

Serving Placer County Residents Since 1957

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PCWA UPDATE

Placer County Water Agency

Volume 18 • Number 4 • August-September, 2004

PCWA Studies Options for Tomorrow's Water Supplies

Times are changing in western Placer County as robust growth continues and brings with it increasing demand for safe and reliable water supplies.

Just three years ago, in 2001, PCWA conducted a water supply analysis and concluded there was enough water available to meet buildout demand as called for in the general plans of Placer County and its cities.

Now, however, city and county officials are reconsidering their general plan boundaries, Lincoln and Roseville are poised for expansion, and PCWA has gone back to the drawing board in planning for the county's future water needs.

Integrated Resource Plan

The agency, working with the consulting firm of Brown & Caldwell, has begun preparation of an Integrated Water Resources Plan for western Placer County.

Studies for the plan are looking at all available sources of water including surface water, groundwater, reclaimed water, stormwa-



In 1892, Grandpa Hayford, standing with pick, and others built a water flume near Secret Town east of Colfax. Parts of PCWA's water system date to the Gold Rush.

(Photo courtesy of Placer County Dept. of Museums)

ter and, importantly, conserved water.

PCWA Director of Strategic Planning Einar Maisch said the agency is conducting more in-depth analyses and reviewing earlier assumptions about available and potential water supplies.

Maisch said Brown & Caldwell intends to complete the first phase of the integrated plan by this fall and complete the plan by year's end. The plan will include an

update of PCWA's existing Urban Water Master Plan.

Through recent years, the PCWA Board of Directors has placed increasing policy emphasis on water resources planning and management.

Regional Planning

On a regional level, the water agency has joined with 18 other water purveyors in Placer County and northern Sacramento County

(Please see Tomorrow's Water, P. 3)



General Manager's Report

By David A. Breninger

Agency Responds to State Balancing Act

The State of California continues to spend billions of dollars more than it receives. State officials, once again, intend to take massive amounts of money from local government - \$2.6 billion - over the next two years in an effort to cover the state budget shortfall.

Local entities - cities, counties, districts and agencies - governed by elected local officials, continue to pay the price for very poor state spending practices that have spun out of control for too long.

This is not the first time the state has turned to local government for money. Over the past 12 years, the state has taken over \$2.2 million in local property tax dollars from PCWA.

PCWA Funding Sources

As an enterprise agency and water utility, PCWA sets water rates and charges to cover its costs for providing water service to our customers. PCWA's Middle Fork American River hydroelectric power project is another example of an enterprise utility.

PCWA also provides an additional service as the county's water resource planning agency. This includes, for example, protecting Placer County's area-of-origin water supplies, watershed stewardship and the relicensing of the Middle Fork Project. These general governance activities are funded under what is called Agency Wide services, under a budget separate from the agency's water and power enterprise utilities. The Agency Wide budget is supported by local property tax and Middle Fork Project water sale revenues.

State Takes Local Tax Dollars

It is these local property tax dollars that continue to be highly coveted by state officials to offset the state budget shortfall. PCWA has projected receipt of about \$900,000 annually in local property tax revenues. It is also projected that the state will take \$534,000 of these revenues this year and another \$586,000 next year. This could amount to over \$1.1 million taken from PCWA over two years.

For the years 1992-2006, it is projected the state could take a total \$3.3 million in PCWA property tax dollars. There is no expectation that any of these funds will be returned or that more will not be taken in the years ahead.

Striving to keep a balanced PCWA Agency Wide budget under these conditions is not easy, particularly with loss of a primary revenue source. This has required carefully planned actions by the Board of Directors including significant spending reductions, abolishment of a vacant position, consolidation of duties and fiscal restructuring of agency services.

In the next newsletter, I'll report further on these and other fiscal impacts being imposed upon local government, and PCWA in particular, by state officials to offset their continuing budget overruns.

(As this issue of our newsletter went to press in late-July, no state budget had been adopted.)

Rebates for New Low-Flow Toilets

The water agency is offering \$75 rebates to water customers who replace old inefficient toilets with new low-flow models.

Low-flow toilets use 1.6 gallons or less water per flush compared to the older models which use 3 gallons or more.

The \$75 per-toilet rebates are good for residential, commercial, industrial and institutional PCWA water users. Up to 500 rebates are being offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

Interested customers should call the PCWA Customer Service Center at (530) 823-4850 to reserve a rebate and obtain an application form. Once the toilet is replaced, the customer returns the form and new toilet receipt and will then will receive a \$75 water bill credit.

Other Consumer Tips

Automatic Bill Payment

Customers may now enroll in PCWA's automatic bill payment program, in which water payments are paid directly by the customer's bank, eliminating the need for check writing. Application forms may be downloaded from the PCWA Web site at www.pcwa.net. Or call the PCWA Customer Service Center to have a form mailed to you.

Check for Leaks, Water Waste

Leaks in outdoor irrigation systems can go undetected without regular inspections. With irrigation season in high gear, now is the time to inspect your system for leaks, faulty or misaligned sprinkler heads or improperly set timers.

House and Business Calls

Do you suspect that you may be using more water than you need? And paying more than you need to? If so, call PCWA to arrange a Water Wise House or Business Call. A trained water efficiency specialist will pay you a visit, assess your plumbing systems, offer free conservation devices and literature and provide you with a recommended irrigation schedule.

