are anticipated with the project, the initial study has determined.

However, there is a public opposition to the proposed project.

Nearby Watertown Road residents Joe and Hillary Bechelli submitted an 18-page letter in opposition saying, "We are disappointed in the total lack of transparency and the obvious back-door politics which run rampant through this project. The only warning some of us could have received about this project was from the VSPUD board's agendas, but they failed to notify the ratepayers or their "new" neighbors about this plan to build a sewer plant two miles away and next to existing homes."

In addition, the Bechellis' letter says the environmental report "completely fails to point out that the major source of VSPUD drinking water comes from well located immediately downstream from the proposed sewage plant."