

**POTTER VALLEY
COMMUNITY UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Well Committee Update

Date: May 21, 2025
To: PVCUSD BOARD OF TRUSTEES – COMMUNITY MEMBERS
From: WELL COMMITTEE
Subject: STATUS REPORT – NEW WATER SOURCE FOR SCHOOL FACILITIES

PURPOSE: The purpose of this report is to update the School District Board of Trustees and the Community of Potter Valley of the Status of New Well Construction to serve the school district.

BACKGROUND: The school facilities are currently served with treated drinking water from a well identified as "Well No. 2". The water produced by this well is treated to meet minimum standards set forth by the California State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water (DDW). The school's water system operator conducts quality testing and monitors daily use and reports the information to the DDW Field Operations Branch Office in Santa Rosa. A test several years ago resulted in the quantity of nitrates exceeding 10 parts per million expressed as 10 milligrams/liter (mg/l) of nitrate as nitrogen. The DDW standard is a maximum of 10 mg/l. High levels of nitrates are known to have public health risks, one of which is commonly called "Blue Baby Syndrome". It is a condition which decreases the amount of red blood cells which carry oxygen in the blood stream and results in a blue skin pigment in babies. There are other health effects in older individuals who ingest water with high nitrate content over time.

School drinking water meets all the other standards required, as documented by reports submitted to DDW. Although the nitrate constituent only exceeded the maximum allowable level once, it triggered concern about the water supply for the school facilities. The Field Office of DDW recommended that the well serving the school facilities be investigated. Consequently, funding for the investigation was established through the State's SAFER program, which is funded by the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund. The program in Potter Valley is lead by California State University, Sacramento, Office of Water Programs (OWP). Funding is provided by the State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Financial Assistance (DFA). The engineering firm of GHD was engaged to conduct the studies.

The initial evaluation included filming the well casing. It was determined that the depth of well seal is only eight feet below the ground surface(bgs). That explains why the potential for nitrate levels exceeding 10 mg/l can occur. Nitrate levels are frequently elevated by percolation of nitrogen fertilizer down through the soil strata in agricultural communities.

This well is thought to be on an old submerged streambed due to its gravelly formation between 20 and 30 feet bgs. Therefore nitrate infiltration can come from lands off the school grounds and upstream.

The current State Standard for wells is to have a sanitary seal to a depth of 50 feet bgs for commercial and institutional wells. A well seal is constructed using cement and other impermeable additives to seal off the strata between the well casing and the edge of the bore hole. It is intended to prevent surface contaminants from entering the water-bearing strata. With a seal of only 8 feet bgs, the current well serving school facilities is clearly out of compliance and has a significant risk of being contaminated through accidental spillage or slowly percolating constituents.

The results of the initial evaluation lead to the need to try to find a well which will comply with current State Standards. For the past three years studies have progressed to determine a course of action to achieve a production well which complies with DDW standards.

EXISTING AND HISTORICAL WELLS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY: The well currently serving school drinking water facilities is identified as "Well No. 2". It is located east of the Bus Barn near the Ag Facilities. Maximum production is approximately 20 gallons per minute (gpm) for short periods of time (2 hours). Reliable sustained production is approximately 16 gpm.

The school initially was served by a well on the west side of the East Fork Russian River (the river) near the football field, known as Well No. 1, but the school was ordered to find a new source when water from that well was tested and was found to have some contamination. Several Test Wells were drilled in 1988 including the one currently identified as Well No. 2. One was abandoned and one was retained as an untreated source for Ag Facility Irrigation (Well No.3). There is also a well on the one acre parcel used for sheep grazing. Since it was constructed when the land was subdivided in the 1970's, it likely has a very shallow seal and would not be suitable for a replacement well.

A test boring was commissioned by GHD in 2023. It was located near the playing courts at the south end of the Junior High Wing. It was identified as test boring B-3 since several other shallower borings to understand the substrate formations were also made (B-1, B-2). In April, 2023, B-3 was extended to a depth of 120 feet bgs and encountered insufficient ground water to warrant construction of a production test well.

