

Monthly Briefing

A Summary of the Alliance's Recent and Upcoming Activities and Important Water News

FEBRUARY 22-23 IN LAS VEGAS

'Farming Is National Security' To Theme Annual Meeting

A growing and vibrant nation would seem to need to be able to provide for itself but an alarming United States agricultural trend is being seen that portends trouble for generations to come.

That potential problem and other challenges facing agricultural water users and their business and civic supporters will be in the spotlight February 22-23 in Las Vegas (Nevada) as the Family Farm Alliance presents its 19th Annual Meeting and Conference. Those attending will also have a rare opportunity to take a behind-the-scenes tour of massive Hoover Dam.

"FARMING IS NATIONAL SECURITY" will be the theme as the Annual Meeting takes place at the Monte Carlo Resort and Casino on the famed Las Vegas Strip. Advance registration materials have been sent out. They are available by calling (707) 998-9487 or e-mailing ffameeting@aol.com.

"Family farms and ranches are experiencing a crisis in numbers," said Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen (OREGON) in explaining the Annual Meeting's focus. "In the 1930s, there were close to seven million farms in the United States. Today, just over two million farmers remain. And 330 farm operators leave their land every week. Both statistically and anecdotally, for the first time in many generations, we see sons and daughters of farmers opting to leave the family farm because of uncertainty about agriculture as a career."

THIS INCREASINGLY SERIOUS SITUATION will be explored through a number of interesting and timely presentations and discussions, including what federal, state, and local policymakers are doing to address burgeoning development in the West. Other sessions will address protections for agricultural water supplies while providing for economic growth, and how urbanization of farmland and transfer of water

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Alliance Makes A New Push For Members

Membership is what organizations are all about and the Family Farm Alliance is launching an effort to broaden participation to further enhance the Alliance's effectiveness.

In its two decades of serving Western irrigated agriculture and users of federal water systems, the Alliance has developed a grassroots and highly personal approach to working with Congress, administrations and government water leaders.

"THERE IS NO OTHER agricultural organization like the Family Farm Alliance," said Pat O'Toole (WYOMING), the Alliance's President. "The Alliance is widely recognized as a leader on issues dealing with Western water policy. Our targeted focus enables us to be extremely effective. We're looking to expand that role."

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Congress OKs Rural Water Supply Measure



Senator Pete Domenici

It came down to the wire but a bill that the Family Farm Alliance has followed closely for two years and agreed earlier this year to support was approved in the Senate early December 9 just before Congress adjourned its session.

The Rural Water Supply Act (S. 895), sponsored by Senator Pete Domenici (R-NEW MEXICO), was sent to President Bush. It would authorize the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to build rural domestic water supply projects

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San Joaquin Legislation Introduced

Congress Does Not Act Before Session's Dec. 9 Adjournment

Bipartisan legislation introduced December 6 in both houses of Congress to authorize and implement the recent settlement over San Joaquin River environmental litigation was not acted upon before lawmakers adjourned the 109th Congress early December 9.

The issue, which involves restoration of water flows and a salmon fishery in Central California's San Joaquin River, also attracted another bill, by Rep. Devin Nunes (R-CALIFORNIA).

THE "SAN JOAQUIN RIVER SETTLEMENT ACT" had much broader, across-the-aisle California delegation support. It was introduced in the Senate and House by California Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, and Representatives George Radanovich, Grace Napolitano, Dennis Cardoza, Jim Costa, George Miller and Richard Pombo.

The bills' sponsorship shows overwhelming bipartisan support for undertaking one of the West's largest river restoration efforts, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and Friant Water Users Authority (FWUA), which earlier this year settled the NRDC-led lawsuit along with the U.S. Departments of Interior and Commerce.

The settlement legislation also enjoys strong support from state officials and numerous water districts around the San Joaquin Valley.

IN ADDITION to approving river channel and water flow improvements, the reintroduction of salmon and water management opportunities for current water users, as agreed to

in the settlement, the bill authorizes \$250 million in new federal appropriations to help pay for the project. Additional funding will come from Friant water user payments and at least \$100 million from the Proposition 84 water and parks bond that was approved last month by California voters.

"This legislation's introduction and its consideration by Congress represent a major advance toward making river restoration, renewed river flows and associated new water management in the Friant Division a reality," said Ronald D. Jacobsma (CALIFORNIA), Friant Water Users Authority Consulting General Manager.

