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Pioneers

Bruce McCreary

(Ed. note: In this 50th anniversary year, our newsletter recognizes people who played key roles in the agency's history. In recent issues we featured legal counsel Ed Tiedemann and Tahoe City's Bill Briner. Here we recognize Middle Fork American River Project pioneer Bruce McCreary. Other pioneers will be featured in future issues.)



Bruce McCreary

At 90, Bruce McCreary has lots of stories to tell, not the least of which is his leadership role in development of PCWA's Middle Fork American River Project, a multi-million-dollar effort he led from 1953-1970.

(Please see Pioneers, Page 2)



Author Steve Hubbard believes this photo from his book was taken in Placer County in 1911 as part of a tour of potential hydroelectric sites.

Placer County Man Authors Book on Historic Sierra Powerhouses

“In the late 19th Century, the making of electricity, which had been a parlor trick only a few decades before, became an urgent need as the necessities of urban life - lights, streetcars, industrial motors - converted from gas, coal and steam power to electrical power.

“While electricity could be generated at coal or gas plants, California had mountains, canyons and rivers that made hydroelectric generation of power possible on a larger scale than in the eastern United States.

“In addition to the terrain and water, the early developers of hydroelectric power in California found an existing infrastructure in the Sierra Nevada that dammed, stored and conveyed water for mining and irrigation. Those facilities were adapted to generate electricity.”

-- Introduction
Powerhouses of the Sierra Nevada

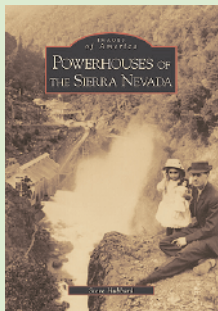
Photojournalist Steve Hubbard lives in Newcastle, just up the road from the historic PG&E Wise Powerhouse. He would pass by and look at the old 1912 plant, one of the Sierra's first, and wonder how it all got started.

Hubbard began to research state and local historical files and photo archives. He visited and photographed powerhouses throughout the region. “Our area has so much history,” he says. “It's all around us.”

(Please see Powerhouses, Page 2)

Powerhouses

Continued from Page 1



Steve Hubbard and his book

Today, after five years of research and writing, Hubbard is the proud author of “Powerhouses of the Sierra Nevada,” a 128-page photographic essay of early hydroelectric development in the region.

The book was released in June by Arcadia Publishing of Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, a company that specializes in local history books. The book is part of the company’s “Images of America” series and is available at local book stores and online at www.arcadiapublishing.com.

Hubbard focuses on hydro development on the Pit, Sacramento, Feather, American, Bear and Yuba river watersheds. Placer County water and hydroelectric history is well documented. The Alta, Drum, Folsom, Spaulding and Wise powerhouses are pictured, as are local canals and reservoirs.

PCWA is Included

The book includes references to PCWA and canal operator Steve Kedinger, who provided background information. “Steve was very helpful,” Hubbard said. “As a ditch tender, or canal operator, he represents a skill, a task, that’s been going on for a hundred years and continues today.”

Hubbard acknowledges that the originators of water and hydroelectric facilities in the Sierra are largely unknown. He dedicates his book “To the forgotten, nameless pioneers of California who made the future possible.”

The book is part of the author’s interest in documenting the disappearing American West. His work can be seen at www.goldcountryimages.com.

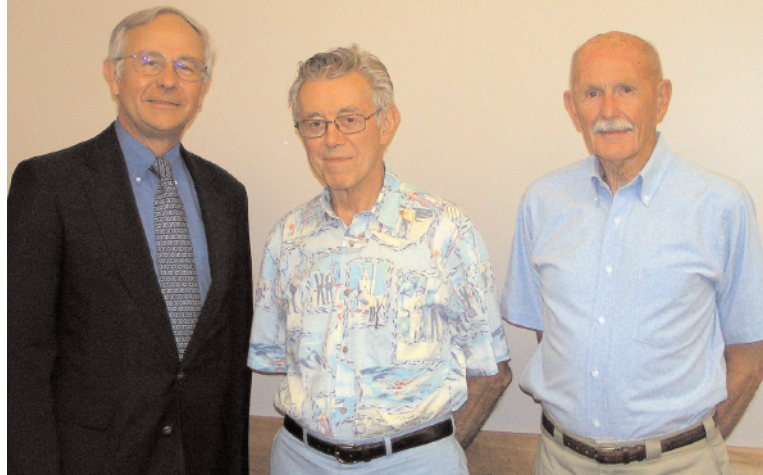
Hydro Tradition Lives at PCWA

PCWA is among the California water and power suppliers that generate hydroelectric energy in the Sierra Nevada today.

