

# Ricki Heck: Transparency at NID takes another step backwards

Other VociesRicki Heck

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Troubling. Disturbing. Public trust? I have been attending NID meetings regularly for the last six months and have come to several conclusions.

First, this is a remarkable organization operating in our community providing jobs and acting as stewards of our vital watershed.

Second, NID directors appear to operate as if they are a fiefdom, with no responsibility to the public or ratepayers for their actions. As many have written in the last month, NID has taken the unfortunate position of non-transparency. Nowhere is there a better example of this than in their property acquisitions in preparation for what they believe will be the Centennial Dam.

Prior to the initial completion to any environmental review, any oversight by the Army Corps of Engineers, any scientific evaluation or the granting of even one permit, they have spent \$4,149,881 on buying properties that will be inundated or impacted by the proposed dam. The only way this was discovered was through a series of requests made by me, members of the public and an eventual public records request completed by YubaNet.

As of April 25, 2017, NID has acquired 23 parcels, 17 in Nevada county and six in Placer county at a total cost of over \$4,000,000; all done presumably with public monies and without public disclosure. This is not transparency.

As I asked in their meeting of April 12, 2017, these actions raise many questions.

- From what source of monies did NID's purchases come from?
- Were the property owners paid fair market value for their properties and who determined the fair market value?
- What is their argument for spending rate/tax payer dollars on the acquisition of these properties before receiving environmental review or being granted any permits for the project?
- If the dam is not built, what will happen to the properties?

This action by NID, hidden from public view, concealed behind a veil of paperwork is not transparency. It fosters distrust from the community at a time when NID is asking the public to trust them in their pursuit of Centennial Dam. The public deserves better. I continue to attend every meeting I can and encourage all who are able to do the same.

*Ricki R. Heck lives in Grass Valley.*