Due to the lack of sufficient water-bearing strata in B-3, the State DFA authorized two additional test borings. Test Boring B-4 (now near future Well No. 4) was drilled to a depth of 150 feet bgs on July 5th and 6th, 2023 and Test Boring B-5 (now near future Well No. 5) was drilled to a depth of 151 feet bgs between July 7th and July 11th, 2023. Both Borings revealed strata which could potentially produce enough water to consider further development. Both borings were backfilled and sealed to prevent surface contamination. B-4 is located near the picnic tables south of the refurbished tennis court on the east side of the river. B-5 is located between the building housing Well No. 1 and the river at the south end of the football field.

In summary the school has two wells which it currently uses:

- Well No. 2 provides potable water for school facilities and produces approximately 16 gpm as a sustained flow.
- Well No. 3 produces water used for agricultural irrigation and stock watering with unknown but limited production.

Other Historical Wells:

- Well No. 1 near the football field has been abandoned and reportedly has partially collapsed.
- Two other test wells were drilled and backfilled in 1988.
- One other well exists on the one acre parcel used as pasture and has minimal use.

Potential New Wells:

- Well No. 4 will be constructed and tested for production and water quality in July or August of 2025. If it is found to be adequate in both regards, it will become a production well to replace Well No. 2.
- Well No. 5 is a back-up concept in case Well No. 4 does not have sufficient water for a reliable supply. There is no current plan to construct it.

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON GROUNDWATER AVAILABILITY

There is concern in the community about what will happen if the Eel River Diversion is curtailed or eliminated. What groundwater will the school wells potentially use if the well construction plan is carried to completion?

Well No. 2 will no longer be used as a potable water source if Well No. 4 is successfully developed. It may serve as irrigation water for the portion of the school grounds which is currently irrigated from Well No. 2 in order to avoid using treated water for irrigation, but, in any case, its production will be significantly reduced or eliminated.

Well No. 4 will be sealed to a depth of 78 feet bgs to exclude strata nearer to the surface where bluish coloration was encountered. Soils with bluish coloration often contain iron and manganese constituents which are difficult and costly to treat. The screen interval for water production is planned to be between 108 and 128 feet bgs, where strata with potential water was encountered. Production is hoped to be sustainable at 5 gpm, but it may be less. Mineral constituents such as boron may present a quality problem, so there is no guarantee that a production well can be successfully completed. Based on the strata encountered in Test Boring No. 4, sustained production of more than 5 gpm is extremely unlikely.

Well No. 5, if constructed to augment production to sustain the potable water needs of the school, will be in similar strata as Well No. 4 and, at best, will produce a sustainable amount of 3-5 gpm.

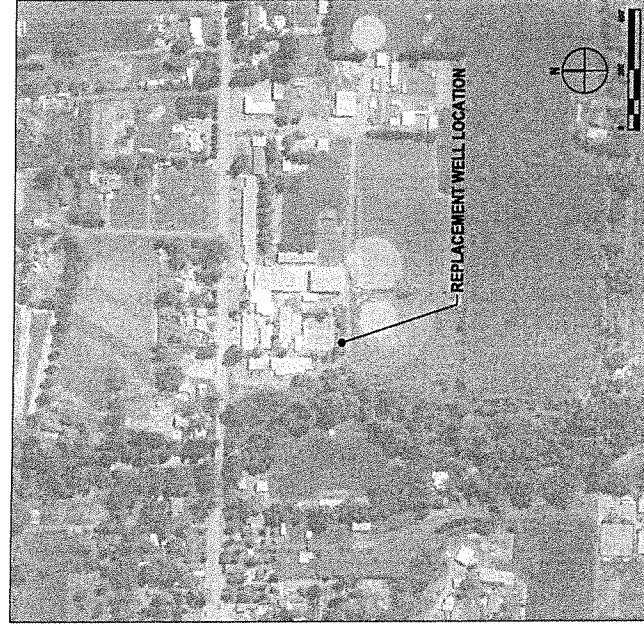
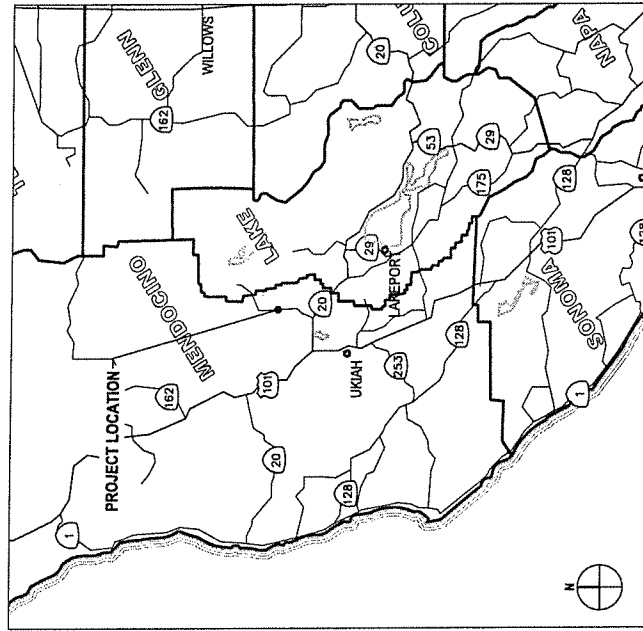
Both test boring logs included information that leads us to believe that there is no interconnection with the river, due to the depths of water bearing units observed and the test well location being at least 100-feet from the river. This information along with the low flow pumping rates anticipated, indicates there will be no impact to the river if either or both wells are brought on line as production wells.

