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Annual Spring Report to PCWA Irrigation Water Customers



Irrigation Season 2008



HIGH ON THE SYSTEM: Canal Operator Tom Reilly stands near the Pulp Mill Canal, left, where it flows into Lake Alta, above, near the top of the PCWA water delivery system.

PCWA Canal System Supplies 4000 Irrigation Customers

Nearly 4000 customers receive summer and winter raw water services through the PCWA canal system.

The raw water canal system also supplies the agency's network of water treatment plants where clean drinking water is produced for domestic users.

165 Miles of Canals

The PCWA raw water distribution system includes 165 miles of canals, flumes and pipelines that transport raw water to customers along the Interstate 80 corridor, from Alta, through Auburn and Rocklin to agricultural lands west of Lincoln.

How Customers Use Their Irrigation Water

Irrigation water is used on large and small farms and ranches to grow crops and raise livestock. PCWA water irrigates pasture for cattle, sheep and other animals, home gardens, orchards, rice fields, vineyards and ranchettes. Nurseries and golf courses also are among PCWA irrigation water users.

Customers receive raw water by the miners' inch, a traditional water measurement that dates to the Gold Rush. A miners' inch is equal to the amount of water that will flow through a one-inch-diameter opening, or 11.22 gallons per minute.

PCWA customers are presently purchasing anywhere from one-half to about 80 miners' inches, depending on need.

Others Rely on Canals

In addition to individual customers and water treatment plants, the canal system supplies a number of independent water suppliers who operate small community water systems.

PCWA employs a team of eight canal operators who are responsible for water flows, daily measurements, inspection, reporting and customer service.

An ongoing maintenance program keeps the canal system in working order.

2008 Irrigation Season Runs April-October

The 2008 irrigation season is scheduled to run from mid-April into October.

PCWA works to minimize inconvenience caused by water service interruptions during the irrigation season, but due to the nature of the water system, outages can be necessary.

Irrigation water customers should be prepared to deal with outages resulting from emergencies or planned maintenance. PCWA notifies customers in advance of planned maintenance outages but notification is not always possible in emergencies.

Know the Location of Your Water Connection

Customers should know where water connections are located and how to turn them off and on. Customers should be familiar with the operation of their own private water systems. The agency recommends that raw water users consider onsite storage and the installation of automatic low water cut-off valves on private pump systems.

Your Home Water System: Get to Know It

- Know your canal name and your station number
 - Where is your water connection?
 - Do you share a line with others?
- Do you have adequate water storage on your property?

Maintain Your Private Water System

- Is your delivery pipe in good condition?
- Is your delivery box clear and unobstructed?

Water Rate Update for 2008

Irrigation Water Customers

For irrigation customers using untreated canal water, the capital facilities charge (for system improvements) for 2008 was raised by 45 cents per month.

Summer irrigation water users in Zone 1 will pay an average 3.25 percent more for water in 2008. The rate for one miners' inch service goes from \$48.25 to \$49.82 per month. A customer using 2 miners' inches will see an increase of \$3.73 and a 4 miners' inch water user will see an increase of \$7.01.

Irrigation water rates in Zone 3 (above Auburn) are unchanged from 2007.

PCWA Director of Financial Services Joseph Parker said staff recommended moderate rate adjustments for this year to allow the agency to keep up with increasing costs for providing water service and rebuilding aging water system infrastructure.

Customers seeking more information about PCWA's water rates, fees and charges may contact the PCWA Customer Service Center at (530) 823-4850 or (800) 464-0030.

**Rate Increases Help PCWA Meet
Increasing Costs for Providing
Water Service and Rebuilding Aging
Water System Infrastructure**



Measuring Water Flows

The Boardman Canal is a key link in the PCWA raw water delivery system. Pictured here is a gauging station in the Loomis Basin.

Canal Tampering Causes Problems, Affects Deliveries to Neighbors

If someone takes more water from a canal than he or she is entitled to, there's a good chance a downstream neighbor will suffer.

Water flows in PCWA canals are carefully regulated and monitored so that customers will receive the water they order to meet their individual irrigation needs.

Downstream customers can be affected when someone removes an orifice on a canal turnout, illegally siphons water from a canal or fills a water truck without a permit.

Adjustments to canal turnouts and orifices are made only by PCWA Field Services employees, not by individual customers.

Removal or tampering with the water delivery orifice is a violation of the agency's water purchase agreement and could result in a Facility Tampering Charge of \$250 to \$1000, plus service disconnection. In addition, tampering and unauthorized taking of water are misdemeanors under the California Penal Code, carrying penalties of six months in jail, a fine of up to \$1000, or both.

PCWA does not tolerate water theft and encourages anyone who suspects canal tampering to call the PCWA Customer Service Center at (530) 823-4850.

Agency Plans 2008 Canal System Improvements

With water efficiency grant funding obtained through Prop. 50, PCWA plans two major canal system projects this year, said Rick Allan, Deputy Director of Field Services.

Gunite lining will be applied to an 1100-foot stretch of the Newcastle Canal that is in poor condition. The second project is the installation of 1165 feet of 16-inch pipe on the Upper Banvard Canal to solve a major seepage problem.

"Both of these projects will aid in our water conservation efforts," said Allan.

The agency's ongoing program to add gunite lining to leaking and seeping sections of canals is budgeted at \$1.5 million for 2008. Last year, the agency gunited more than three miles of canals at a cost of \$1.7 million.

PCWA Accepts AR Pump Station

The PCWA Board of Directors on Mar. 6 officially accepted the American River Pump Station into the PCWA system for operation and maintenance. The station has been in testing and is expected to be fully operational this spring.

Completion of the pump station closes a 12-year campaign by the agency for a permanent facility to provide access to existing water rights on the Middle Fork American River Project.

