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New 100-acre lake for recycled water proposed in Hemet

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07:25 AM PDT on Wednesday, August 12, 2009

By MICHAEL PERRAULT
The Press-Enterprise

HEMET - Two water districts and the city of Hemet are considering plans to create a nearly 100-acre lake with recycled water about a half-mile east of the vast Diamond Valley Lake freshwater reservoir.

The proposed lake would hold about 1,700 acre-feet of recycled water, enough to supply about 3,400 households during a year, said Behrooz Mortazavi, assistant general manager of resource development for Eastern Municipal Water District.

Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, which owns the 4,500-acre Diamond Valley Lake, has collaborated with Eastern Municipal and Hemet officials on a preliminary study. The proposed lake is on city land and near existing water district pipelines.

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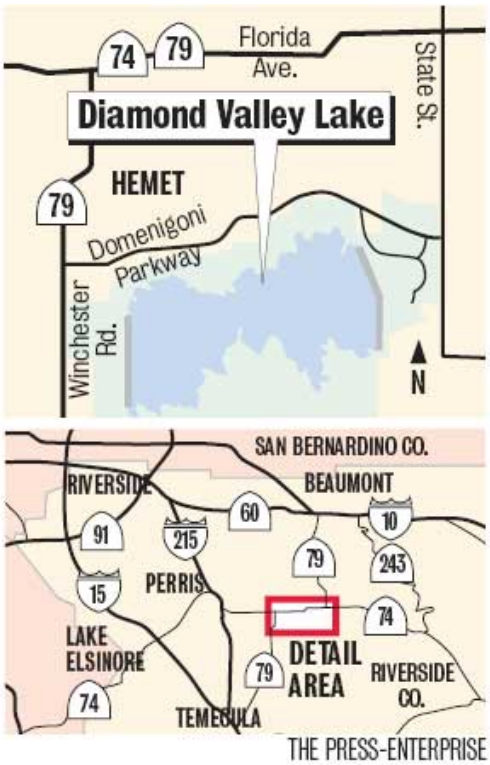

Mortazavi laid out plans to Hemet City Council members Tuesday morning in hopes of gaining their support for a two-year, $1 million demonstration project.

If Hemet officials give the OK, an area next to Diamond Valley Lake would be filled with recycled water. If the demonstration lake proves cost-effective and environmentally sound, it could become permanent and one day supply recycled water to nearby golf courses and parks and for other needs during dry summer months.

Hemet Public Works Director Mike Gow said the goal is to make the best use of recycled water in the San Jacinto Valley and increase storage capacity, particularly during the winter.

Officials with the water districts -- which will foot the bill for the demonstration project -- would like to get it up and running by November to begin storing recycled water that accumulates during the winter.

Mayor Eric McBride and other council members said they want assurances the project will offer decent, long-term recreational opportunities before they agree to sign an agreement with the water districts.

"I think this is just giving our chips away to (Metropolitan Water District)," Councilman Jim Foreman said, noting that previous promises of recreational amenities at Diamond Valley Lake have never materialized.

Councilwoman Robin Lowe said she wants the city to continue "serious negotiations" with the hope the project could take on a broader scope and provide more recreational features.

Initial plans call for as much as 70 acres of the lake to be used for recreational activities such as boating and fishing. Another 30 acres, possibly divided and filled with potable water, may be used for water skiing or swimming.

"The concept and its implementation need to be refined," Mortazavi said.

Another option being considered is a 70-acre lake with recycled water on the west side of Diamond Valley Lake.

If the demonstration lake proves a viable long-term resource, the water districts eventually expect to invest more than $60 million on pipelines and other equipment, Mortazavi said.

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