

'It is willful neglect': A look at North Yuba Water District and alleged mismanagement

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'It is willful neglect': A look at North Yuba Water District and alleged mismanagement

Amid California's current years-long drought that is directly affecting farmers, ranchers and everyday residents, one would think that any amount of water waste or mismanagement should be taken seriously.

While Yuba County is considered by many officials to have a good supply of water, there are some who reside in the foothills of the county who said they have been affected by limited deliveries of water by North Yuba Water District (NYWD) which have caused a few that depend on consistent and regular deliveries to consider selling their property or livestock.

For many who are served by NYWD, their biggest issues with water were amplified with the introduction of General Manager Jeff Maupin.

"It starts with the hiring of Maupin. My understanding is that the manager at the time, Bill Suppa, unexpectedly needed to resign for I believe health reasons," Dr. Gretchen Flohr said, a former director of the NYWD board who was elected to the Division Four seat in 2019. "So the water district put out an advert for a manager. One of the requirements was a college degree. They had a number of candidates that responded, many of whom were very qualified for the position (of general manager)."

The Appeal was given a copy of Maupin's resume and on it, he lists that he received a "BS" in business administration from Trinity College. However, according to a deposition related to a lawsuit seeking public records from NYWD, Maupin admitted to lawyers that he did not have a college degree.

"I do not have a degree in -- in college if that's what you're coming up with," Maupin said during a deposition in 2020.

During the deposition, he said he had attended Mt. San Antonio College, Los Angeles College and "quite a few JCs." In the deposition he does not mention Trinity College or the fact he graduated from there when pressed on what his educational background was.

Flohr, who said she has been dealing with issues surrounding NYWD for about five years, claimed what happened next in the hiring process of Maupin was "very strange." She said NYWD board members had narrowed down the field of candidates and then took an unusual next step for a position with so much authority.

"So, Jenny Cavaliere was on the board at the time," Flohr



Robert Summa/Appeal-Democrat
Water collects near a leak of the tank that supplies water to customers in Forbestown on March 14.

said. “They had done some interviews ... and she wanted the candidates to be vetted. And the other four board members ... told her in a meeting, they said, ‘We don’t care about vetting, we’re hiring this guy, Maupin.’”



The Forbestown Ditch is pictured on March 14.

Robert Summa/Appeal-Democrat

Flohr, who has degrees from Ohlone College in Fremont, San Jose State University and Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Ill., claims there was a “backroom deal” at the time to hire Maupin.

“That was how it started. If you watch the progression of events within the board itself over time, Maupin almost immediately set out to take over control of the entire agency, including the board,” Flohr said. “What he did over time is to isolate the running of the finances to only himself. He got rid of all the committees. ... Most especially the finance committee. ... He got rid of all of that. Over time, what has occurred and where we’re at now is that the manager directs his attorney ... to write a resolution. ... He writes the resolutions and what happens is they are put on an agenda and then they are voted on. So the resolutions are not done at the direction of the board.”

Flohr said Maupin is given “tremendous power” over the agency because she claims that the board only sees resolutions once they get introduced on an agenda before a vote.

“He owns the board,” Flohr said.

Flohr, along with other disgruntled individuals familiar with NYWD, claim that Maupin, at the very least, is not managing the district as well as it could be. Because of this, some customers who depend on water from NYWD claim they are being shortchanged.

One major example of Maupin’s alleged mismanagement that Flohr and Oregon House resident Marieke Furnee point to is NYWD’s plan to install a pipe in the Forbestown Ditch as a way to improve the way water is delivered. Forbestown Ditch is an unlined and open canal that conveys water for use by the district and its customers.

“Maupin wants to build a pipe. The pipe that he describes will carry only 3,700 acre-feet (of water), not a cubic centimeter more. Meaning that 20,000 acre-feet for as long as that pipe is there will be available for sale to the Bay Area, get lots of money, they can do whatever big projects they have,” Furnee said. “But, the permit will expire because 20,000 acre-feet not used is 20,000 acre-feet that will leave this community forever. The state will say, ‘You have that much you’re not using, you’re building your

infrastructure for a tenth of what we gave you, so therefore we shall now give that water to someone else that needs it more than you. You clearly don't want it."

