

Public Meeting
Crystal Geysler Roxane Water Quality Investigation
Wednesday, March 2, 2016, 5:30 p.m.
Olancha Fire Station

Questions and Answers – **not** verbatim

- Who is moving the waste from the pond and where to?
 - *The arsenic pond has been removed. Arsenic by-product is currently being transported off-site to an approved facility.*
- What happened to the liner and dirt from the pond?
 - *The liner has been taken away and disposed at a site permitted to take this type of waste.*
- Why wasn't it monitored before?
 - *Although it is difficult to reconstruct events, it appears that proper approvals were not obtained for the arsenic pond or other waste discharges at the facility.*
- Will the dirt from the pond be removed?
 - *This will be evaluated through the investigatory process.*
- Does Lahontan review CEQA documents?
 - *Yes.*
- Will all of tonight's presentations be on the website?
 - *Yes*
- Is the net amount of arsenic moving to the Lake (Owens) not affecting it because arsenic is already high at the lake?
 - *Although this is generally accurate, arsenic in Owens Lake is derived from natural processes, while elevated arsenic levels on the site appear to be from CGR's activities.*
- Would the State (Lahontan) consider disposal of the arsenic on the Lake (Owens)?
 - *This could be considered through a regulatory process.*
- What agency is the lead agency for CEQA?
 - *The County is generally the lead agency for CEQA purposes, although the Lahontan Regional Water Board or other entities could be for certain activities.*
- If the arsenic is naturally occurring, why is it an issue?
 - *Levels on the CGR site appear to be artificially elevated.*
- From the data that is available, is any of the arsenic moving to the Cabin Bar Ranch or Cartago?
 - *No.*
- Has the water been tested at the duck pond (Dirty Socks)?
 - *No.*
- Is the arsenic moving to the wetlands near the Lake (Owens)?
 - *Yes.*
- Was the wetland delineated in the modeling?
 - *Yes.*

- Did Crystal Geysers have a permit from the County to store contaminated water in the arsenic pond?
 - *Currently this is unknown. The County is trying to put together what happened, but may never find out exactly what happened. There are supposedly permits somewhere.*
- Is the arsenic from the pond different than the arsenic that is naturally occurring?
 - *No, arsenic is arsenic. The difference is the concentration of it.*
- When the arsenic measurement is high, like what was found, is it serious?
 - *It is serious enough for Lahontan to order the investigation.*
- How long will it take to clean up?
 - *This depends on the concentrations and spread and will be determined as part of Phase 3.*
- When will the cleanup process begin?
 - *Hopefully in a month or so. This will be part of Phase 3.*
- Is there a public health issue right now in Olancha/Cartago; should we not drink our water?
 - *No. They (Lahontan) do not think there is a danger.*
- Is the Company (CGR) discharging illegally right now into a drinking water source (Cartago Mutual Water)?
 - *That is what Lahontan is investigating and it will be determined by that investigation. It does not appear that the arsenic on the site from CGR's activities is moving toward the Cartago Mutual Water Company's wells.*
- Are we witnessing an illegal discharge today?
 - *That is what Lahontan is investigating and it will be determined by that investigation. CGR is transporting arsenic byproducts to an approved off-site facility.*
- Don't the existing Conditional Use Permits require following State and Federal Laws?
 - *The existing CUPs require compliance with certain regulatory requirements. Generally speaking, land uses in the County are required to follow State and Federal laws.*
- Isn't there illegal waste discharge now; shouldn't there be permits for it?
 - *There is nothing in Cartago's drinking water now; the arsenic is not going to impact Cartago's water. The Water Board is investigating discharges and additional permits may be required.*
- Are there plans to monitor the dry particulates around the dry pond (emptied arsenic pond)?
 - *No, we (Lahontan) are not planning to monitor the dry pond. A liner will be placed in the pond to prevent the water that collects in the pond from seeping through the ground and bringing arsenic with it to the groundwater.*
- I live on Lacy Lane near the arsenic pond will anyone be checking my well for arsenic?
 - *Some private wells and the Cartago Water Company's well will be monitored. CGR offered to check wells if people contact them. County Environmental Health also offered to check wells.*
- What has the County done to gather and check permits so that citizens can review?
 - *The County is in the process of piecing together all of the history. Permits have been posted on the website.*

