

# Summary Meeting Royal Gorge re: water 5/24/07

This summary was prepared from notes taken during the meeting. brackets [] are additions not stated by participants. Although the notes were not verbatim, they were done in the dialogue form shown here. These notes should help those who did not attend understand what did happen.

**“Our desire is to work closely...to develop a solid plan to meet Royal Gorge’s water needs while at the same time benefiting existing SLCWD customers and ensuring that the lakes remain the recreational jewel of the Serene Lakes community.”**

Letter from Royal Gorge to SLCWD president Wade Freedle 5/17/07

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## **Attendees:**

SLPOA, DSAA, SYRCL, Sierra Watch, North Fork American River Alliance

**Mike Livak:** Royal Gorge has not settled on any one option for water.

They need to consult the various districts.

Water is an important issue.

Royal Gorge wants to continue their “open approach” to dealing with the public.

They are estimating 237 gallons/day per house and 138 gallons /day per condo.

This compares to current Serene Lakes usage of 137/day per house.

There are more options listed for water sources than are listed in the documents so far supplied. For example all of answers about ground water have not been answered even though their four test wells turned up. They have also used an old SLCWD study by McGuire and Sons that studied dredging the lakes to accommodate a Serene Lakes build out of up to 4000 units.

The current proposal for dredging the lake would yield an additional 60 AF and that coupled with drawing the lake down and additional two feet will yield another 60 AF.

Mr. Livak also said that dropping the lake level will actually increase the surface area. [This assumes that currently the lake bottom is exposed at each year’s lowest water level July-February. This must also mean they want to dredge the edges.]

Add wells, dredging, and capturing the lake overflow and Royal Gorge will develop 200% of the proposed development’s needs.

There is still more data to collect and more discussions to have with various boards.

**CDM:** the mandate from Royal Gorge was  
to be conservative in the development of figures  
conservative in draw down of the lakes  
not to reduce the lake footprints  
develop options for water sources that would work with the community.  
they need to collect more hydrological data on the area  
needs to collect the hydrologic record of the area  
learn how the lake recharges  
learn about the historical lake levels  
they are now measuring the spillover from the dam  
need to study the yield of the Serene Lakes basin  
if they dredge they will need  
bathymetric survey  
a group from Truckee has been engaged to do so in a couple of weeks  
if there is excavation they need to know the amount of sediment vs. bedrock  
this will be done via seismic profile  
need to investigate wells as a source more completely.  
long term yield? analysis for treatment.

**Gene Bowles:** the water board has not really thought about dredging the lake

**Blake Tresan:** just the vegetation

**Livak:** they have no idea how dredging will be done  
they don't know exactly where the dredging would be – need bathymetric survey and  
then see where the best volume will come from.

**Cliff Busby:** What about the proposal to raise the dam on Van Norden?

**Livak:** it is one option that “may merit further consideration.” The options listed are the “most obvious options.... contained in the memo.” Van Norden is off the list for now.

**Cliff Busby:** If you look at all of the options on the list and listed those that were not feasible why didn't you list Van Norden?

**Livak:** it's a water rights issue. They need both technically feasible and water rights feasible sources.

**CDM:** There are no water rights available in Van Norden.  
It's a different watershed.  
it's too complicated from a water rights perspective.

**Cliff Busby:** is Lake Angela the same problem?

**CDM:** yes – out of basin transfer is the same problem.  
DSPUD has rights to that water.  
part of Royal Gorge's project falls in the DSPUD service area.

**Livak:** SLCWD has substantial unused rights.  
SLCWD has the ability to deliver  
in Nevada County DSPUD has water and capacity for that part of the development.

**CDM:** surface water rights differ from ground water rights. Ground water does not need permits and it can be transferred out of the watershed.  
Counties can pass ordinances however, not on the ground water but on tangential issues.  
there are no specific laws that would prevent ground water from being shipped from Van Norden to Serene Lakes.

**NFARA:** are there any specific requirements for flows into Serena Creek.

**CDM:** we've consulted and found no requirements.

**DSAA:** what's the status of water at Rainbow?

**Livak:** I don't know.... that's Neil Erasmus.

**DSAA:** why not use that as a water source?

**Livak:** it's 18 miles away and there is not enough volume.

Maybe the McGuire and Sons bathymetric Serene Lakes survey was not accurate.

**Gene Bowles:** if the connection between the lakes goes dry how does that affect water being pulled out for drinking?

**CDM:** then dredging might be needed to keep the connection between the lakes open.  
the diagrams don't really show the connection between the lakes going dry.

**Blake Tresan:** maintaining the surface area is irrelevant to draw down. [i.e. the lakes will still go up and down even as the surface area is maintained.]

**CDM:** increased capacity from 2/3 storage of excess water and 1/3 from excavation.  
More information is needed.

**Blake Tresan:** the proposed occupancy at 46% may be unrealistic. You can't stop the people at 46%. You need to assume you have an adequate supply for 100% or close to that.