Furnee claimed that by restricting the amount of water that is carried through the pipe, it will "restrict the customer base to 100-plus customers forever."

She said if the pipe plan is completed as currently designed, it will reduce opportunities for farms to start and reduce a possible increase in the economic activity in the area.

"There are young farmers looking for land to produce local food, a food hub, agro tourism," Furnee said. "None of that is going to work if this pipe gets built."

Flohr said district customers are entitled to 23,700 acre-feet of water. Because the Forbestown Ditch is the only conveyance for water in the system, Flohr said installation of the pipe will ensure "that we will never receive our 23,700 as there will be no way to convey it."

"If we do not build infrastructure to convey all 23,700 (acre-feet of water) to us to put to beneficial use, the state will take 21,000 (acre-feet of water) back permanently," Flohr said. "We have only 13-15 years to prove to the state that we can put all our 23,700 (acre-feet of water) of water to beneficial use."

She said the Forbestown Ditch, which has existed for about 150 years, is pivotal for fire protection.

"There are massive greenbelts and small ponds along the ditch from water seeping from the ditch streambed. It recharges the groundwater table and helps to recharge wells. Most people have wells in this area," Flohr said. "It is habitat for wildlife. And importantly, firefighters can back right up to the ditch and fill their trucks right from the ditch. It has been used this way frequently in the last few years and has saved property and lives in the process. The ditch goes through people's yards – and if they have to – they can drop pumps in it to save their homes from fires."

Flohr said if a plastic pipe is installed in the ditch, then it could easily burn up or melt in a fire. She said there was a fire last year that was very close to the Forbestown Ditch and it would have melted the pipe.

Flohr said Dan Freeman, who lives in Forbestown, along with his neighbors, has been fighting the planned pipe for years. She said his emails and letters related to the pipe have gone unanswered.

"He was threatened with 'eminent domain' by former director Terry Brown," Flohr said. "No one in Forbestown wants this. In fact, no one wants this, except a few backward yahoos living in the 1920s."

In emails obtained by the Appeal to Flohr, Freeman expressed his frustration on the issue.

"I spoke with our neighbors and NYWD domestic water customers who own property on the Waldon Pond, a historic, ancient, and still existing tributary of the Feather River watershed," Freeman wrote to Flohr. "They are vehemently opposed to the installation of a pipe in the residential zone areas of Forbestown and especially in the areas of our watershed."

In a scathing letter to NYWD which the Appeal received, Freeman highlighted more detailed concerns about the proposed pipe in the Forbestown Ditch. In it, he claimed that he and others were not informed of the details surrounding the pipe in the residential zone of Forbestown.



An area managed by the North Yuba Water District is pictured on March 14. Robert Summa/Appeal-Democrat

“We are only aware that the ditch is a conveyance and not an easement for which we have been paying taxes on for decades past. We do not think it is environmentally viable, or a child safe project to be implemented within the residential zoned areas in Forbestown,” Freeman wrote. “Since the NYWD has taken over responsibility of the OWID ditch it has not been maintained as it was when South Feather Water maintained it. By law conveyances are to be maintained as to their original purpose and maintained in compliance for that purpose. When the North Yuba took over, I have never seen our section of the ditch maintained as it was in the past. This lack of maintenance is why the ditch keeps blowing out. ... For many, many decades the ditch has provided humidity, beauty, and water for the local environment, ecosystem, and wildlife.”



Robert Summa/Appeal-Democrat

The water tank that supplies water to customers in Forbestown is pictured on March 14.

Flohr echoed these claims and said Maupin and NYWD have not been able to maintain the ditch properly as others did in the past.

If NYWD is ever proven to be mismanaging resources, then Flohr said the state could come in and appoint a manager.

