



Photos by Benjamin Fanjoy/For the S.F. Chronicle

Alex Zyskan fishes along the Nicasio Reservoir on Aug. 12. The Marin Municipal Water District is exploring the idea of expanding the reservoir as it searches for additional water supplies.

Reservoir plan faces sharp resistance

Nicasio residents fear increased flood risk around homes, school

By Jerry Wu
STAFF WRITER

In 2001, Monica and Michael Seybold bought a home in Nicasio, less than a mile from a shimmering reservoir on the edge of the Marin ranching community. Over time, hazards have become increasingly apparent. Most winters, heavy rainfall floods a creek that flows through their backyard toward the reservoir. Sediment buildup has caused the creek bed — and the water — to rise further, they said.

“It got so bad in one winter storm that we had goats and they got themselves trapped, and Mike had to go out and swim each goat back up to land,” said Monica Seybold, who has raised three boys there with her husband.

Now, the Seybolds and their neighbors fear things could get much worse. A plan by the Marin Municipal Water District to expand the reservoir, which accounts for more than a quarter of the district’s storage capacity, would inundate



Nicasio homeowners Monica and Mike Seybold show a photo depicting flooding along Nicasio Creek, which runs into the Nicasio Reservoir.

more land. Water in the town’s two creeks could back up during winter at the enlarged reservoir and cause more flooding in at least five people’s properties, including the Seybolds’. Finding more water is urgent for the water district, which serves over 191,000 people in central and southern Marin. In 2020-21, a drought left it with only about a few

months of water supply, according to Matthew Samson, the district’s president. As it looked for new options, the district assessed expanding Nicasio Reservoir, and found it viable. “When we got engineer estimates for installing the technology — not counting regulation, studies or permits — the cost was surprisingly low for the water we’d gain,”

Samson said. The proposal involves installing a 280-foot-long, 4.4-foot-high inflatable rubber gate across the spillway crest of Seeger Dam, which created Nicasio Reservoir in 1960. That would increase the reservoir’s capacity by about 3,700 acre-feet, or about 16.5%. The gate could then be raised to capture more rainfall. *Reservoir continues on A8*

Claims on crash get key facts wrong

White House tries to tie deaths to state’s ‘sanctuary’ policies

By Sophia Bollag and Sara DiNatale
STAFF WRITERS

SACRAMENTO — The White House on Monday blamed California’s sanctuary policies for a fatal crash in Florida allegedly caused by an undocumented semitruck driver, even though the Trump administration acknowledged the driver had a federal work permit. And while it’s true that California enabled immigrants without legal status to obtain driver’s licenses more than a decade ago, that law did not extend to commercial trucking licenses. The accusation prompted a new round of fighting between President Donald Trump and California Gov. Gavin Newsom, and became the latest tragedy to stand in for the broader debate about immigration. It appeared that once again the White House got key facts wrong as it attempted to seize on a devastating accident to harness public sympathy for its efforts to swiftly remove thousands of immigrants from the country. The White House has targeted California in particular as it carries out its deportation campaign, including by sending military troops into Los Angeles, and through an incident last week in which Border Patrol officials crashed a Newsom news conference. Harjinder Singh, 28, of Stockton, was arrested on charges of vehicular homicide following the *Sanctuary continues on A9*

Experts dispute GOP’s stance on redistricting

By Bob Egelko and Sophia Bollag
STAFF WRITERS

Gov. Gavin Newsom’s plan to ask the voters to redesign California’s congressional districts to enable Democrats to add House seats is drawing challenges from Republicans who claim the proposal violates the state Constitution and federal law. But the law doesn’t appear to be on their side. As the Democratic-controlled Legislature prepares to vote this week on Newsom’s proposed November ballot measure to change districts that were drafted by an independent commission, Assembly Member Carl DeMaio, R-San Diego, asked the nonpartisan Legislative Counsel’s Office to declare the measure illegal. He said he was also prepared to go to court. “By concocting this partisan redistricting scam, Gavin Newsom and Democrat politicians are openly violating the California Constitution and their oath of office,” DeMaio said in a news release. “Any vote ... on this corrupt plan would be unlawful and unconstitutional.” He argued that the state Constitution, under a ballot measure approved by the voters in 2008, *Districts continues on A9*

‘Boring’ is the goal for S.F. school officials

By Jill Tucker
STAFF WRITER

As San Francisco school officials kicked off the first day of school Monday amid a cacophony of welcome-back cheers, a few anxious sobs and excited shrieks, they were hoping for peace and quiet over the next nine months — with a break from the upheaval, chaos and conflict plaguing the district over the past several years. “We want to be boring,” said Superintendent Maria Su. “No drama, nothing to see here.” The goal, she said, is to get the San Francisco school district on steady

ground, with working payroll and hiring systems and a budget that isn’t headed toward insolvency. That means no big controversies, no imminent school closures or other big decisions and, fingers crossed, no teacher strike, recalls or other curveballs that could disrupt the path to maintaining a well-oiled machine that’s ready for the challenges ahead. “We need to be heads down, focused on student learning,” she said. On day one, it was so far so good. More than 95% of classrooms had a qualified teacher in front *Schools continues on A8*



Benjamin Fanjoy/For the S.F. Chronicle

San Francisco Unified School District Superintendent Maria Su gives students high-fives Monday at Sanchez Elementary School.