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PCWA Does Well With Grants

PCWA has successfully obtained \$2.3 million in grant funding over the past two years, bolstering the agency's ongoing efforts to improve water delivery systems and promote more efficient use of water.

Most of the funds have been granted under Prop. 84, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Act, a bond act passed by state voters in 2006.

Prop. 84 Grants

- \$379,468 via the Regional Water Authority for the reduction of sediment and water loss in the Antelope Canal.
- \$140,014 via CABY (the Cosumnes, American, Bear and Yuba rivers watershed planning group) for noise data recording and water loss reduction in Alta and Colfax.
- \$997,500 via CABY and in partnership with the Nevada Irrigation (Please See Grants, P. 3)

Grant Funding Benefits North Auburn Area

PCWA and the Grass Valley-based Nevada Irrigation District are teaming up to strengthen the North Auburn area water supply through a Prop. 84 grant. Increased system reliability and fire flow are among the benefits.

PCWA and NID treated water systems will be linked through two interties; one will connect the PCWA and NID systems near the Auburn Airport Industrial Park while the second will connect water systems along Mt. Vernon Road.

Waiting for Winter



By November 15, water storage at PCWA's Hell Hole Reservoir had dropped to 87,390 acre-feet. Target storage for this time of year is 140,000 acre-feet. The reservoir's capacity is 207,590 acre-feet.

Good Precipitation Year is Needed

After three dry years, Californians are hoping this winter will bring plenty of rain and snow.

By mid-November, the 2013 calendar year (from Jan. 1) had been declared the driest on record in San Francisco, which has the state's oldest weather records, going back 164 years. Since Jan. 1, San Francisco had received just 3.95 inches of rain.

As of Nov. 13, major California reservoirs were holding less than average water supplies. At Lake Shasta, water storage was at 37 percent of capacity and 61 percent of average for the date, while the Lake Oroville numbers were 41 percent and 67 percent. Folsom held 27 percent of capacity and 55 percent of average for the date.

In Placer County, the water outlook is better than many other parts of the state where water managers are preparing for possible water cutbacks if drier than average conditions prevail.

"Like everyone, we're hoping for a normal winter," said PCWA Director of Field Services Mike Nichol. "We're also looking at ways to deal with limited supplies if we have another dry year."

Exemplary Performance Awards to Four PCWA Employees

Each year PCWA recognizes employees who inspire and demonstrate commitment to the agency's vision, mission and goals. The Exemplary Performance Award is the highest honor awarded to PCWA employees.

Pictured with their supervisors, the four 2013 recipients are:

James Buland, Canal Operator
Raw Water Division, Field Services

Cory Ronsonet, Service Worker
Raw Water Division, Field Services

Jimmy Martinez, Service Worker
Treated Water Division, Field Services

Nicole Skarda, Treatment Plant Support Technician
Water Quality Division, Technical Services



Buland, right, with Don Kellner



Ronsonet, left, with Mike Nichol



Martinez, right, with Tom Reeves



Skarda, right, with Heidi Vaughn

Fall Maintenance Projects Completed

This year's maintenance work on Pacific Gas and Electric Company and PCWA canals has been completed with few impacts on PCWA canal water users. Treated water users were not affected.

PG&E crews worked on the Bear River, Wise and South canals while PCWA took advantage of the water outages to complete fall maintenance on its canal system.

PCWA Director of Field Services Mike Nichol said a few rotating canal outages were needed during the six-week maintenance effort but for the most part PCWA was able to reroute water supplies and keep customers supplied.

"We appreciate our customers' understanding and cooperation," he said.

PCWA to Transfer Zone 4 to Northstar CSD

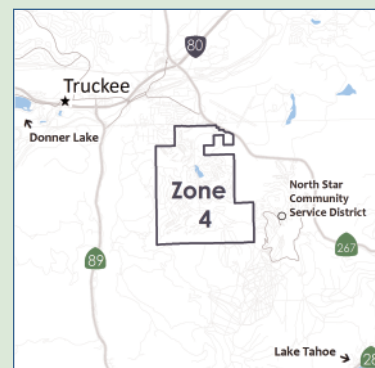
As a countywide water resource agency, PCWA in 1996 was asked to take water supply responsibilities for developing lands in eastern Placer County's Martis Valley, near Truckee.

Working with developers of the Lahontan community, PCWA began supplying groundwater to the area in 1997. As other nearby properties - Martis Camp and Schaffer's Mill - have been developed, PCWA's Martis Valley Zone 4 service area has grown to serve 1000 customers.

With no other water supply operations in the eastern county, PCWA contracted with local water purveyors for day-to-day operation of Zone 4 water facilities.

For the past few years, the agency and Northstar Community Services District have explored a transfer of the system to Northstar, which is located next to Zone 4 and could benefit through increased numbers of customers. PCWA has no debt on the Zone 4 water system; it was paid for by developers of the properties it serves.

The two agencies plan to finalize the transfer in 2014, following approval of the Placer County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo).



A Better Water System Boardman Canal Upgraded

The old and leaking Laing No. 2 Flume on the Boardman Canal has been replaced.



PCWA is continuing to improve the Gold Rush-era Boardman Canal, a main waterway that supplies much of central and western Placer County.

This year, the water agency eliminated a pair of old flumes known as the Laing Flumes. The two wooden box flumes southwest of Colfax were replaced with 60-inch pipe and new concrete understructure.

In 2014, the agency plans to replace the old 24-foot-tall Hayford No. 2 Flume below Colfax with a new bench structure along an adjacent hillside. In addition, the Cherry Tree and Secret Town flumes above Colfax are scheduled for replacement, as is the Wall Flume near Gold Run.

