SWEETWATER SPRINGS WATER DISTRICT

TO: Board of Directors **AGENDA NO. V-D**

FROM: Steve Mack, General Manager

Meeting Date: March 6, 2014

SUBJECT: FEBRUARY SANITARY SEWER MAIN BREAK

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Receive a report on the February 13 sanitary sewer main break and provide direction to staff.

FISCAL IMPACT: None

DISCUSSION:

At approximately noon on Thursday, February 13, District Field Manager, Kevin Gilman was notified that there was a large wastewater spill coming from the Russian River Sanitation District mainline at Vacation Beach near the wastewater treatment plant. The 16 inch force main had a blowout and wastewater was flowing into the Russian River at approximately 500 gpm (their estimate given at the time). The Monte Rio well field could have been affected by this spill but had been off since about 11 am that morning (coincidentally because storage was full then). Staff manually turned off the well field, once the extent of the spill was communicated to the District. The plan at the time was to not reactivate the well field until the sewer line was fixed, no spillage was going into the river, and the possible contamination was downstream of the well field. At the time the Sanitary District believed they could fix the main by that evening and could contain the spilling wastewater effluent by using vacuum pumping trucks (also know as Vactors).

At the time we believed we had, by conservative estimates, adequate storage for at least 24 hours of normal use which we thought would be adequate for this situation. However, we had no guarantee that the main would be fixed in the timeframe given by the Sanitation District so we sent out a conservation message via our automated phone message system to our customers in the Monte Rio system and posted an alert on our website.

The broken sewer main was fixed that Thursday night at about 12:30 am. Staff tested the water from the Monte Rio wells that morning and the tests turned out fine so the wells were turned back on and water pumped into the system. Our Monte Rio customers were notified by automated phone calls at approximately 9:30 Friday morning that they could resume normal use of water.

Looking at the water use in the Monte Rio system, it appears that we had about 48 hours of water supply based on that level of water use during the time the wells were shut off and prior to sending the second “all clear” message to our customers.

The sewer main break appears to have been a response to the high infiltration into the sewer force main due to the heavy rains of the prior weekend. That caused higher than normal pressures on the main. The rains also contributed to relatively high flows (estimated at 1500 cfs) during the event that helped dilute the contamination. I have informed the Sanitation District that this item is on our agenda and invited a representative to be available at our meeting to answer questions.