



Nestlé project manager speaks to Weed Rotary

By Charlie Unkefer

During a half hour presentation at last week's Weed Rotary Club luncheon, Nestlé's Dave Palais outlined the company's recently revised McCloud water bottling project proposal and fielded questions from club members and guests.

Nestlé, according to Palais, who is the McCloud project manager, chose to revise their original plant proposal, in part, due to changes in the economic climate.

Palais noted that the original project, which included a one million sq. foot building and the extraction of 1,600 acre/feet of water annually, has been scaled back to a 350,000 sq. foot building and the extraction of 600 acre/feet annually. Other revisions include the reduction of projected plant jobs from 240 to 100 and the exclusion of a groundwater well as another means of water extraction.

Palais emphasized that the company currently has no contract with MCSD. "They are hesitating at the moment in regards to entering negotiations," he said, adding that Nestlé is "still committed to

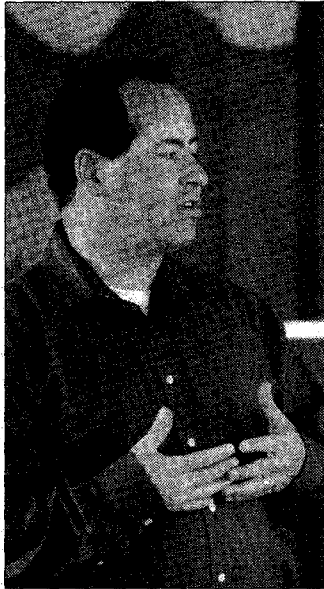


Photo by Charlie Unkefer

Nestlé project manager Dave Palais was the guest speaker at last week's Weed Rotary luncheon.

dialogue with the district and respect their position."

Speaking of the highly publicized opposition to the project, Palais said, "There is a small group that is opposed to the project and many are from out of town."

He said, "There are some

private interests in McCloud who see us as competition and are opposed to the project."

"People should not be scared by those who want to stop (the project)," said Palais. He encouraged those attending the Rotary meeting, if inclined, to express their opinions by writing letters to the editor and to the McCloud Community Services District Board of Directors.

When asked his thoughts on the MCSD board's decision to seek "higher level" contacts with Nestlé, Palais said, "They (the board) feel that need, and I respect that. I'm still the project manager and will continue to be involved."

Speaking about the last Community Forum held by Nestlé in February, Palais characterized it as a "respectful exchange" and noted that the consulting firm MIG is still processing the comments generated by the public. He said that the feedback will be updated on a website that Nestlé has devoted exclusively to the McCloud project. The web address is nestlewatersca.com/mccloud.

The next community forum to be held by the company is

tentatively scheduled for some time in May and will focus on the hydrological studies which are taking place along Squaw Valley Creek.

Palais was also asked if the company is concerned about plastic bottles and their overall effect on the environment.

He responded, "We are very concerned. Our CEO has been outspoken about recycling."

He also noted that the company has started the trend of manufacturing the lightest bottle in the industry, and on Earth Day will be releasing a plastic bottle that is made up of 25 percent recycled material.

He discussed concerns expressed about the amount of truck traffic that will be created by the proposed project.

"If we could compare the traffic to mill traffic (during peak production years), there would be no comparison," he said.

For more information about the Nestlé Project visit nestlewatersca.com/mccloud or call 1-866-McHydro (624-9376).

The Weed Rotary Club meets every Thursday at 12:15 at Do's Amigos Restaurant in South Weed.