“There’s a number of different avenues to get that to occur. Number one, if the public got together and did a vote of no confidence. If that occurred, then they could go straight to the state and say, ‘We don’t have confidence ... we took a vote.’ They could lobby the state and the state would take over and they would appoint South Feather to manage the district to get it back on track,” Flohr said. “Another way it can happen is the reserves are spent down below, I believe you have to have three times your operating costs in reserves and if

you don’t have that, then the state will step in and takeover. For this district (NYWD), their current operating budget, based on their budget sheet, is I believe \$1.7 million. So they are required to have \$5.4 million in their reserves, which they don’t, but unfortunately that’s not going to last long. Another way is being able to prove our case of waste, fraud and abuse.”

Flohr said if the state were to ever take over NYWD, major changes could happen to the district and its board.

“They would appoint someone and then one of two things can happen. Either the new manager gets the agency in shape and they’re able to appoint a new board and they can move forward with Rath Moseley (general manager of the South Feather Water & Power Agency) still managing, but they have a board of their own,” Flohr said. “Or, they could end up ultimately getting another manager that is competent and go back to being their own entity. Or, they could merge with South Feather and potentially have one or two board directors to augment the South Feather board that would represent North Yuba and Rath Moseley would continue to manage the resources.”

Flohr said there may be a reluctance to merge with South Feather because of the “propaganda” spread about the agency and those such as Flohr and Furnee who have raised concerns about how NYWD has handled water in the district.

“The thing that has to be overcome ... is the poison that Maupin has spread because he’s had a propaganda campaign against South Feather since the day he stepped foot onto the North Yuba Water Agency. He has continued to feed lies and misinformation around South Feather and blaming South

Feather for all the ills of North Yuba,” Flohr said. “Essentially, ‘Everything that’s wrong has nothing to do with me as a general manager. I’m doing everything I can. The whole problem is South Feather and the stupid 2005 agreement.’ Which is insane, because the only reason North Yuba has any money is because of the power revenues. But a huge number of the public, and of course the entire (NYWD) board, has swallowed hook, line and sinker the Kool-Aid Maupin’s been dishing out.”

The 2005 agreement that Flohr alluded to is in reference to a contract NYWD signed with South Feather Water & Power Agency that went into effect in 2010, Furnee said. She said in the 2005 agreement, NYWD got access to 20,000 acre-feet of more water than they used to and 50 percent of power revenues, worth a couple million dollars a year.

In their push to expose what has been happening over the years with NYWD, Furnee and Flohr have been collecting a massive amount of evidence of potential wrongdoing or mismanagement by Maupin and the district.

Furnee and Flohr said the reason they have been so aggressive with seeking documents and information is because they wanted to stop the perception that has been pushed in documents such as NYWD newsletters that are sent to customers.

“We were trying to stop being branded as those pesky irrigation customers,” Furnee said. “(Yuba County District Five Supervisor) Randy Fletcher, bless his heart, has come in the last year to North Yuba meetings and expressed his compassion that they have to deal with those ‘haters.’”

She said once you see some of the “real willful neglect” concerning NYWD’s management of water, that it’s essentially hard to ignore the issues that Furnee and Flohr have brought up during NYWD meetings and in other public forums.

“We reached out to him (Fletcher) multiple times and he came back with polite answers, saying, ‘Well, you know ... it’s not really actually under my control.’ In my face he has said, ‘I don’t really want to get involved because once you take sides it’s such a burden,’” Furnee said.

The burden that Furnee was referring to was the burden of trying to get reelected as a supervisor for the county.

“He came publicly to the water district meeting, saying that the water district had done such a good job,” Furnee said.

Asked what they thought Fletcher meant by saying the district had done a good job, both Furnee and Flohr expressed they were confused by the comment.

“He wanted to commend them on all the amazing things they’ve done without expressing what’s been amazing,” Furnee said.

Much of the “propaganda” that Flohr said has been spread about their efforts in outlets such as NYWD newsletters has been done so with the help of Crystal Martin, a political strategist who in past years was linked to a “political attack ad mailer directed against then-Yuba City mayor and City Council candidate Kash Gill, an opponent of her client, Yuba City Councilman Tej Maan,” the Appeal previously reported.

