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PCWA UPDATE

Placer County Water Agency

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New Meters Use Radio Technology

More than 1000 old water meters are being replaced by PCWA this Spring and Summer in the foothill communities of Alta, Dutch Flat and Colfax.

The aging meters are making way for modern, state-of-the-art meters that use radio frequency technology. This allows meters to be read from the street, saving time and limiting the need for entry onto private property.

Water Efficiency

The replacement program is designed to boost water efficiency and is being conducted in association with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Funding is through the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1999 and was secured through the efforts of U.S. Rep. John T. Doolittle. The program carries no meter replacement charges for PCWA water users.

The project contractor, R.L. McDonnell, began the first replacements in Alta in May and will continue in Dutch Flat and Colfax with completion anticipated in July.



New Water Meters in Alta

Inspector Tom Brown, left, is pictured with Robert and Brendon McDonnell of R.L. McDonnell Construction as the meter replacement project gets under way in Alta.

PCWA Director of Customer Services John Kingsbury said water customers are advised by mail about one week before their meter is scheduled for replacement. Door tag reminders are placed one day before the work, he said.

In many cases, the older meters are reading at only 85-95 percent of actual water usage, so customers should not be surprised to see higher readings with the new

meters, Kingsbury cautioned.

To help customers reduce water usage, PCWA offers a full range of water efficiency programs, including free home water use surveys, low-flow plumbing fixtures and rebates on installation of modern, low-flow toilets.

For water use efficiency and other water service information, call the PCWA Customer Service Center in Auburn at (530) 823-4850 or see www.pcwa.net.



General Manager's Report

By David A. Breninger

PCWA Ratepayers Should Not Have To Pay CALFED Costs

Proposals advanced by state and federal officials are being watched closely by PCWA so that our customers are not saddled with unfounded costs in funding the \$8.1 billion CALFED Bay Delta Program. This is a program that intends to pump more Northern California water to Southern California. The problem is that CALFED is short on money and is looking directly into the pocketbooks of Northern California water ratepayers to help subsidize CALFED.

The 10-year-old CALFED Program is the largest and most comprehensive water management and ecosystem project in the nation. The program, however, faces huge shortfalls in state and federal funding and is looking to identify new sources of revenue. For example, it was proposed that CALFED collect nearly \$4 billion through fees imposed on local water and power customers in California.

Water Suppliers United Against Fees

PCWA has joined with water suppliers from across Northern California to closely track the CALFED funding issue and strongly oppose proposals for unilateral costs being placed on Northern California water suppliers and our customers.

CALFED may be a needed and worthy program for those who benefit. Its mission is to develop a long-term comprehensive plan that restores ecological health and improves water quality in the Delta system, allowing Southern California contractors to pump more Northern California water to the south.

Those Who Benefit Should Pay

The program should be fully supported by those who would benefit from it. We question whether upstream agencies such as PCWA would benefit at all. At this point, we certainly see no benefits nor any reason that would warrant new fees or taxes being levied against PCWA and our customers.

To date, we are making our voice heard. We have participated in the CALFED public process and have taken our case to our legislators through letters and personal meetings.

In May, we joined a coalition of 37 water agencies as signatories to a letter to Gov. Schwarzenegger and the legislative leadership to state our strong opposition to CALFED water user fees or payments.

At this point, user fees or payments are not part of the governor's "May revise" budget but nothing has been resolved to fund CALFED's massive shortfall.

We are continuing to participate in the legislative and administrative process and will strive to do everything we can to avoid Placer County water users having to pay fees for the CALFED program. Indeed, a fee without benefit is little more than a new state imposed tax on water customers.

Long-Term Debt Restructured:

Agency Saves \$300,000 Per Year

PCWA in May refinanced \$35.2 million in long-term debt, reducing current annual debt service by \$300,000 and resulting in an overall net present value savings of \$3.68 million.

The PCWA Board of Directors authorized staff to pursue the refinancing in order to take advantage of today's favorable interest rates.

The refinanced debt is in the form of certificates of participation (COPs) issued by the agency in 1995 and 1999 to finance major water system improvements, including expansion of the Foothill Water Treatment Plant in Newcastle.

To restructure the debt, PCWA Director of Financial Services Joseph Parker assembled a refinancing team including legal counsel from Sacramento and San Francisco, financial advisers from Los Angeles and a Wall Street investment bank.

"The refinancing team did an excellent job in getting us into the market in time to capture very favorable interest rates," Parker said.

Personnel Notes

Michael Cooper Retires



PCWA Director of Administrative Services Michael D. Cooper is planning to retire on Aug. 5. Cooper has spent 32 years in local government service, including 13 years with the water agency. He is a resident of Auburn Lake Trails.

Enjoy the Outdoors at PCWA's Mountain Reservoirs



Hell Hole Reservoir

High on the western slope of the Sierra, near the headwaters of the American and Rubicon rivers, lies a pristine, relatively undiscovered area.

