



**MARIN COUNTY
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

ALEX HINDS, DIRECTOR

EHS POLICY # LU(W)- 07.01

Well Drilling Permit Policy for All Water Wells on the Bolinas Gridded Mesa

RE: Well Drilling Permit Policy for All Water Wells on the Gridded Mesa Area of Bolinas

DATE: April 16, 2007

PURPOSE

This policy interprets the applicable sections of well construction standards and Coastal Permit development standards for non-domestic (agricultural/irrigation) wells within the Gridded Mesa Area of Bolinas.

BACKGROUND

The Gridded Mesa area is characterized by poor soil characteristics, shallow soil depths above impervious blocks of shale rock, high ground water conditions, small lot sizes, and substandard drainage patterns, as documented in the Bolinas Gridded Mesa Plan. The Mesa is located within the Marin County Local Coastal Program, Unit I.

Authority to regulate well drilling and to require well drilling permits is granted to Environmental Health Services through the Model Well Standards Ordinance adopted in Accordance with State Water Code Section 13801, (November 1, 1989). Both the State Water Well Standards and the septic regulations, found in Marin County Code, Title 18, require a specified minimum separation between individual sewage disposal systems and wells.

Marin County Code Section 22.56.130 allows the use of individual domestic water wells within the service area of a community or mutual water system, but only under specified conditions. If criteria are met, wells shall maintain a setback of at least 100 feet from all property lines or a finding shall be made that the well does not create development constraints on neighboring properties. In cases where the well is intended for domestic use, these requirements are addressed through the Coastal Permit. However, because non-domestic wells are not subject to Coastal Permit requirements, the potential exists that a well could adversely impact surrounding properties, either by limiting the available land that a neighbor could use for siting a component of a sewage treatment system, or by imposing other development constraints.

Environmental Health Services

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MINIMUM SITING, LOT-BOUNDARY SETBACK AND CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS

The following standards for water well drilling on the Bolinas Gridded Mesa combines existing standards of the State Water Well Standards and the MCC Regulations for On-site Sewage Treatment Systems, the intent of the Local Coastal Plan, sound public health policy, and the restrictions imposed by the unique environmental conditions of the Bolinas Gridded Mesa.

1. A well constructed with the minimum safe seal depth, defined in the State Well Bulletin as a 20-foot sanitary seal, shall maintain a 100-foot setback to the property boundary
2. A well constructed with a shallower seal depth, defined in the State Well Bulletin as below 20-feet and no shallower than 10 feet, shall maintain a doubled, or 200-foot, setback to the property boundary.
3. No water well with a sanitary seal shallower than 10 feet shall be approved for construction.
4. Due to Marin County policies administered during the siting and approval of on-site sewage systems, any encroachment by a setback radius from an adjacent well effectively restricts the neighbor from being able to use that part of their property and, thus, imposes a development constraint. This interpretation is further supported by historic failures of local sewage systems, small lots and poor environmental conditions on the Bolinas Gridded Mesa. Consequently, a variance to the lot-boundary setback, by definition, cannot be issued by EHS.
5. Using the precedents established in the Model Water Well Ordinance, Section 8 and the MCC Section 7.28.046, an applicant can appeal a well drilling permit decision to the Marin County Board of Supervisors, accompanied by an appeal fee.
6. If needed, EHS will assist BCPUD in obtaining contact information to facilitate the public notification, by providing TAPIS reports for those APNs submitted to EHS by BCPUD.
7. An additional Design Consultation Fee (the one-hour equivalent cost, currently at \$102) shall be added to the well drilling permit fee for every well drilling permit within the BCPUD area of influence.