

## LA CONTENTA DENIED NEW HOGAN WATER

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SAN ANDREAS - A judge has denied a request by La Contenta Golf Course to force Calaveras County Water District to supply the course with raw water from New Hogan Lake.

Instead, operators of the lush 18-hole course near Valley Springs are under pressure to keep the greens green with recycled water provided by a nearby sewage treatment plant.

In his ruling last week, Judge John E. Martin said that he never got an answer to the question, "Why can't the golf course lengthen its irrigation cycle to maximize use of the recycled water?"

Water district officials said La Contenta has been irrigating only four hours each night, and has been tapping into the high-quality water from Hogan to allow higher flows during that time. District officials say they want the course to use all recycled water by taking a lower flow of only recycled water and spreading it over nine hours.

The water district and the golf course both face possible fines if the course fails to use enough recycled water. That's because storage ponds at the sewage plant are too full and could spill into a creek leading to Stockton's drinking water supply next winter if they are not drained now during the irrigation season.

On Monday, La Contenta Director of Golf Marty Davis said the irrigation cycle already is extended. "We always water for nine hours," Davis said.

Water district officials, however, say that monitors on pipes flowing to La Contenta give them detailed information on the timing and volume of water flows.

"The fact that they have been doing it all along is not accurate," said Joone Lopez, the water district's general manager.

The dispute between the golf course and the water district hit a new level of intensity in late May when the district turned off the raw water supply to La Contenta. Lopez said the goal was to prompt course managers to use more recycled water.

Over the following month, La Contenta crews drained golf course ponds that had stored lake water, rather than the recycled water ponds at the sewage plant. Neighbors complained as mud pits began to dominate their once-scenic vistas, and course owners went to court and obtained a temporary injunction ordering the raw water supply turned back on.

By then, the water district said it had evidence that when La Contenta staff wanted, they could take more of the recycled water. "There was a couple of times after we turned off the Hogan water that they started to use more (recycled) water," Lopez said.

On July 19, La Contenta representatives went to court to ask Judge Martin to keep the injunction in place. Since then, Lopez said, La Contenta has been expanding its irrigation hours.

"They have started to expand the watering window, which we are glad to see," Lopez said.

The water district has offered to keep the raw water supply open for La Contenta as long as the course also makes maximum use of recycled water.

Lopez said Monday that for now the district is pleased with the golf course's progress, and has no immediate plan to turn off the raw water supply.

"As long as they do it, there's no issue," Lopez said.

If that changes, however, the raw water supply could again be shut off.

"We are hoping that this finally gets them to do what they need to do," Lopez said. "We will continue to monitor and see how they do."

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