“Crystal Martin has been NYWD’s PR person for years,” Flohr claimed. “As of last year, she has been labeled a ‘litigation consultant’ so that her invoices, communications and anything related to her cannot be CPRA’d. She writes the ‘newsletters.’”

CPRA is the California Public Records Act, which gives access to public records unless they’re exempt from disclosure by law. These records can include written or electronic information.



Robert Summa/Appeal-Democrat
Water is pictured streaming from the leak of a water tank that supplies treated water to North Yuba Water District customers in Challenge.

Furnee and Flohr said another example of neglect by NYWD has been its handling of maintenance for the ditches that carry water and the tanks that store treated water for residents within the district's boundaries. On March 14, the Appeal saw firsthand treated water flowing out of leaks from water tanks that serve customers, including an older tank that serves the community of Challenge.

These tanks are often shot at by people, causing leaks and thus leaving open the potential of water theft and extreme water waste, Furnee and Flohr said. The Appeal observed these leaks and each one appeared to have been caused by a

bullet or some other object around the same size.

During a visit to the area served by NYWD, Flohr took the Appeal to a section of the landscape further down from the Challenge water tank leak that had a small stream running along a dry forest floor.

"It is willful neglect," Furnee said.

What Furnee and Flohr are both claiming is that this "willful neglect" is what's causing service to be shut off for water customers.

"The irrigation policy that has just been approved names water waste as a reason to shut off your service. It's the biggest change. If irrigation water comes off your property and we see that, you are going to be rejected water if they see the waste coming off your property, beyond your property boundary, on the road. So, that's my point," Furnee said. "This waste is coming from the water district itself, they've known about it for 20 years. They've tried to do something about it until Maupin became general manager. He stopped it and this is where we are today. This is what keeps me up at night."

Furnee said she went back to the Challenge water tank recently and was able to record the amount of water flowing out of the tank.

"I dug a hole in the channel and made sure my small bucket fit in it and could catch all the water that fell over the ledge," Furnee said Thursday. "I did it 10 times."

She said the average amount of water she was getting equaled about 5 gallons a minute.

Maupin responds

The Appeal reached out to Maupin for comment on this story. When asked if he wanted to do an in-person interview or talk about the issues over the phone, Maupin said he preferred to answer questions via email.

Maupin said the main issue that currently exists with NYWD is not a water supply problem, but a water conveyance problem. In an effort to highlight that issue, Maupin gave a breakdown of the Forbestown Ditch piping solution, which he said was vital to the district's future.

"Originally dug in the 1860's, when Abraham Lincoln was President, the Forbestown Ditch is an unlined, open canal, approximately 10 miles long. Water from various sources (Little Grass Valley Reservoir, Lost Creek, Slate Creek and Sly Creek Reservoir) move through the South Feather Power Project and are partially diverted into our Forbestown Ditch at a point called "SF-14" in the area of Forbestown along the northernmost boundary of the District," Maupin said. "Additionally, further down the Forbestown Ditch, water from Oroleve Creek, a seasonal stream, can be diverted to the Forbestown Ditch. Because it is an open ditch, the Forbestown Ditch can safely run a maximum (Contractual and physical) of 22 to 24 cubic feet per second (cfs)."

Maupin said the ditch "conveys 1.8 to 3.6 cfs needed for NYWD's Treatment Pond, which is the sole source of drinking water for our approximately 840 current domestic connections, which is approximately 3,100 residents residing in Brownsville, Challenge, Rackerby and Forbestown."

He also said the ditch "conveys our contractual obligated 11 cfs water to South Feather Water & Power (SFWP); and the Ditch loses approximately 35%, or 7.7 cfs, to seepage and evaporation along the way."

He said prior to 2010, the Forbestown Ditch also conveyed a small amount of water that was diverted to Costa Creek and then to NYWD's approximately 100 seasonal water contractors along the irrigation ditches. He said the plan to install a pipe in the Forbestown Ditch will actually save water loss, contrary to what others have claimed.