French Meadows and Hell Hole reservoirs, owned and operated by PCWA, attract outdoor enthusiasts who want to get away for a few days of uncrowded natural beauty.

Snowbound in winter, the reservoirs are generally accessible from Memorial Day weekend through early October. French Meadows is located 50 miles east of Auburn, via the twisting, turning Mosquito Ridge Road. It's another 10 miles to Hell Hole.

The reservoirs date to 1963-66 when they were built as part of the Middle Fork American River Project, which created additional water supplies and a valuable hydroelectric power generation system.

French Meadows Reservoir

French Meadows, near the headwaters of the Middle Fork American River, is a large, 1,500-acre reservoir. Campground and boat launch facilities are located around the lake and along the Middle Fork American River upstream from the reservoir. Camp sites are \$5-\$8; group sites, \$25-\$75.

French Meadows Family Campground
(75 sites)

Lewis Family Campground (40 sites)

Gates Group Campground

(75 person capacity)

Coyote Group Campground

(50 person capacity)

(Five additional 25-person group sites are available)

French Meadows Remote sites

Ahart Campground

(12 sites one mile upstream)

Talbot Campground

(5 sites three miles upstream)

Poppy Campground

(north shore hike or boat access)

McGuire Picnic Area and Swimming

Beach (day use, no fee)

For information, contact the U.S. Forest Service American River Ranger District at (530) 367-2224. For reservations, call the National Forest Reservation System at 1-800-280-CAMP.

Hell Hole Reservoir

Located at the 5,200-foot elevation on the Rubicon River, the more remote Hell Hole Reservoir covers 1,200 acres and is surrounded by scenic rock outcroppings. Fishing and hiking are the main activities here. Camp sites are \$5 nightly.

Big Meadows Campground
(4 miles from reservoir, 40 sites)

Hell Hole Campground
(1 mile from reservoir, 10 sites)

Upper Hell Hole Campground
(5 mile hike, 15 sites, no fee)

For information, contact the U.S. Forest Service Georgetown Ranger District at (530) 333-4312. For reservations, call the National Forest Reservation System at 1-800-280-CAMP.

Water Recreation

Camping, boating, fishing, hiking and in some areas, river rafting, are popular activities on the American and Rubicon river watersheds. Local U.S. Forest Service district offices can provide more information and maps of the areas.



Rafting at Indian Bar, downstream from PCWA's Ralston Afterbay



**U.S.
Forest
Service
Centennial**

USFS to Dedicate Historic Robinson Flat Site Aug. 20

A hundred years ago, Gifford Pinchot, first chief of the U.S. Forest Service, saw the relationship of forests and water.

Today, as the Forest Service celebrates its Centennial (1905-2005), its role in watershed protection and management is more important than ever before.

PCWA works closely with the Tahoe and Eldorado national forests and is a cosponsor of a U.S. Forest Service Centennial celebration to be held on Saturday, Aug. 20, at Robinson Flat. Hours are 10-4 p.m. and the public is invited to attend.



Pictured in 1927, the guard station still stands at Robinson Flat.

Historic Robinson Flat, 45 minutes northeast of Foresthill, was used from 1913-1971 as a summer home by Forest Service patrolman who protected this part of the Tahoe National Forest.

The ceremony includes a flag raising, ribbon cutting, guest speakers, music, trail hikes and more. For information, contact Nolan Smith at the American River Ranger District in Foresthill, (530) 367-2224.

Water Awareness



PCWA water efficiency specialists visited area schools in May during California Water Awareness Month. Above, Audra Davison reads to first graders in Gina Grunigen's class at Alta Vista School in Auburn. Left, students enjoy a hands-on watershed model.

\$75 Toilet Rebates: Save Water, Save Money

Older model toilets use up to 6 gallons per flush. That's a lot of water going down the drain. PCWA customers can replace old, inefficient toilets with new ultra low-flow models that use only 1.6 gallons per flush.

Customers will save not only water; they can also save money through a \$75 rebate program offered by PCWA and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

Rebate application forms may be obtained in advance through the PCWA Customer Service Center. Once the toilet has been replaced, the customer returns the form with a receipt and will then receive a \$75 water bill credit.

More than 200 rebates are now available through the current program.

The PCWA Customer Service Center may be reached at (530) 823-4850.

In Brief

ENVIRONMENTAL WATER SALE. The PCWA Board of Directors on Apr. 7 agreed to sell 10,000 acre-feet of surplus water from the American River to the state Environmental Water Account for \$75 per acre-foot. Last year, the agency sold 20,000 acre-feet of water to the account.

INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCE PLAN. A new integrated water resource plan for Placer County is being prepared for the agency by Brown & Caldwell Environmental Engineers and Consultants of Sacramento. Completion is anticipated early this summer.

AR PUMPS SEEN BY 2007. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation continues to face budgetary delays for the ongoing American River Pump Project. The pump station, which will supply up to 35,500 acre-feet of water per year to Placer County, is now expected to be in operation by summer of 2007.

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

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