



Seaside Pilot Injection Well Project Under Way

In May 1998, District staff successfully injected 20 acre-feet of water into the Seaside groundwater basin during a preliminary test to determine the feasibility of utilizing the Seaside basin to store water from the Carmel River during the winter months. Ultimately, if injection proves successful, 1,700 to 2,080 acre-feet of Carmel River water stored in the Seaside basin could be released throughout the Cal-Am system in the summer months when reliance on the Seaside aquifer increases and withdrawals from the Carmel River must decrease.

Construction of the District's pilot-scale injection well was completed in late March 1998. In April, the SWRCB issued a temporary water rights permit that allowed the District to withdraw water from the Carmel River for injection testing purposes. The project was in operation between May 12 and May 31, 1998, when the permit expired. Results from the initial test period were encouraging. In December 1998, the SWRCB issued the District a temporary permit to undertake Phase II of the project in 1999 and inject excess, available Carmel River flows into the Seaside basin for a more extended period of time.

In the near term, this project could enable injection of additional water into the Seaside basin while allowing Cal-Am to remain within State Order 95-10 production limits on withdrawals from the Carmel River basin. If a new dam or large seawater desalination plant were constructed, production from a full-scale injection/recovery project could provide additional water for new construction and remodel projects.

The injection/recovery concept is well suited to the Monterey Peninsula area. Water storage in the Carmel River basin is severely limited, so excess water from the Carmel River flows to the ocean during the winter months. Using the Seaside basin to store excess Carmel River flow allows increased utilization of the Seaside basin without causing environmental damage. The excess flows taken from the Carmel River are allowed under the District's temporary water rights permit; they are not included in Cal-Am's yearly production that is limited by State Order 95-10.

Tom Lindberg conducting routine maintenance at the Seaside Injection/Recovery Project well site. Approximately 20 acre-feet of water was injected into the Seaside Basin during the preliminary test phase in 1998. It may be possible to inject 1,700 acre-feet of excess winter flows from the Carmel River into the Seaside basin. The water could be stored there for use during the dry summer months.