Mike Nichol Retires

He Has Overseen Significant Upgrades of Water Delivery System

In nearly a quarter-century with PCWA, Mike Nichol has come to learn the PCWA water system like the back of his hand. And today it's a much different water system than when Nichol set about improving it in the 1990s.

Nichol, who retires Jan. 24 as PCWA's Director of Field Services, sat down in a recent interview to reflect on his lengthy public service career, which he says he would do all over again if given the chance.

Born in the Bay Area and raised in Sonora, Nichol earned a civil engineering degree from University of the Pacific before going on to the University of Nevada, Reno where he obtained a master's in geological engineering and a master's in business administration.

He worked on water and heavy construction projects in Utah, Virginia and the southern Sierra foothills before joining PCWA in 1989 as an Engineer III, overseeing an upgrade of the Foothill Water Treatment Plant. In 1990, he was named Maintenance Supt. in the Field Services Department and in 1995 he was promoted to Director of Field Services.

The Field Services Department has 53 employees in a variety of occupational specialties and is responsible for maintenance and upkeep of 600 miles of pipeline, 165 miles of canals and eight foothill division reservoirs.

"I think the most important thing we've done over the years is gaining adequate funding to upgrade our water systems," said Nichol, who credits the PCWA board and management for taking a proactive approach to system maintenance.

Preventive Maintenance

"We're making solid, permanent repairs instead of patching leaks and breaks," Nichol said. "Our emphasis is now on preventive maintenance, not emergency response. Our water systems are much more reliable and we are reducing maintenance costs over the long term."

Under Nichol's leadership, maintenance crews have carved into a long list of deferred maintenance projects, including the



Pictured along the Shirland Canal in Auburn, PCWA Director of Field Services Mike Nichol has spent nearly 25 years improving the operation and efficiency of the agency's water distribution systems. Nichol retires in January.

addition of concrete lining to many miles of canals to reduce leakage, seepage and water waste. Over the past 22 years, gunite lining has been added to 56 miles of canal, Nichol said.

Nichol's crews have replaced dozens of old wooden flumes, some dating to the Gold Rush. He says PCWA has rebuilt all the wooden flumes in the system, many of them more than once. About 25-30 percent of the flumes have been replaced with more permanent structures, and more are in planning.

PCWA General Manager David Breninger, who appointed Nichol to the department head position, said Nichol has been a key member of the management staff and has assembled a talented and dedicated team in his department.

"Mike has served in his position longer than anyone in the agency's history," said Breninger. "His skills and leadership have been a very important part of the agency's progress over the years."

Highly Regarded

"Mike is highly regarded by his employees and everyone at the water agency," Breninger said. "He will be missed."

Nichol and his wife, April, plan to enjoy retirement at their Grass Valley home, visit daughter Erin, a sophomore at the University of Portland; and cruise the British Isles and San Juan Islands.

Nichol said his PCWA career has been personally rewarding. "We have a great team of employees, we work together and our customers are always first. Working here has been an outstanding experience," he said.

Grants - Continued From P. 1

District to connect PCWA and NID treated water systems in the North Auburn area, add concrete lining to a remote stretch of the Boardman Canal near Colfax, water flow measurement and water efficiency.

- \$23,784 for interior conservation retrofit surveys and installations.
- \$96,933 for landscape water surveys and budgets for large irrigation water users.
- \$28,262 for irrigation efficiency rebates.

Prop. 50 Grant

Additional funding has been obtained via Prop. 50, the California Agricultural Water Use Efficiency Grant Program. This funding of \$453,753 is for additional concrete lining along a remote stretch of the Boardman Canal near Colfax.

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
(2013 Chairman of the Board)
DISTRICT 2: Primo Santini
DISTRICT 3: Mike Lee
DISTRICT 4: Robert Dugan
DISTRICT 5: Joshua Alpine
(2013 Vice Chairman)

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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WATER EFFICIENCY CORNER

Green Gardener at Home

PCWA Offers Second Series of Classes

PCWA's Green Gardener at Home classes are returning in 2014 after proving to be very popular in 2013.

The 2014 series will be offered Tuesday evenings for 10 weeks, Feb. 18 through Apr. 22, in the American River Room of the PCWA Business Center, 144 Ferguson Road in Auburn.

Doors open at 6 p.m. for networking with classes from 6:30-8:30. Cost is \$50 for the series.

The classes, a part of PCWA's Water Efficiency Program, are geared to the avid home gardener. Classes are led by local experts who teach a variety of sustainable landscape practices, including water efficient irrigation practices.

To sign up, contact PCWA at waterefficiency@pcwa.net or call (530) 823-4906. Late sign-ups will be accepted if the class is not filled (class limit is 30 students). Customers may also sign up to be notified of future classes.



GOING GREEN

Students are pictured at last year's Green Gardener at Home series

Weed Control

In a trial program at the Bowman (pictured) and Sunset water treatment plants, PCWA has contracted with The Goat Works of Penn Valley, Nevada County, to provide weed control services. The goat grazing is intended to reduce herbicide use, fire hazards, and landscape maintenance costs.



Q&A

Where Does Our Water Come From?

PCWA customers are supplied with water that flows from the Yuba-Bear and American river watersheds.

Most customers receive their water from the Yuba and Bear rivers via Pacific Gas and Electric Company and PCWA water conveyance systems.

This water is supplemented by water from the American River that flows through the PCWA Middle Fork American River Project.

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