THE LEGISLATION, expected to be re-introduced by Senator Feinstein and Rep. Radanovich in January, would authorize the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation — which administers the Central Valley Project, Friant Dam and the Friant Division (along the southern San Joaquin Valley's east side) — and other federal agencies to implement the San Joaquin River litigation settlement.

That agreement was filed September 13 in U.S. District Court in Sacramento and was approved on October 23 by U.S. District Judge Lawrence K. Karlton. It resolved long and complex litigation brought in 1988. The settling parties included the FWUA and all of its member agencies that were parties to the litigation, the U.S. Departments of the Interior and Commerce, and the plaintiffs, an environmental and fishing coalition headed by NRDC.

Administration Opposition Helps Bring Site Security Bill To A Halt

Legislation that the Family Farm Alliance had encouraged failed to make the cut when Congress adjourned for the year, in part due to the Bush administration's opposition.

A lengthy letter of opposition to Senator Pete Domenici (R-NEW MEXICO) December 1 from Mark Limbaugh, Assistant Interior Secretary for Water and Science, was one reason the bill stopped moving.



Assistant Interior Secretary
Mark Limbaugh

Limbaugh said the bill, H.R. 6029, "could have numerous serious and adverse consequences for both Reclamation and its water and power customers."

THE MEASURE was introduced September 6 by House Water and Power Subcommittee Chairman George Radanovich (R-CALIFORNIA) and the subcommittee's ranking minority member, Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CALIF-

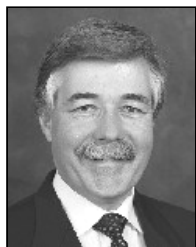
ORNIA) to amend the Reclamation Safety of Dams Act of 1978 to authorize improvements for the security.

The Family Farm Alliance has learned that the issue will be an important one for the House Water and Power Subcommittee, which Rep. Napolitano is likely to be chairing, and the House Resources Committee when the 110th Congress convenes in January.

Bureau, Interior Department 'Clearly Serious' On Planning

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation officials continue to press ahead with studies, meeting and planning in their "Managing for Excellence" and, the Family Farm Alliance believes, are showing every sign about wanting the effort to show results.

"Reclamation and the Department of the Interior are clearly serious about this process," Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen reported after attending a public session hosted by the Bureau last month in Sacramento (CALIFORNIA).



Commissioner
Robert Johnson

Recently confirmed Reclamation Commissioner Robert Johnson told participants that this process is his "top priority", and that he would not sacrifice a quality final product for timeliness.

"Managing for Excellence" is Reclamation's response to *Managing Construction and Infrastructure in the 21st Century Bureau of Reclamation*, a comprehensive report completed earlier this year by the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences.

"**THE FAMILY FARM** Alliance is involved because this process provides such an important opportunity for Western water users to find further ways

to improve transparency in Reclamation decision-making and make the organization as efficient as possible," said Keppen.

Alliance representatives from Arizona, New Mexico and California's San Joaquin and Sacramento valleys attended the Sacramento session.

Commissioner Johnson said he sees as primary objectives for this process:

- Improved transparency of Reclamation decision-making.
- Enhanced efficiency of operations.

Mark Limbaugh, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Water and Science, expressed similar comments.

All five Reclamation regional directors and other policy directors from Denver and Washington, D.C. were in attendance and directly participated in presentations.

AMONG TOPICS discussed in detail were reimbursable costs, and "right-sizing" the Bureau's engineering and technical services with an eye toward greater efficiency.

"The Family Farm Alliance believes that Reclamation's workforce should be sized to maintain the critical core competencies and technical leadership but to increase outsourcing of much of the engineering and laboratory testing work," Keppen said.

USBR Has A New Public Affairs Chief

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation has a new Chief of Public Affairs.

Daniel J. DuBray, former Assistant Director Communications for the Bureau of Land Management, was appointed to the position, Reclamation Commissioner Robert Johnson announced.

DuBRAY WILL be responsible for managing Reclamation's national media relations program and ensuring public involvement and participation in Reclamation's decision making process.

He joined the Interior Department in 2002 as Special Assistant for Communications in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs.

In 2005, DuBray became Press Secretary in the Department's Office of Communications.

Also discussed were title transfers and operation and maintenance transfers, the Reclamation Fund and project management.

RECLAMATION INTENDS to conduct three more public workshops in 2007. The next one will likely be scheduled for February.