"Moving to a piped Forbestown Ditch will provide a reliable, safe source of drinking water; lower the possibility of breaches, like the those experienced in 2017 and 2018; save a significant amount of water lost from seepage and evaporation (water losses average 35%); increase the amount of water available to divert to seasonal water customers; eliminate a vast majority of dirt, trash and contamination from entering the treatment pond; and most importantly, secure NYWD's water rights by satisfying the State requirement our water is being put to beneficial use and curtailing losses," Maupin said. "A Prop 1 grant for \$500,000 was used to complete the engineering phase in 2019, and reviewed by an independent engineering firm through the Yuba Water Agency. Engineering documents for the Forbestown Ditch are available on our website at www.nywd.org/publications. Ongoing misinformation and lawsuits by a handful of seasonal water contractors have significantly delayed the project."

Furnee and Flohr said the reason previous breaches of water occurred in the Forbestown Ditch is because the ditch has not been maintained properly. When the Appeal visited the ditch earlier this month, Furnee demonstrated how settled soil in the ditch affected the amount of water that could properly flow through it. She estimated about a foot of soil had accumulated over time. This soil, according to Furnee and Flohr, could easily be removed and cleaned up as has been done at similar sites, therefore allowing more water to flow through the ditch as originally intended.

Maupin said he has faced three major challenges since he was hired as general manager for the district. He said those challenges include securing the district's water rights by bringing the Forbestown Ditch to acceptable water losses, dealing with the ramifications of the "2005 Agreement" with SFWP, and "suffering the public misinformation and District harassment by a small group of detractors."

Maupin and the district have consistently blamed a "group of detractors" for misinformation about NYWD.

Counter to what Flohr and others have claimed, Maupin said the installation of a pipe in Forbestown Ditch will benefit water customers.

“In order for any entity to maintain their State approved water rights, they must continue to prove the water is being put to beneficial use and must continue to make efforts to curtail losses to an acceptable level,” Maupin said. “Piping the Forbestown Ditch would check both of these boxes by giving us the conveyance ability to move additional water to our seasonal water contractors and curtail all seepage and evaporation losses.”

Maupin said the agreement made between NYWD and South Feather, “dramatically changed NYWD’s obligations to SFWP.”

“Prior to 2010, SFWP was responsible for the water loss on their 11 cfs as it traveled the 10 miles along the Forbestown Ditch. This arrangement left approximately 4 cfs water to divert to NYWD seasonal water contractors. After 2010, NYWD took responsibility for SFWP’s water loss, and is responsible to deliver the full 11 cfs to SFWP at the base of the Ditch. Accepting that water loss, approximately 4 cfs, leaves nothing to divert to NYWD’s seasonal water contractors,” Maupin said. “Since the ‘2005 Agreement’ took effect in 2010, mother nature, through tributaries like Dry Creek, is the primary source of water available to divert to NYWD seasonal water contractors. Unfortunately most of that time has been record drought years (2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2019, 2020, 2021, and most likely 2022) and there is not enough water to have an irrigation season for NYWD’s seasonal water contractors.”

Maupin again in his response to the Appeal blamed his “detractors” for spreading false information about the ditch and district.

“Ironically, our small group of detractors are mostly seasonal water contractors who stand to regain irrigation water by piping the Forbestown Ditch,” Maupin said. “Instead, they spread misinformation, embroil the District in frivolous lawsuits, levy hundreds of Public Records Requests on our small District staff, and damage working relationships NYWD has with outside agencies. This fiscal year alone, NYWD has spent over \$500,000 in attorney fees battling the frivolous lawsuits.”

Maupin also blamed detractors for interfering with the district’s relationship with other agencies.

“NYWD has pursued, and many time(s) received, initial funding from a number of agencies including the State Water Resource Control Board, the Yuba Water Agency, the United States Department of Agriculture, and we are currently completing projects funded by the Department of Water Resources,” Maupin said. “The problem is, each time a new agency attempts to engage with NYWD they become victims of the small group of detractors who assault their agency with public records requests, accusations of wrongdoing, and subject the agencies to dozens of hours of follow-up and investigations to prove no wrongdoing exists. As you can imagine, any agency subjected to this becomes much less likely to champion our cause or raise their hand to help.”

