

Squaw studies water; incorporation moves forward

With Squaw Valley wanting to dramatically expand its commercial and recreation offerings at the base area, the availability of water is a concern.

Last week the Squaw Valley Public Services District released the draft of the water supply assessment for the valley. The study is designed to look at how much water the project would use, what is available and how to meet future demand in dry and wet years.

“The total projected water demand represents a 43 percent increase over the average annual volume of 843 [acre-feet per year] currently used in the Olympic Valley, and a 47 percent increase over the current annual average groundwater,” the report states.

The Olympic Valley area uses groundwater. Today, SVPSD supplies 1,569 residential connections and 20 large commercial entities from four wells.

In coming up with data, the study looked at current use, and projected use for the project in addition to other proposed projects and needs for snowmaking. The findings are that four wells are needed for the Squaw expansion and two for other projects.

The state water code triggers this type of analysis based on the size of a project. On the 94 acres proposed for development, thousands of lodging units in the form of condos and hotels are likely, in addition to retail, a mountain adventure center and other components.

“We are pleased with and confident in the thoroughness of the PSD and their water resource experts’ analysis of the aquifer

in the valley,” Andy Wirth, president and CEO of Squaw Valley Ski Holdings, said in a statement. “We look forward to the county issuing the EIR as part of the required CEQA process, giving everyone the ability to ask thoughtful questions and provide meaningful comments.”

Here is a copy of the 175-page document.

But all the proposed development is the overriding reason a group of Olympic Valley residents wants to incorporate. They want more of a say in what goes on instead of letting Placer County supervisors in Auburn dictate the rules.

They have gone to Placer County Local Agency Formation Commission seeking to be incorporated. LAFCo has selected Folsom-based Citygate Associates Inc. to perform the comprehensive fiscal analysis (CFA) for the town of Olympic Valley.

“We are excited to take the next step towards incorporation,” Fred Ilfeld, Incorporate Olympic Valley chairman, said in a statement. “We expect the CFA to show if whether or not the new town is financially viable. We are optimistic the analysis will prove positive for the prospect of incorporation.”

– Lake Tahoe News staff report