

The Greenspot Recharge Project



The Greenspot Recharge Project, also known as “Greenspot,” will keep our water local by sending purified water from the Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency (BBARWA) treatment plant to new recharge basins in the Erwin Lake area. There, it undergoes additional, natural filtration as it slowly filters down through layers of soil and travels northwest to existing municipal wells, helping to replenish the Big Bear Valley’s groundwater basin.

PROJECT BENEFITS



Keeps Our Water in Our Valley. Millions of gallons of highly treated water currently leave the Big Bear Valley each year instead of being reused here. This project would keep more water local by purifying it and putting it back into the ground for future use.



Protects Against Drought. Greenspot provides a reliable local source of water that isn’t dependent on rainfall or snowfall. Putting this purified water into the groundwater basin helps the community better withstand droughts.



Valleywide Benefits. The Big Bear Area Regional Wastewater Agency (BBARWA) would manage the full lifecycle of the water, from treatment to recharge. Recharged groundwater flows to wells that already serve both the City of Big Bear Lake Department of Water and the Big Bear City Community Services District.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is this project needed?

Big Bear Valley depends entirely on groundwater for its drinking water supplies. In recent years, drought and more variable precipitation have reduced how much water naturally recharges the groundwater basin, leaving the community vulnerable to water shortages. Water purified and returned to our local groundwater basin through this project is equivalent to what 2,700 average households in the Big Bear Valley use each year.



How does it work?

At the BBARWA treatment plant, water will undergo multiple treatment steps including ultrafiltration, reverse osmosis, and ultraviolet light. Purified water is pumped to the Greenspot site and placed into recharge basins that appear like large ponds and allow the water to soak into the ground over time. Once absorbed into the ground, this purified water will undergo additional, natural filtration as it soaks through layers of soil and into the groundwater basin. From there it travels northwest to existing municipal wells.

Have you considered other water supply options?

Professionals have looked at seven ways to use our treated water in the Big Bear Valley. These studies show that groundwater recharge at Greenspot is one of the best options.

Why is the project being considered in the Erwin Lake area?

Studies and tests have confirmed that groundwater recharge would be effective at the Greenspot Recharge site. Additionally, the site is near existing Big Bear Lake Department of Water and Power and Big Bear City Community Services District wells, which reduces project costs.

Is the water safe to drink?

Purified water goes through multiple treatment steps and routine testing to ensure it meets or exceeds strict state and federal water quality standards. Once placed into the Greenspot recharge basins, water will undergo additional, natural filtration as it soaks through layers of soil and into the groundwater basin. Eventually the water will reach municipal wells and be considered the same as all other groundwater. Local water suppliers then follow state and federal standards for potable water so that by the time it gets to you it's completely safe to drink.

How much does it cost and who is paying for it?

The estimated cost to complete Greenspot is \$81.4 million. The total cost is \$88.6 million when you include the cost of developing the overall Replenish Big Bear Program. If approved for construction by the BBARWA Governing Board, Greenspot would be funded using a mix of grants, loans, bonds, and sewer rates. BBARWA has pursued grants and low-cost financing to help limit rate increases for residents and businesses. Updates will be shared as the project moves forward.

What happens next?

Final design is currently underway. The Project Team is refining design components and estimated costs. Construction of the project is subject to BBARWA Governing Board approval. The community will be informed as more details become available.

The Greenspot Recharge Project is a proposed component of the Replenish Big Bear Program. Funding for this project has been provided in part through the California Department of Water Resources, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and United States Bureau of Reclamation.

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