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**For immediate release**

**August 24, 2009**

## **Board approves design work for small hydropower projects**

### **Facility removal and site restoration okayed for Silver Lake resort**

**Placerville, CA. . . .** The El Dorado Irrigation District board of directors has given the okay to include two small hydropower projects in EID's 2009 – 2013 capital improvement program and has authorized funding for the design phase of the projects. The district will seek state certification of the projects as "clean" renewable energy.

"When the projects go on line in 2011, they will immediately generate revenue," emphasized Cindy Megerdigian, EID's engineering manager for water and hydropower, at the August 24 board meeting. "We expect to net at least \$400,000 a year from the two projects combined, and they will keep generating clean power and revenue long after their payback periods end."

The projects were identified during a year-long study in conjunction with the El Dorado County Water Agency to seek hydroelectric power generation opportunities in the county. While several other potential projects were also on the list, district staff recommended only two for funding—the Pleasant Oak Main at Reservoir 7 and the El Dorado Main 2 at Reservoir 3. "In looking at financing costs, regulatory requirements, and other criteria, it became clear these two projects are the most viable," Megerdigian said.

Board president George Wheeldon compared the projects to the district's solar photovoltaic system, which began generating energy and saving electricity costs as soon as it went on line. "It seems to me that these two hydropower projects are much the same, with relatively short payback periods," he said. Board vice president John Fraser noted that district customers are likely to support the investment.

The projects will be designed to take advantage of existing water flows and infrastructure at pressure reducing stations at the two reservoirs. In essence, the projects—consisting of in-conduit generators, concrete vaults, and a series of valves to change the direction of water flows—will capture energy that is currently dissipated and send it to Pacific Gas and Electric Company's grid.

PG&E is offering "feed-in tariffs" for projects such as the two that the district is proposing. Once criteria are met, including state certification of clean power, PG&E will guarantee the district a price for energy produced over 20 years. When the projects operate during PG&E's peak-use periods, that price can double. "Our revenue estimates include what we expect from the projects during non-peak and peak times," Megerdigian said.

District staff will collaborate with the consulting firm of Domenichelli and Associates throughout the design phase. "The firm worked on the joint district and water agency study of the county's hydropower opportunities and they are very familiar with our water and hydropower facilities and these two projects," Megerdigian said.

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## Silver Lake resort work to move ahead

The board unanimously awarded Evans Brothers Inc. a contract to tear down deteriorated buildings and a trailer, clean up hazardous materials, and improve the parking facilities in the boat launch area of the Silver Lake resort, formerly known as Kay's Resort. The project will begin September 9 and is scheduled for completion on October 15.

"We inherited the resort when ownership of the Project 184 hydropower generation system was transferred to the district in 1999," said EID associate engineer Daryl Noel. "When the concession lease expired in September 2006, we conducted numerous site investigations and learned that most of the structures are unsound and that lead and petroleum hydrocarbons exist within the soil in small, isolated areas of the resort. We've fixed some of those problems and other safety concerns, but much remains to be done."

Noel listed nine structures that will be demolished, including the 4,200 square-foot main resort building that contains 13,500 square feet of asbestos-containing material in the linoleum, drywall, and wall texture. The boat launch at the resort will be closed for the two to three days that it will take to safely demolish the main building.

Noel said soils contaminated by petroleum hydrocarbons will be removed and properly disposed of. "However, soils contaminated with lead from the garbage burial pit will not require removal," he explained. "The lead is eight feet under the land surface and is stable. The Amador County Environmental Health Department will allow the soil to stay in place as long as we file a deed restriction to prevent future activity at the site."

Noel also said that the boathouse will be kept intact at the request of Amador County because it fits with the ambience of the Highway 88 scenic corridor. "With that in mind, we're also moving the portable toilets and dumpsters and screening them with wood siding salvaged from the old buildings to keep an historical feel to the place," he added.

When the demolition work is finished, the contractor will rough grade the area and chip seal part of it where the main building now stands. This will create a new parking area with parking spaces for nine more boats, three more passenger vehicles, and one more handicap vehicle.

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