

# Mineral County Water District October 2021

38292 Scenic Avenue Mineral, CA 96063-0206

## Dixie Fire Threatens Mineral

On Tuesday, August 17<sup>th</sup>, Mineral residents were ordered to evacuate due to wildfire for the first time. Several factors combined to make the Dixie Fire a real threat to Mineral and Mill Creek: gusty east winds of up to 30 mph; plentiful, tinder-dry fire fuels; and a sinking water table.

## The Drought Factor

Over the last 10 years, sub-average precipitation levels have hit many North State basins, ours included, very hard. Hundreds of inches of precipitation deficit have accumulated. The seemingly endless drought puts the District at a disadvantage when wildfire threatens.

The Board wishes to thank all of those who conserved water as the Dixie Fire approached Mineral. This helped keep supplies up when needed most and took some pressure off of General Manager John Frehse, who had to contend with multiple issues.

On August 5th, State Water Resource Control Board (SWRCB) advised Frehse to post a Boil Water order in case he had to leave. He also replaced the yellow flags at each subdivision entrance with red ones, indicating a Stage 3 Drought Alert. Frehse did not end up leaving town, and once the worst of the fire danger had passed, the yellow flags went back up, indicating that customers could once again use up to 800 ft<sup>3</sup>/month.

To receive a PDF of the District's most current Drought Contingency Plan via email, contact the Office. To read the plan, visit the website.

## Annual Audit Delayed

Robert Johnson of Citrus Heights, CA, served as MCWD's auditor for several years. Sadly, just before he was scheduled to do the FY 2019-20 audit last year, he passed away. MCWD sends its sincere condolences to Robert's friends and family. He was a skilled auditor and great human being. This event compounded the District's already existing difficulty in getting

the audit performed, due to Covid-19 restrictions, which created a backlog for many auditors.

The new auditor, Pehling & Pehling of Truckee, CA, who was scheduled to do the audit August 17<sup>th</sup>, is in process of being re-scheduled, due to the Dixie Fire evacuation.

## New Policy: Evacuation Protocol

In response to news about water district customers leaving sprinklers running after they evacuated from the Caldor Fire, the Board has adopted the following policy at its meeting on September 13, 2021:

**Whereas**, the District has adopted a set of guidelines making clear that the use of sprinklers and/or hoses being left running upon departure of premises is prohibited during an evacuation due to a fire.

**Whereas**, the District authorizes any Board member, employee or representative of MCWD, as well as members of the local Volunteer Fire Department or representative thereof, to turn off any water sprinklers or hoses being left running on any property after the premises have been vacated during an evacuation due to fire. If you have comments/suggestions on the new policy, please let us know.

## Emergency Communications

While Mineral-Mill Creek residents faced evacuation, they were also dealing with intermittent landline, internet, and cell service. This meant that concerned neighbors had to physically check on each other's well-being and evacuation status.

MCWD's website could not be updated, due to the internet service outage. Communication fell to a few individuals who helped keep others informed and safe. We thank you!

## Mi'kel Le Master Joins Board

Mi'kel Le Master replaced Steve Buckley on the Board in May. Mi'kel is fairly new to Mineral and enjoys meeting and interacting with members

of the community. Last year, he completed the training required to join Mineral's Volunteer Fire Department. His 16-year-old son, Calyx, enjoys computer gaming and yard work.

## Gale Gilbert Leaving the Board

At last month's Board meeting, long-time MCWD Vice-President Gale Gilbert turned in his resignation after more than twelve years of service. Gilbert joined the Board in March 2009 and served under Presidents Shorty McCullough, Michael Porter, and current President Tim Kask.

Gilbert, who is a retired career California Highway Patrol officer, consistently brought strong leadership, good common sense, and practical suggestions to the table. He will be greatly missed at meetings.

## Welcome to the Board

We would like everyone to welcome our newest Board member Lefty McClellan.

## Mineral County Water District

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