To learn more, visit on line at <http://www.usbr.gov/excellence>.

USFWS Has A New Wildlife Refuge Chief

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dale Hall has named Geoffrey L. Haskett Assistant Director, National Wildlife Refuge System. Haskett, former Deputy Regional Director for the Service's Southwest Region, replaces former Assistant Director Bill Hartwig, who retired June 3.

Winter's Precipitation Outlook Is A Mixed Bag

Some long-range National Weather Service precipitation forecasts hold soggy and snowy promise but other parts of the West may cling to drought conditions.

In its most recent December-through-February outlook, the NWS believes warmer sea surface temperatures that are developing an *El Niño* pattern will bring above-average amounts of precipitation to many parts of California and the Southwest.

By contrast, below normal precipitation is predicted for parts of the Pacific Northwest as well as Montana and Wyoming. There are equal chances of below and above average precipitation elsewhere.

Agricultural Threats Will Be Annual Meeting Focus

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supplies from agriculture to municipal uses is affecting the environment and wildlife habitat.

There will also be a panel of Western experts discussing climate change, impacts to water supplies, and the most ambitious cloud seeding program ever undertaken in the West.

The Annual Meeting's traditional Washington Insider's panel will again be led by the Alliance's Washington representative, Joe Raeder. It will feature majority and minority staffers from key Congressional water committees and will address the many changes taking place with Democratic Party control of Congress.

CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS are waiting to see if Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne will be able to attend as invited.

In any case, the Interior Department will be well represented.

The Annual Meeting's concluding sessions on the morning of February 23 will be an all-Reclamation program that will include the new Commissioner of Reclamation, Robert Johnson as well as the Bureau of Reclamation's regional directors.

The Bureau of Reclamation's leadership team is expected to talk about "Managing for Excellence", the agency's high priority response to *Managing Construction and Infrastructure in the 21st Century Bureau of Reclamation*.

That comprehensive report was completed earlier this year by the National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academy of Sciences.

THE ANNUAL MEETING will wind up on the afternoon of February 23 with a real water community treat.

"We will be led by staff from the Bureau of Reclamation's Lower Colorado River Region on a behind-the-scenes tour of Hoover Dam," Keppen said.

Hoover Dam, creating Lake Mead from waters of the Colorado River astride the Nevada-Arizona border, is the Bureau of Reclamation's most significant structure, and the first of the world's truly great dams. It is crucial to regional water and power supplies.

There will be no charge. Just sign up

in advance on your Annual Meeting and Conference registration.

"We hope you'll join us, not only for a great and informative couple of days in Las Vegas, but for a brief few hours in Boulder Canyon, where you will witness one of the greatest construction achievements in history," said Keppen.

Alliance Seeks To Build Membership

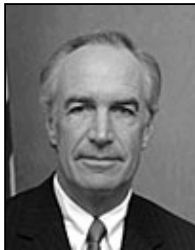
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"The Family Farm Alliance is a powerful advocate for family farmers, ranchers, irrigation districts, and allied industries in 17 Western states," said Dan Keppen (OREGON), Executive Director.

"We are a focused organization," Keppen added. "Everything we do supports one mission — to ensure the availability of reliable, affordable irrigation water supplies to Western farmers and ranchers."

ALLIANCE DIRECTORS and Advisory Committee members are reaching out to prospective members and providing details on the Alliance.

If you or someone you know is not a member, please have them visit the Alliance's website, www.familyfarmalliance.org, and click on "join us" for a membership application and suggested contribution levels. Or call the Alliance at (541) 850-9007.



Interior Secretary
Dirk Kempthorne

Rural Water Supply Bill Passes Congress

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that meet certain engineering and feasibility criteria. The Bush Administration strongly supports the bill.

THE BILL AUTHORIZES \$20 million a year for planning new water delivery infrastructure and would establish a loan guarantee program within the Bureau of Reclamation to help communities finance new water projects and pay for maintenance on existing water systems.

The amended bill includes provisions that had been recommended by the Family Farm Alliance. It establishes a federal loan guarantee program. The legislation also expedites the appraisal and feasibility study process.

"My bill creates a number of opportunities to help rural communities in America improve and maintain their water infrastructure. It is sometimes very difficult for smaller communities to provide high quality water access to its citizens, so I'm looking forward to this bill becoming law so that they can have another avenue for help," said Domenici.

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