Well No. 4 is located approximately 400 feet from Main Street, approximately 400 feet from the south boundary of the school, approximately 1200 feet from the east boundary of the school and approximately 600 feet from the west boundary of the school. Typical drawdown cones of depression from wells pumped at 5 gpm in 20 feet of water-bearing strata may extend 80-120 feet radially, so potential impacts to groundwater from this well to adjoining properties are considered insignificant.

Well No. 5, if constructed, would be approximately 100 feet north of the south boundary of the football field and 150 feet east of the west boundary. With the limited production anticipated in similar shallow water-bearing strata, it is unlikely that water level interference would occur in offsite wells to the school grounds.

The attached Google Earth Photo shows the locations of the wells discussed in this report.

FEBRUARY 2025



LOCATION MAP

SHEET INDEX		SHEET DESCRIPTION	
SHEET NUMBER	SHEET TITLE		
1	G-001	TITLE SHEET AND PROJECT MAP	
2	G-002	GENERAL NOTES, LEGEND, AND ABREVIATIONS	
3	C-001	WELL CONSTRUCTION, DEVELOPMENT, AND TESTING SPECIFICATIONS	
4	C-002	HYDROLOGIC BURNING LOG REPORTS	
5	C-101	WELL SPLIT PLANS	
6	C-201	WELL CONSTRUCTION DETAILS	