**Blake Tresan:** then there's Serene Lakes occupancy and Serene Lakes will need another 300 AF at build-out and possible increased occupancy [as more people live there full time.]  
So with RG and Serene Lakes at build-out another 500 AF will be needed so the draw down will be more like 6 feet than 2 feet. The water district will have trouble under that scenario.

**Livak:** 46% is a good start.

they will analyze different scenarios.

we need to lay out demand and scenarios.

we will analyze different occupancy scenarios.

Royal Gorge is using different occupancy scenarios.

**Blake Tresan:** What if there are a few years of low precipitation? What will the cumulative effects of continual draw down be?

**Livak:** we agree.

More occupancy will mean more draw down.

Right now identified sources will yield 200% of projected demand.

**Blake Tresan:** you can't think about SLCWD wells. Those are backups for emergencies not to be considered as primary water sources.

**CDM:** what about creating redundancy? [storage for emergencies]

**Blake Tresan:** that's not safe.

**NFARA:** snow is now the source for water.

what will happen given climate change?

don't rely on average figures because that's good for average and above average years but doesn't work for below average years. We must think in terms of what will happen in bad not average/good years.

**Livak:** we will evaluate various scenarios.

**CDM:** The County will check this out including the needs of Serene Lakes now as well as in the future.

**Gene Bowles:** that's Jones and Stokes

SLCWD will analyze needs at build out and as the community changes [more full

time residents.]

**DSAA:** where do the water rights [figures] come from?

**Blake Tresan:** who knows... it's a 1960's permit but how was the number arrived at?

**CDM:** maybe a combination of stored and overflow calculations.

**Livak:** the permit says it's for serving several thousand more units.

**DSAA:** lots of numbers on the Summit are out of date.

maybe what can be supplied does not equal the amount of water rights.

**NFARA:** lots of water in California is over allocated.

**CDM:** well you're at the top.

**Blake Tresan:** dredging vs. surface area.

recreation will be impacted even if the surface area is maintained. For example you may have the same surface area as when swimming was possible at 5 feet of depth, but when it's 2 feet in depth recreation will be impacted.

**Livak:** we will need a bathymetric survey.

**Cliff Busby:** how is that done?

**CDM:** sonar/radar

**NFARA:** what's the dam size?

**Jason Rainey:** downstream people are analyzing climate change related to usage.

Will Royal Gorge consider climate change?

**CDM:** there are no requirements to do that.

Snow level may go from 4500' to 6500' by 2050 or so so runoffs will be earlier in the season.

Climate change is about storage not precipitation.

**CDM:** storage is rather small in Van Norden compared to precipitation.

the problem is the same in Serene Lakes [advocating more storage in Serene Lakes and so greater draw down.]

**NFARA:** Serene Lakes is not in the same watershed as Van Norden. There is more draining into Van Norden.

**Livak:** we will develop a drainage report:

how much water comes from where?

**Cliff Busby:** how do you factor in increased residency of the current development and not just the proposed Royal Gorge development?

**CDM:** we will analyze now and for the future.

Jones and Stokes will do that for SLCWD

that will coordinate with the Royal Gorge studies.

**Blake Tresan:** the lack camp lakes.

**Livak:** that drains into the Yuba.

**NFARA:** that goes to Palisades.

**Livak:** that's right [sic]

**Blake Tresan:** the lakes size vs. recreational usage.

**Livak:** that will be a different lake. The east lake will be the reservoir the west lake [in Lake Camp] will be recreational.

**Cliff Busby:** can anyone dig a lake? What rules apply?

**CDM:** division of safety of dams.

state water board to fill the reservoirs

use Serene Lakes to store water for those Lake Camp lakes.

**Livak:** it would all be CEQA, County grading permits

**NFARA:** so details about the dams?

**Livak:** they won't be dams. impoundments is a better term.

**Livak:** we won't displace wetlands.

**Cliff Busby:** if they won't be dams what will they be?

**Livak:** dig a hole, utilize a current depression

that's different from a "Hoover Dam type of thing."

impoundment is a more accurate term in this example.

**Cliff Busby:** a hole or a berm.

**Livak:** there's a continuum... a combination of both cut and fill but I'm not a design person.

**Jack Schwartz:** The east lake is a reservoir.

**Livak:** this is not a plan yet. there's still more to do... we are just doing this because the water district wanted information ahead of time.

**Jack Schwartz:** if it's in the SLCWD area, who owns the water in the new lakes?

**Livak:** store the overflow water from Serene Lakes in the east lake. Who owns it? I don't know.

**DSAA:** Could you move the Serene Lakes water to the east lake via a pipe?

**CDM:** that's an option.

**NFARA:** where does the dredging material go?

**Livak:** the EIR will examine dredging alternatives.

**Blake Tresan:** who will look at more sources for groundwater?

**Livak:** in a few weeks a company in Truckee

4 sites last year developed no supplies

No further questions?

If anyone heard any odd things today, any egregious things then confirm them with us so the "correct facts get out to the folks."

**Blake Tresan:** will there be follow up reports on coming studies?

**Livak:** we need to talk to the two districts and then refine the description of preferred alternatives for water supply.

AB 610 221 requires validation of water supplies under different scenarios.

**CDM:** that's usually done at the time of the EIR.