The water agency’s traditions date back to the completion of the Middle Fork American River Project in 1963-67. The project includes five power plants, two primary reservoirs, French Meadows and Hell Hole; several smaller storage facilities and many miles of canals and tunnels.

PCWA has embarked upon a multiyear project to gain a new federal license for operation of the Middle Fork American River Project. The original 50-year license must be renewed by 2013.

Through relicensing, the water agency intends to maintain a productive, publicly-owned project that will benefit the people and property owners of Placer County.



Three Generations

As part of its continuing 50th Anniversary celebration, PCWA has recognized agency general managers through the years. Pictured above, from left, current manager **David A. Breninger (1992-present)**, **Bill Grant (1974-1983)** and **Robert Johnston (1972-1973)**.

Pioneers: Bruce McCreary

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The Middle Fork project was a crowning achievement in a colorful engineering career that took McCreary from geology studies at Stanford to the gold mines of Mexico, design work on the New Jersey Turnpike and development of strategic airfields in North Africa. An airfield he designed in Casablanca, Morocco is now an international airport.

Today, McCreary enjoys life with his wife, Kay, at their longtime Auburn area ranch. He was recognized this fall as part of PCWA’s 50th Anniversary celebration and later shared memories of his American River days.

McCreary’s career grew from early work in materials research with the California Division of Highways. He was involved in road building technologies that would spread throughout the world and his work in stabilization of soft soils would serve him well in his profession.

Began Hydro Studies in 1953

After working internationally, McCreary, a Santa Cruz native, returned to San Francisco where he, longtime partner Sanford Koretsky and others opened an engineering firm. In 1953, he began to study the water and hydroelectric potential of the American River, picking up where studies by Union Pacific and the State of California had left off.

By the time PCWA was formed in 1957, McCreary-Koretsky Engineers had envisioned and outlined the Middle Fork Project. “We did it on a contingency basis,” McCreary recalls. “There was no money coming in from 1957-60.”

The firm was involved through the 1967 completion of the project, and longer after legal difficulties arose over project construction. McCreary retired in 1970.

Three decades later, the visionary engineer looks back on the project with pride and a great sense of accomplishment. The reservoirs, power plants and waterways he helped design and build have served Placer County well and will continue to do so for many years to come.

TAKING SHAPE

This photo illustration shows construction of the new pump station on Oct. 24, left, combined with an artist rendering of the structures' "fruit shed" design.



Water Central

New Pump Station Will Distribute American River Water

Completion of the \$36 million Foothill Raw Water Supply Pump Station, now under construction off Ophir Road, is scheduled for late Spring 2008.

The new plant, in combination with the American River Pump Station which is now being completed in the river canyon, will eventually give PCWA the ability to supply American River water as an added source to service areas now supplied primarily with water from the Yuba and Bear rivers.

The plant will pump water from the existing Auburn Tunnel and supply a new water treatment plant at Ophir that is planned in coming years. It will also supply the Foothill Water

New Structure Blends Well with Rural Character of Ophir Area

Treatment Plant in Newcastle once a new pipeline is in place to connect the two facilities.

Construction at the site has been in progress since early 2006. The structure has been designed with a "fruit shed" appearance to blend well with the surroundings and PCWA's nearby Heritage Center.

Annual Outage is Seamless

Fall is a time of year when demand for water is lower and canal flows can be cut back for maintenance work.

This year's annual PG&E-PCWA canal maintenance outage has been among the smoothest in many years, said PCWA Director of Field Services Mike Nichol.

Fall rains kept fields green, cutting demand for irrigation water, but were not heavy enough to delay construction work on the canals. The outage was slated for six weeks but the work was done in five.

Nichol said the water agency was assisted by the Nevada Irrigation District and the cities of Roseville and Lincoln to make certain that supplies were sufficient in all service areas.

PG&E crews worked on sections of the Bear River Canal between Alta and Bowman and completed substantial tunnel work in the Auburn area. Meanwhile PCWA completed maintenance and gunnite work in its service areas, taking advantage of the scheduled outage.

Board Meets With Tahoe Water Leaders

Local and countywide water industry leaders gathered Oct. 11 in Tahoe City to review eastern Placer County water issues and commemorate PCWA's 50th anniversary.

The PCWA Board hosted presentations by several local water agency representatives during an afternoon meeting and then gathered at the River Grill for an anniversary reception.