Maupin said a 2019 customer survey conducted by NYWD showed that the work the district has done has been viewed as mostly positive by those in the community.

“After repeated negative attacks by a handful of detractors, NYWD conducted a customer survey in late 2019 to assess our customer’s satisfaction with the District,” Maupin said. “Customers were given a paper survey to rate their overall satisfaction with the District on a scale of 1 (listed as ‘Unacceptable’) to 10 (listed as ‘Exceeds Expectations’). The result was 23% of our Domestic customers responded to the survey (169 of 726) with an average score of 8.8 out of 10; and 23% of our seasonal water contractors responded (27 of 119) with an average score of 7.3 out of 10. While the results are extremely positive, we strive every day to provide the best service possible to all customers.”

When asked about the leaks from water tanks that serve Forbestown and Challenge, Maupin said the district was aware of those issues and steps were being taken to address them.

“NYWD has two steel tanks in Forbestown and Rackerby; and one wood tank in Challenge. NYWD has periodically employed divers to enter all three tank(s) and install steel panels and/or epoxy to reduce leaks,” Maupin said. “Through the help of the Yuba Water Agency’s Integrated Regional Water Management, NYWD sought and received a grant from the Department of Water Resources for \$692,116 to complete the project of lining the two existing steel tanks and replacing the wood tank. We are now at the stage of going out to bid to complete the lining projects; and we are completing the geological assessment on the wood tank replacement.”

As for the Forbestown Ditch itself, Maupin said it is “fully functional and operational to deliver the full contractual amount of 24 cfs.”

Maupin said NYWD serves about 840 domestic customers with potable water.

“As long as I have been with the District, we have never failed to meet the obligation to make full delivery of potable water. The only change in the pattern has been when the State Water Resource Control Board issues curtailments during severe droughts,” Maupin said. “NYWD serves approximately 100 seasonal water contractors through the irrigation ditches. ... NYWD has the water available to serve these customers, we just don’t have the conveyance system to get it to them. Piping the Forbestown Ditch would ensure a more consistent irrigation season.”

Another main point of contention among NYWD customers is the fact that some have observed illegal marijuana growers take water from the district to support their grows. The Appeal was able to observe some of the possible grow locations near NYWD sites and how easily it was, for those who wanted to, to essentially steal water from the district and its customers.

Maupin admitted this was a serious issue.

“Illegal marijuana growers are the main culprit of water theft along the Forbestown Ditch and NYWD’s irrigation ditches,” Maupin said. “Our staff will occasionally find hoses running to the ditch, but it is mainly done at night and not caught at all. There is a link to report water theft and waste on our website at www.nywd.org. Piping the Forbestown Ditch would stop the water theft along that stretch. Once water becomes more consistent again along the irrigation ditches we will have to step up efforts to address illegal marijuana growers stealing water.”

Yuba Water Agency

While Yuba Water Agency (YWA) technically is not directly involved with what NYWD does, the agency does have a history with the district, Flohr said. She also said that after Maupin took over, Yuba Water continued to have a relatively strong relationship with NYWD.

“Historically, YWA (and the County) was run by Randy Fletcher (Chairman of the Board and Supervisor District 5) and his trusty sidekick Curt Aikens, the former General Manager (GM),” Flohr said in an email. “While Fletcher and Curt Aikens held power, YWA poured money into NYWD coffers. Maupin had only to ask and YWA gave, despite NYWD customers showing up at YWA meetings begging them to stop funding Maupin and NYWD. Also begging YWA directors to intervene. All our appeals were to no avail.”

She said NYWD had no relationship with Yuba Water other than to ask for money.

“YWA was the mother bird to Maupin’s baby bird insatiable craving for more money,” Flohr said. “Our water, however, does end up in YWA’s Bullard’s Bar ... 20,000 af to be exact. Therefore, YWA has a vested interest in seeing that our water continues to end up in their reservoir – they then sell it.”

