
Fairmont Elementary School

July 16, 2019

County: Fresno

Population: 640

Challenges: Nitrate MCL violation

Consolidation date: June 10, 2019



Photo 1. Picture of Fairmont Elementary School

Fairmont Elementary School (School) is located within the Sanger Unified School District (District) at 3095 N. Greenwood Avenue in Fresno County. The School serves a population of approximately 640 students and staff. The School has a long history of Nitrate MCL exceedance from all of its groundwater sources. Therefore, the School was allowed to supply bottled water through a permanent waiver issued by the County's Health Department in 2000. Under this waiver, the School could continue supplying water for use in restrooms and lawn irrigation while bottled water was provided for drinking and cooking. After the State Water Board (then California Department of Public Health) took over the jurisdiction of the School's water system in 2007, the permanent waiver was revoked declaring that bottled water was not a permanent solution. A Compliance Order No. 03-23-09O-011 (Order) was issued on May 19, 2009 for Nitrate MCL violation. The Order required the District to take necessary actions to bring the water system back into compliance.

The District qualified and applied for a Prop 84 grant funding and successfully entered into a planning study funding agreement with the California Department of Public Health (now State Water Board). The planning study was completed on February 17, 2015.

During the planning study, various alternatives, including nitrate treatment, new groundwater source, and consolidation with the nearby systems were evaluated. Consolidation with another public water system, Fresno County Service Area (FCSA) # 10/Cumorah Knolls, located approximately three (3) miles north of the School was selected as a preferred solution. Due to opposition from majority of the FCSA # 10 residents, the first planning study was unsuccessful. Later, the residents agreed to the project and the second planning study was conducted to complete the bid documents for the consolidation project.

FCSA #10 is a community water system owned and operated by the County of Fresno Special Districts and located at the intersection of Shaw and Greenwood Avenue in Fresno County. It serves a population of 132 via 47 service connections. The community has two groundwater wells, each capable of meeting the demand of the Water System. The consolidation project included approximately 3 miles of 4-inch C900 PVC, a hydropneumatic tank and a booster station at the school site. As part of the consolidation project, FCSA #10 was granted some improvements to their aging system, such as a new sand separator, a new pump, a new hydropneumatic tank and necessary electric controls.

The State Water Board entered into a construction funding agreement with the District on December 4, 2016 and the project was completed in June 2019 for a total construction cost of \$2.44 million using Prop 1 and DWSRF funds. The School now receives water from FCSA #10 for domestic use. The School's groundwater source continues to supply to lawn irrigation. A shut down test was conducted to ensure there is no actual cross connection between the irrigation and the domestic system during the final project inspection conducted on June 10, 2019.