



2011-2012
Madera County Grand Jury
Final Report
Bass Lake Sewage Treatment Plant

**2011-2012
Madera County Grand Jury
Final Report
Bass Lake Sewage Treatment Plant**

Introduction:

On December 15, 2011, the Grand Jury toured the Bass Lake Sewage Treatment Plant located at 40601 Road 274, Bass Lake. The plant provides sewer service to about 978 residential and commercial connections. Its current configuration has the capacity to accommodate up to 300 additional connections. The plant was built in 1974 and consists of:

- a collection system with 16 raw sewage pumping stations;
- a treatment process that removes sludge (solids);
- a sodium hypochlorite tank for water treatment;
- a station for pumping treated water into a ponding basin;
- a boost pumping station to move treated water to a dispersal site; and
- a spray field to disperse the treated water.

Part of the collection system is buried in the lakebed and submersed when the lake level is up. The treatment plant and high use raw sewage pumping stations have generator backup. Approximately 100 alarm settings are monitored continuously, and auto dialers call in alarm conditions as they occur.

The treatment plant is maintained by a crew of 5 utility workers employed by the Special Districts Division of the County Engineering Department, under the umbrella of the Resource Management Agency. This work crew additionally maintains 5 sewer treatment plants and 6 potable water systems of small maintenance districts for which the County has assumed responsibility.

Findings:

1. The Grand Jury found that the facility was clean and well maintained.
2. The Grand Jury found that the required reclaimed water quality tests are conducted by a state certified laboratory in Fresno.
3. The Grand Jury found that the heavy equipment assigned to the facility is old but functional.
4. The Grand Jury found that the heavy and miscellaneous equipment is serviced by the plant employees.
5. The Grand Jury found that the assigned light vehicles are delivered to and serviced by the Madera County Central Garage.

6. The Grand Jury found that plant operators are required to have current state certifications.
 - a. Operator certifications are posted in the plant office.
 - b. The plant supervisor monitors the certification of the operators.
7. The Grand Jury found that sodium hypochlorite is delivered to the plant by a vendor who is responsible for the storage tank and the required spill containment system.
8. The Grand Jury found that the plant is not utilizing the County's formal Safety and First Aid Program.
9. The Grand Jury found that the sludge removed through the treatment process is stored on the ground and covered with a large tarp.
 - a. The sludge is subjected to moisture seeping under the tarp.
 - b. Storage of the sludge on the ground subjects the ground water to possible contamination.

Conclusions:

1. The Grand Jury concluded that there may be advantages to having the light vehicles maintained in the Oakhurst area.
2. The Grand Jury concluded that failure to utilize the County's Safety and First Aid Program increases County liability exposure.
3. The Grand Jury concluded that the current method of sludge storage is potentially hazardous.

Recommendations:

1. The Grand Jury recommends that the County consider establishing a maintenance program to service light vehicles in the Oakhurst area.
2. The Grand Jury recommends that the County implement and monitor its existing Safety and First Aid Program.
3. The Grand Jury recommends that a structure with a roof, cement floor and stub walls be constructed for sludge storage to prevent ground water contamination.

Respondent: written response required pursuant to PC 933(c)

Madera County Board of Supervisors
200 W. Fourth St.
Madera, CA 93637

Informational: response optional

Madera County Resource Management Agency
Director
2037 W. Cleveland Ave.
Madera, CA 93637

Madera County Resource Management Agency
County Engineer
2037 W. Cleveland Ave.
Madera, CA 93637

Madera County Resource Management Agency
Special Districts Division Manager
2037 W. Cleveland Ave.
Madera, CA 93637