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PRESS RELEASE

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Drought Emergency Declared by City of Rio Dell

At a special meeting held on Tuesday, June 22nd the Rio Dell City Council voted to declare a drought emergency. The declaration calls for a series of voluntary reductions in water use in order to ease pressure on the waters of the Eel River. The Council also directed that the City's alternative groundwater well site be activated to diversify the water supply and reduce surface water intake from the river.

"We didn't have this option back in 2014." Stated Mayor Pro-Tem Gordon Johnson, referring to the City's emergency well system that came online in 2018 after the last drought left the community with few options. "This is a tremendous relief for our citizens, for the environment and it shows we have been working hard to fix the threats posed to our system."

Johnson went on to thank the State Water Resources Control Board and Senator Mike McGuire for stepping in with financial assistance to help cover the \$1.8 million water source diversification project.

The City's wastewater system also recycles treated water back to the groundwater aquifer the wells are located in. 1/8 of a mile downstream of the well system sits a 14 acre irrigation field where this water is allowed to replenish the groundwater basin, resulting in the lowest environmental impact possible.

Rio Dell's Superintendent of Wastewater Operations, Derek Taylor stated, "This is a technologically advanced and environmentally friendly system, one of the best on the Eel River Watershed. Much of what we take out in well water is returned to the basin."

Taylor concluded by saying, "The river does so much for us, now is the time to help the river by conserving this resource."

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