Things changed, however, Flohr said in 2020 when two new supervisors were elected for Yuba County and Willie Whittlesey was named the new general manager of Yuba Water.

“Since the changing of the guard – with the new GM Willie – and the two new supervisors, plus a massive effort by Charles (Sharp) and Marieke, we have finally managed to turn that board,” Flohr said. “In addition, Willie is a stand-up person with integrity – he is a true breath of fresh air after the stink of Curt Aikens. Literally in the last two months, yes it is only that recent, we have managed to turn the board a 180 and they are no longer willing to finance NYWD. They are finally listening to us and actually looking at the data we are providing and they are realizing that something is greatly wrong with Maupin and the NYWD board.”

The Appeal was able to sit down with Whittlesey recently and discuss these issues. Whittlesey said there was “no real formal relationship” between Yuba Water and NYWD.

“They’re a district, we’re an agency, elected boards, totally separate,” Whittlesey said. “However, we have an interest in water supply reliability to the people of Yuba County. So, when entities that provide water come to us through our grant program for grant requests or grant proposals that benefit the people of Yuba County, we consider those. We look at those and if they are within the mission of the water agency, then we very commonly grant funds for water supply reliability-type projects.”

Whittlesey said Yuba Water commonly grants the local cost share of other grant funds. He also said Yuba Water will help fund studies for projects, as well.

“With North Yuba, they’ve come to us in the past under our grant program and asked for grant funding for projects,” Whittlesey said. “So, we’ve granted funds for water supply projects or related projects for North Yuba Water District to benefit their customers.”

Over the last four years, Yuba Water has provided hundreds of thousands of dollars to NYWD. Whittlesey briefly described the process of committing funds to any given entity.

“The process is they have an elected board. That elected board sets policy just like our elected board sets policy. They have a general manager that executes on that policy,” Whittlesey said. “If an elected board has a proposed project that benefits their constituents, we support that effort. Do we dive in and look at their specific board policies from start to finish completely? No. Do we look at, generally, the viability of their projects? Yes.”

Whittlesey said along with funding assistance, Yuba Water also will help with engineering advice.

With regards to the state or other districts possibly taking over NYWD, Whittlesey said he didn’t necessarily see a need for that yet.

“I think that North Yuba Water District is its own entity and I think they do have opportunities for success and so I don’t know that there’s even a need for that at this point,” Whittlesey said.

Whittlesey said, though, that he was aware of the concerns brought up by concerned citizens such as Furnee and Flohr.

“I’ve had interactions with the general manager (Maupin) I think for four or five years now and everything that we’ve worked on has been successful,” Whittlesey said. “I know that there’s concern from the constituents in North Yuba’s district, but I have a professional relationship with the general manager there. I don’t have anything more to say beyond that.”

Whittlesey said he did see a relationship between NYWD and South Feather as a positive opportunity for customers of the district.

He said any water that may be lost through alleged mismanagement by NYWD does not affect water that Yuba Water has access to.

“The watershed is complicated. It’s all tied together. You would think if they have some issue with leakage or whatever, it would affect us,” Whittlesey said. “It doesn’t affect us. Just the way the conveyance is connected, it doesn’t affect us. So, if there was a leak or some type of mismanagement, it does not affect us.”

Asked if he saw room for improvement in NYWD, Whittlesey said there could be room for more discussions between the district and those concerned about how water has been managed.

“I see an opportunity for dialogue. We have many constituents from North Yuba speaking at our board. I don’t operate North Yuba Water District. I don’t know the day-to-day dealings,” Whittlesey said. “I don’t know if these concerns are valid concerns, I don’t know what they are. I really can’t speak to the validity or whatever, but when you have constituents like that bringing issues up, I think there should be a dialogue around it and find out what the true concern is.”

https://www.appeal-democrat.com/news/it-is-willful-neglect-a-look-at-north-yuba-water-district-and-alleged-mismanagement/article_5f30ae04-b227-11ec-9a0a-ab3a5d864f3b.html