



City of Santa Barbara
Public Works Department

Interoffice Memorandum

DATE: October 6, 2008
TO: Mayor and City Council Members
FROM: Christine F. Andersen, Public Works Director
SUBJECT: BATHYMETRIC SURVEY OF GIBRALTAR

As you know the Zaca fire burned much of the Gibraltar watershed, resulting in substantial siltation of the Gibraltar Reservoir. To quantify the loss of capacity, staff commissioned a bathymetric survey to determine the new elevation of the base of the reservoir. We have now received the results of the study and have confirmed a loss of capacity of approximately 1,500 acre feet. While this is not as bad as feared, it represents a 21% loss of storage capacity from last year at Gibraltar.

The City has an existing agreement with other users of Santa Ynez River water that will allow us to use storage capacity in Cachuma to offset the lost capacity in Gibraltar. However, in order to store water in Cachuma, the City needs to negotiate a Warren Act Agreement with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR). The 1911 Warren Act specifies that non-project water stored in a Federal water project must pay fees. Staff has met with USBR staff and believes that we will be able to secure an agreement with them, although we will have to pay storage fees.

Please contact Rebecca Bjork, Water Resources Manager, at 897-1914 if you have questions about this matter.

RB/es