USA NORTH 811
Call 811 Before You Dig

Bar is one inch on original size sheet



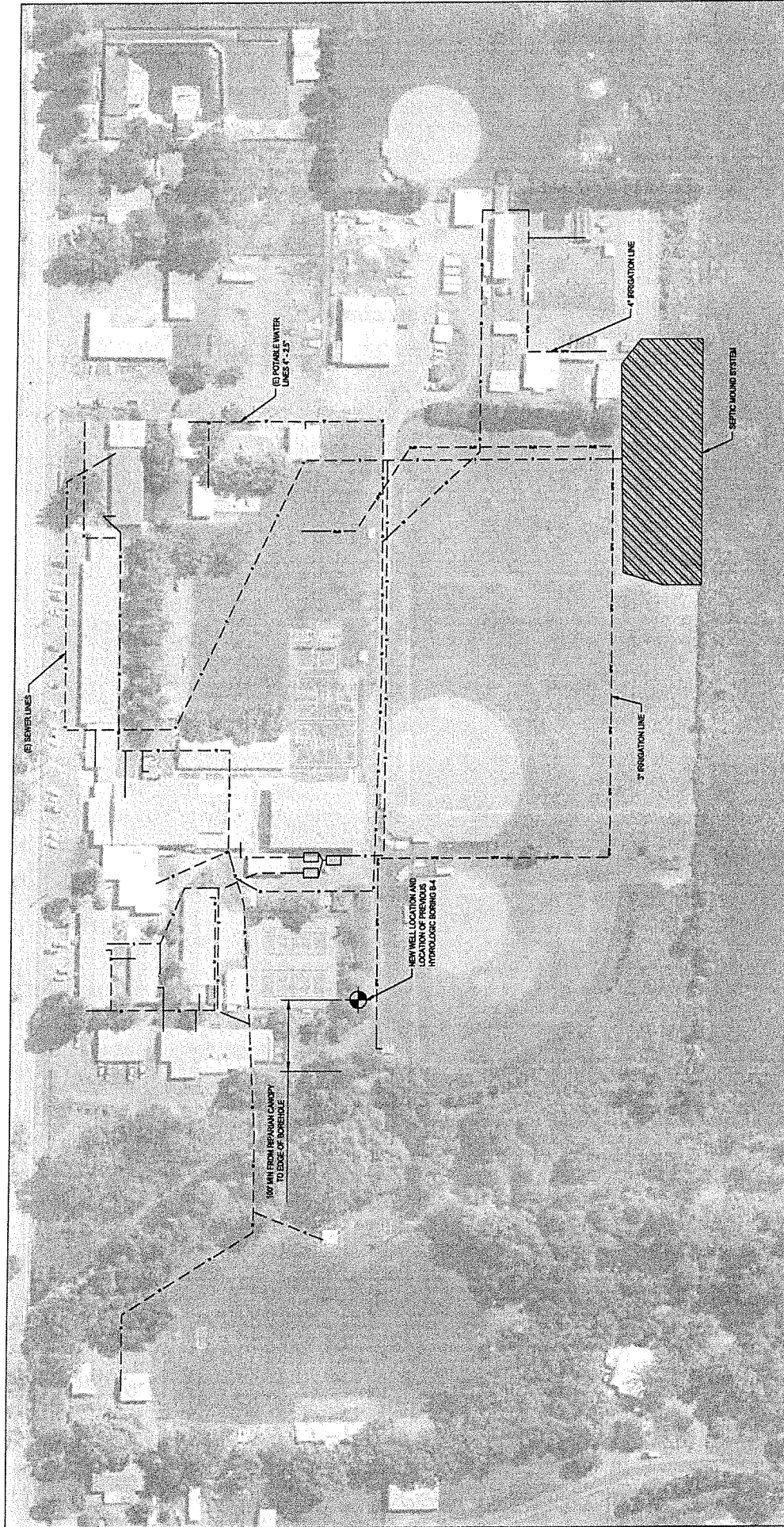
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CLARK UNIVERSITY ENTERPRISES INC.

Project **POTTER VALLEY SCHOOL**

Project No.	Date
12577382	2/21/72

AS SHOWN
Scale[illegible]



1 SITE PLAN
SCALE

PRELIMINARY

<div> <div>USA NORTH 811</div> <div>Call 811 Before You Dig</div> </div>	<div> <div>SEAL BY STATE ENGINEER</div> <div>1" = 100'</div> </div>	<div> <div>PROJECT: POTTER VALLEY SCHOOL REPLACEMENT WELL</div> <div>DATE: 2/21/2025</div> <div>AS SHOWN</div> </div>	<div> <div>Client: UNIVERSITY ENTERPRISES INC.</div> <div>Project: POTTER VALLEY SCHOOL REPLACEMENT WELL</div> <div>Project No: 12577332</div> </div>	<div> <div>GHD INC.</div> <div>11107 123 100 P 1 707 527 879</div> </div>	<div> <div>SEAL BY STATE ENGINEER</div> <div>1" = 100'</div> </div>	<div> <div>USA NORTH 811</div> <div>Call 811 Before You Dig</div> </div>	<div> <div>Author: T. BELL</div> <div>Designer: C. GOLDER</div> <div>Checker: T. GOLDER</div> <div>Project Manager: M. GOLDER</div> <div>Project Director: A. L. MOORE</div> <div>Revision: 11/14/2024</div> </div>
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