

Wednesday, December 28, 2005

OID Preps For Review Process

Phase II of the Oakdale Irrigation District Water Resources Plan (WRP) was approved for start-up by the OID Board of Directors at its Dec. 20 meeting.

This phase is comprised of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process that is part of the WRP Phase I, recently completed, was the preparation and distribution portion of the Master WRP leading into Phase II. OID General Manager Steve Knell said the OID will begin soliciting input from the public for the next four to five months at board meetings, talking to service clubs, public hearings, and so on for preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Any comments from the public will be reviewed and incorporated into a document. The law requires that every comment be addressed.

Knell said there will be a 45-day review for the EIR in the summer. WRP consultant CH2M Hill will then assemble and categorize the comments, at which point they will determine the cost involved in addressing those comments. That information is expected to be ready by late summer 2006.

Knell said that after comments from various members of the public and environmental groups have been made and before the EIR draft is prepared, the OID and CH2M Hill will work with the groups regarding their comments and concerns to try to come to agreeable terms. Around October or November of 2006, all final comments will be assembled and then the final EIR will be prepared. It is expected that the final EIR will be adopted in early 2007; however, there is some expectation of lawsuits, as is apparently common with these types of documents. Knell added that they have some good ideas to work with some of the environmental groups and hopes that lawsuits won't be a factor.