Record Water Use Expected This Year

PCWA is on track this year to supply more water than ever before, says PCWA Director of Field Services Mike Nichol.

"All four of our temporary pumps on the American River have been running for much of this year," said Nichol, who noted that supplies should increase by the fall of 2005 when the new American River permanent pump station goes into operation.

The temporary pumps now supply a maximum of about 47 cubic feet of water per second (cfs). The permanent pumps will double capacity to about 100 cfs.

More Customers, Dry Conditions

Increased usage is attributed to high rates of growth in western Placer County, more water use by commercial agriculture in Zone 5, and to this year's dry spring, which brought peak demand much earlier than usual.

PCWA reached record water supply levels in 1999-2000 when customers used a total 107,100 acre-feet of water. Totals are measured in October at the end of the irrigation season.

Auburn Tunnel Outlet



Water from the American River is pumped through the Auburn Tunnel and into Auburn Ravine, above, for distribution in western Placer County.

Tomorrow's Water

Continued from Page 1

in a planned five-year effort to develop a Regional Water Master Plan.

Coordinated through the Regional Water Authority (RWA) the study will integrate the plans of participants and bring a regional focus to water resource issues and solutions.

Maisch said the regional studies will explore opportunities and benefits of partnering with neighbor agencies, sharing infrastructure and resources and increasing system reliability.

Through these planning efforts, Maisch said, PCWA's main objective is "to make sure that we are prepared to supply the continuing development in Placer County while at the same time maintaining a high degree of reliability to all of our customers."

Dog Owners Can Make Work Safer for PCWA Meter Readers

You may have heard the stories about dogs vs. meter readers. Fortunately, for PCWA meter readers, dog bites are rare.

Pet owner responsibility is key when it comes to the safety of utility workers. PCWA meter readers are very aware of the occupational hazards of their work and are trained to spot potential dangers.

Here are a few things we ask you to do to make their jobs safer:

- Post a fence sign to alert utility workers that a dog is present.
- Confine your pet when workers are in the area. Never tie or restrain your dog near the meter.
- If you are at home when a meter reader is working in the neighborhood, put your dog in the house.

Remember, even a gentle, otherwise friendly dog can become protective or aggressive when surprised or confronted by a stranger.



How to Contact Your Elected PCWA Board

PCWA is an independent public agency governed by an elected Board of Directors.

Your directors are:

DISTRICT 1, Pauline Roccucci • Roseville, (916) 782-2708
DISTRICT 2, Alex Ferreira • Lincoln, (916) 645-2072
DISTRICT 3, Lowell Jarvis • Auburn, (530) 889-8836
DISTRICT 4, Mike Lee • Loomis, (916) 408-5600
DISTRICT 5, Otis Wollan • Colfax, (530) 346-7967

A Lake Tahoe Primer

A presentation by Chad Blanchard, chief hydrologist at Lake Tahoe, highlighted the PCWA Board's annual eastern Placer County meeting in Tahoe City on July 1. Here are some interesting Tahoe facts and figures:

Water capacity: 122 million acre-feet
 Water storage capacity: 744,600 acre-feet
 Annual evaporation: 360,000 acre-feet
 (Enough to supply Reno and Sparks for a year)
 Elevation at its natural rim: 6,223 ft.
 Average depth: 1,000 ft. Deepest spot: 1,632 ft.
 Surface area: 122,000 acres
 Width: 8-13 miles. Length: 22 miles.
 First dam: 1870s. Current dam built: 1913
 Visitor days per year: 23 million



Water from Lake Tahoe flows into the Truckee River at Tahoe City. Sixty-eight streams feed the lake. The Truckee River is its only outlet.

IN BRIEF

Water Rate Review This Fall. The PCWA Board of Directors is expected to consider the agency's 2005 water rates and budgets this fall. Interested customers may contact the PCWA Customer Service Center at (530) 823-4850 to find out when hearings will be held.

Algae Control at Work. The agency has resumed its effective algae control program this year and is treating irrigation canals on a monthly basis. Algae control keeps canals free of buildup and allows more water to flow through the system.

Breninger Named to NWRA Board. PCWA General Manager David A. Breninger is one of four California water industry leaders named to serve on the Board of Directors of the National Water Resources Association. The California Caucus appointment was announced June 21 by Jerry Gladbach, president of the Association of California Water Agencies.

Fire Assessment in Progress. With many of its water conveyance and power generation facilities in remote forest areas, PCWA has contracted with a specialist to assess fire danger and develop a management plan. Directors in early July approved an \$8400 contract with Stewart Feldman of Meadow Vista to prepare the plan.

Personnel Notes

Longtime PCWA employee, Agency Secretary **Cheri Sprunck**, has assumed the duties of Clerk to the Board, effective July 1. She succeeds Kathleen A. Smith who was appointed Clerk-Recorder and Elections Officer for the County of Nevada.



Mal Toy, a nine-year employee, was named Director of Resource Development, effective July 1. The former

Director of Planning Services is heading the federal relicensing effort for the Middle Fork American River Project.

Public Meetings

The Placer County Water Agency Board of Directors meets regularly the first and third Thursdays of each month at 3 p.m. in the Placer County Board of Supervisors chambers, 175 Fulweiler Avenue in Auburn. The public is welcome.

www.pcwa.net

This newsletter is published as a public service of the

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