- In the bottling process, making the bottles, is arsenic created?
 - *No.*
- Is CGR regulated for the volume of water they pump?
 - *It is 600,000 gallons per day for the new (Cabin Bar) facility. California only began to regulate groundwater pumping a couple of years ago.*
- If more bottles are produced, will there be more arsenic?
 - *Yes, more arsenic will have to be processed out.*
- Is the arsenic increasing based on the volume of water being used?
 - *No one is sure.*
- Will new production of water be regulated?
 - *Sustainable management plans for groundwater will be used.*
- Regarding Production Well 1, what is the screen zone?
 - *150-feet deep.*
- Addressing a slide from Geosyntec presentation, the arrow on the slide pointing to the red dot, could you put the arsenic pond there and it leaked, would the arsenic show there (shallow water)?
 - *It possibly would not, cannot say for sure.*
- What is the depth of the arsenic contamination?
 - *No one knows that yet. It will be examined in Phase 3. They (Geosyntec) do not expect it to be deep though.*
- Will Lahontan require the expansion of the project (Cabin Bar) to have the arsenic moved off site?
 - *No, the Cabin Bar water does not have arsenic that will need to be removed from it.*
- The Army Corp permit, does CGR have it or when will they have it?
 - *That will be the decision of the Army Corp.*
- Does the contamination from the production of the plastic bottles have to get really bad before someone does something about it?
 - *There is no evidence of carcinogens coming from the plastic bottles.*
- Has anyone looked into the number of miscarriages around here?
 - *Not that anyone knows about. Health and Human Services does not track this information.*
- CGR statement: *they are very concerned about the issues and are working with Lahontan to fix them.*
- How many residents know that the Cartago Mutual Water Company is suing CGR, alleging that their wells are contaminated by CGR?
 - *The water company is concerned and has been providing information to people.*
- Is the fire pond in compliance, doesn't it have other contaminants?
 - *The Lahontan Water Board is investigating the fire pond.*
- Has the Cartago Mutual Water Company been removed from the public information list?
 - *No, Lahontan will continue to keep them on the mailing list.*
- Will CGR test private wells?
 - *The County and CGR will test private wells.*
- Was there specific testing that showed the contamination?
 - *The company (CGR) should be monitoring regularly.*

- What data are you (Cartago Mutual Water Company) using when you make these claims?
 - *Please make sure that people pay attention to the data in total and spot data is not used to create unrealistic results.*
- The unlined pond, the east pond, is there discharge going to it?
 - *Yes.*
- Does the unlined pond get contaminated discharge?
 - *No waste is going to any pond anymore it is all hauled off site for proper disposal.*
- Does the demand for water lower the water levels and create more contaminates?
 - *This is not anticipated.*
- Can Lahontan prepare a report about the findings from tomorrow's (March 3, 2016) site visit so that all can see.
 - *The meeting is to discuss the Phase 3 work plan. Lahontan will provide comments on that plan. Later there can be additional public meetings or a newsletter to keep people informed.*
- From earlier question number 1, who let this happen?
 - *Although it is difficult to reconstruct events, it appears that proper approvals were not obtained for the arsenic pond or other waste discharges at the facility.*
- What County office, or who, is responsible for this?
 - *Permit reviews are the responsibility of the Public Works, Planning and Environmental Health Departments. It all happened a long time ago so no one is sure who or in what department it happened. Currently, the three departments are near each other, in the same building, which makes communication better and we are all working to improve our process so this does not happen again.*
- Is this specific problem going to be taken care of before the new bottling plant is built?
 - *The Cabin Bar project is under construction.*
- Is the paper work for the new plant being scrutinized, like for the type of liner that will be used for arsenic ponds?
 - *An extensive mitigation monitoring program is being implemented for the Cabin Bar project. No arsenic pond has been entitled.*
- Doesn't the Board of Supervisors have the end say on these things (development proposals)?
 - *The Board of Supervisors generally provides oversight and decision-making authority for development proposals. Individual departments, the Planning Commission, and other agencies also have decision-making authority.*
- After the new plant is built, how much larger will this grow (CGR)?
 - *This is it, no more.*
- Since the 1980s could there have been a fire or something and that is what happened to the files?
 - *Maybe.*