

## SUBDIVISION WEIGHS PLAN TO SOLVE WATER WOES

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VALLEY SPRINGS - If Mabelle Moore wakes up in the middle of the night and hears a toilet running, her heart sinks.

It means the water tank at her family home on DaLee Road in the Rancho Calaveras subdivision south of Valley Springs may soon be empty.

And an empty tank means spending extra hours the next day trucking water from a filling station.

"It's like being an old pioneer woman," said Moore, 39, a mother of four who also operates a child care business. "It's a constant pressure on your mind of having water for your children."

Moore is not alone. She lives in a section of the Rancho Calaveras housing subdivision where wells are failing or produce water so tainted with iron and other minerals that it can't be used for drinking or washing laundry.

And while other parts of Rancho Calaveras in all directions have water utility service, the 3- and 4-acre lots here don't.

Now, as more wells fail, Calaveras County Water District officials are surveying the owners of 59 lots in the area to see if they are ready to pony up the estimated \$25,000 to \$30,000 per lot needed to install water lines here. Though all the results are not yet in, initial responses to the survey have been overwhelmingly positive, said Bill Perley, director of operations for the water district.

"We've only gotten one no," Perley said.

That may be a reflection of the growing hardship of life in a residential neighborhood without reliable and drinkable water.

Laurie Matsuoka, 47, said the water has been a problem since she moved into her home on Cassidy Road 10 years ago.

"It was brown and disgusting," she said of her first look at the well water in her home's toilets. "When you let it sit for a while, there will be brown specks on the bottom."

Matsuoka, like Moore, said she goes to a laundromat to do laundry.

Neighbors here can trade stories of spending thousands, even tens of thousands of dollars on various technologies to filter and soften their well water.

Don Powlesland, who retired after a career as a components engineer for United Airlines, maintains a small water treatment system that includes filters and an ozonator to help precipitate out the iron.

Although his well provides him enough water, Powlesland favors bringing a water line to the area.

"The groundwater is not going to support the people," Powlesland said.

Moore, meanwhile, said that since her well failed two years ago, several of her immediate neighbors have also had their wells go dry. "It's moving down the street."

And most of her immediate neighbors are raising children, she said.

"We don't water anything outside," Moore said. "The cats are lucky they get any water. My kids know they can't take a bath. We do military showers."

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