PCWA is active in countywide water resource matters, working with local water agencies in both western and eastern Placer County.

Rate Increases Anticipated for 2008

As this newsletter went to press, an increase in water rates for 2008 was being considered by the PCWA Board of Directors.

Under the proposed schedule, treated water users would see adjustments of about \$1.40 to \$6.75 per month, depending on the amount of water used. Rates are reviewed each year and are based on PCWA's costs in providing reliable water service.

The rates are based on a proposed \$91.2 million Water System budget. The 2008 Power System budget is \$21.4 million. The Agency Wide budget is \$10.2 million.

Q&A

Water Rates & Growth

"Are the existing ratepayers of the Placer County Water Agency paying for system expansion to supply new growth?"

No. The agency is very careful to separate its revenues and expenses for maintenance (existing customers) and expansion (new customers). New service connections pay a Water Connection Charge (WCC) that is based on specific water projects and debt service needed to support the new development. It is only fair that the costs of new development be paid by those who receive the benefit.

How to Contact Your Elected Directors

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

Your directors are:

DISTRICT 1: Gray Allen
DISTRICT 2: Alex Ferreira
DISTRICT 3 and 2007 Board Chairman: Lowell Jarvis
DISTRICT 4: Mike Lee
DISTRICT 5: Otis Wollan

If you would like to contact a member of the board, please call the PCWA Customer Service Center at (530) 823-4850 or (800) 464-0030. We will be pleased to put you in touch with the elected representative from your area.

Public Meetings

The Placer County Water Agency Board of Directors meets regularly the first and third Thursdays of each month at 2 p.m. at the Placer County Water Agency Business Center, 144 Ferguson Road, in Auburn. The public is welcome.

www.pcwa.net

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PLACER COUNTY WATER AGENCY

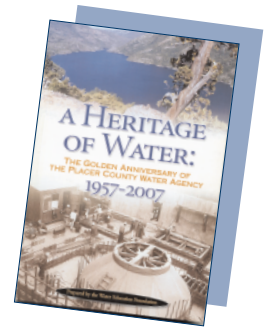
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PCWA Book Celebrates Placer's Rich Water History

PCWA and the Water Education Foundation have published a colorful 88-page book that tells the water agency's story. It is available through PCWA.



PCWA Lends Support to Water Awareness Campaign

The PCWA Board of Directors in October pledged support to a statewide public awareness campaign titled "California's Water: A Crisis We Can't Ignore."

The educational effort is being coordinated by the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA), a coalition of 450 public water agencies, including PCWA.

The purpose of the campaign is to focus public attention on "the critical challenges now confronting the state's water supply and delivery system."

The board approved \$30,000 in support for the program. The contribution will go toward ACWA's announced fundraising goal of \$9 million.

The voluntary contributions are supporting a multimedia campaign that includes television, radio and print advertising, and internet and community outreach.

Key issues in the statewide campaign are the deepening crisis in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta and a recent court-ordered reduction in statewide water supply, a growing population and need for more water storage.

WATER EFFICIENCY CORNER

Rebates For Water Efficiency

Are you in the market for a new washing machine? Or maybe a new toilet? Installing new water efficient models can save money on your water bill and also earn you a rebate.

Today's high efficiency washing machines save 15-20 gallons of water per load. Since 2005, PCWA has awarded 465 rebates to customers installing high efficiency washing machines, for an estimated annual water savings of 2.9 million gallons.

The ultra low flow toilets sold today use less than 1.6 gallons per flush. PCWA has awarded 877 rebates for these fixtures since 2002, resulting in an estimated annual water savings of 11.1 million gallons.

Current rebates to PCWA customers are \$150 for high efficiency clothes washers and \$75 for ultra low flow toilet installation. Rebates are given as credits on the water bill.

For rebate information, contact PCWA Customer Service at (530) 823-4850 or see www.pcwa.net.

Winterize Your Water System

Home water systems should be protected against freezing temperatures. Exposed pipes, faucets, valves and backflow prevention devices should be insulated. Inexpensive pipe wrap is found at local hardware and building supply outlets.

Homeowners also should know the location of water meters and shutoff valves. This is especially useful knowledge in case you have to deal with a leak or broken pipe in your home water system.

Quick Leak Check

If you think your home water system has a leak, try a quick leak check. Turn off all water. Note the readings on the dial of your water meter. Use no water for 20 minutes. If the dial hasn't moved, congratulations! If it has, you'll need to inspect your system.