More Water for Placer

The pump station will allow PCWA to pump up to 35,500 acre-feet of water per year for use in western Placer County.

The pump station and river restoration project has been under the direction of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for the



This panoramic photo shows the PCWA pump station, middle left, on the river bank along the restored section of the American River. The nearby canyon walls stand as reminders that the Auburn Dam was once planned at this site.

past four years. Transfer of the land upon which the pump station is built is still pending at the federal level.

The pump station restores a missing link in the PCWA water delivery system. The agency's previous pump station was removed more than 30 years ago when the federal government planned to build the Auburn Dam.

IN BRIEF

Fixed Rate Financing

The PCWA Board of Directors in March approved the refinancing of \$35 million in Certificates of Participation (COPs) at a fixed rate to be determined when the refinancing is completed. The agency's good credit rating is expected to help keep the interest rate down. The original COPs were issued in 2005. The maturity date remains 2029 under the revised payment plan.

Water for Zone 5

The Board of Directors declared on Apr. 3 that 13,328 acre-feet of irrigation water will be available this year to meet the delivery requests of commercial agricultural growers in Zone 5 in far western Placer County. When adequate water supplies are available, the agency tries to give early notice so Zone 5 growers have time to plan and plant their crops.

Agency Works to Cut Energy Use

PCWA has joined Motherlode Energy Watch, a voluntary energy efficiency program sponsored by the Pacific Gas & Electric Company. Agency officials are hopeful the program will help identify opportunities to save energy. Motherlode Energy Watch serves a number of public agencies in the area from Sierra County to Calaveras County.

Learn About PCWA: www.pcwa.net

Information about PCWA, its many water service and water resource activities, background and history, and water efficiency and rebate programs may be found on the agency's website. See www.pcwa.net.

Budget is \$123 Million

The PCWA Board of Directors has approved a combined 2008 budget of \$122.8 million. The overall combined budget includes a 2008 Water System budget of \$91.2 million, a Power System budget of \$21.4 million and an Agency Wide budget of \$10.2 million.

PCWA Achieves 'AA' Credit Rating

Water agency leaders were pleased to learn in early April that PCWA's credit rating with Standard & Poor's has been upgraded from "AA-" to "AA."

The higher rating is expected to result in a more favorable fixed interest rate in the agency's current refinancing of \$35 million in certificates of participation (*See story, left*).

The Standard & Poor's profile of the agency cited ample and inexpensive local water supplies with good storage capacity, a diverse ratepayer base of primarily residential customers, strong PCWA financial performance and good liquidity as reasons for the upgrade.

PCWA has one of the highest credit ratings among regional water agencies and compares very favorably to some of the larger water agencies in the state, according to information presented by the agency's financial staff and consultants.

Working to Ensure Bright Future for the Middle Fork American River Project

PCWA and the County of Placer are well into the fourth year in an overall eight-year \$30 million process to win a new federal license for the Middle Fork American River Project.

The PCWA Board of Directors on Jan. 3 approved task orders to continue the work of six environmental research firms through the year. The 2008 task orders total \$5.7 million.

The Middle Fork American River Project is a system of reservoirs, powerhouses and water conveyance facilities on the Middle Fork American River watershed. The project stores water, produces hydroelectric energy and offers public recreation. PCWA built the project under a 1963 federal power license that must be renewed by 2013. The agency filed a formal Pre-Application Document (PAD) in December.

Relicensing work began in 2005. In January 2006, PCWA and the County of Placer formed the Middle Fork Project Finance Authority to finance the costly relicensing process.

Goals in the effort are to relicense and maintain public ownership of the project, operate the project for the benefit of the people of Placer County and to gain and share as much information about the project as possible.

Your Elected Board of Directors

PCWA is an independent public agency governed by an elected Board of Directors. Directors represent each of five districts in Placer County and are elected by voters to four-year terms.

Your PCWA Board of Directors:

DISTRICT 1: Gray Allen
DISTRICT 2: Alex Ferreira
DISTRICT 3: Lowell Jarvis
DISTRICT 4: Mike Lee
(2008 Board Chairman)
DISTRICT 5: Otis Wollan

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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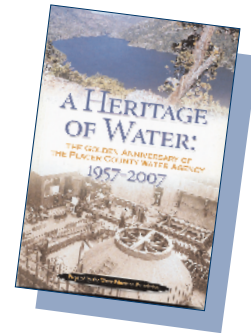


One Big Pipe

Installation of a 69-inch-diameter steel overflow pipeline is part of the current Foothill Raw Water Pump Station project near Ophir. The overall project, when complete, will make more water available to customers in Placer County.

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.



WATER EFFICIENCY CORNER

High Tech Irrigation

Timely Application of Water Can Reduce Use, Improve Crop Quality

A pilot program that helps growers increase efficiency of their crop irrigation has been extended for a third year.

The PCWA Grower Irrigation Management System (GIMS) helps growers measure soil moisture and, based upon computer analysis, determine precise timing and amounts of irrigation for maximum crop production.

The agency has retained the services of JVB Consulting, Inc., of Davis, to continue the program this year. Consultant Jim Brockmeyer uses neutron probe soil monitors at selected locations at each participating site.

PCWA Director of Customer Services John Kingsbury said 10 commercial growers took part in last year's program and that he anticipates doubling the number to 20 this year.

Placer County grape grower Ron Morris joined the program last year. During a Mar. 6 presentation to the PCWA Board of Directors, Morris said he not only saved water but significantly improved his grape quality by fine tuning his irrigation for maximum grape flavor.

For information on this and other PCWA water efficiency programs, please contact the PCWA Customer Service Center at (530) 823-4850.