

Monthly Briefing

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

Tremendous Interest In Water Supply Study

A tremendous amount of interest and enthusiasm has been voiced and demonstrated in response to the Family Farm Alliance's Western Water Supply Enhancement Study.

"The response has been very good," said Craig Smith, Alliance Executive Director. "We have nearly 30 surveys in and completed and have many more commitments, but we need have people to finalize the survey forms and get them in as soon as possible."

That is increasingly important because of the Alliance's desire to have the entire project completed and released by early December.

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Colorado Deal Is Huge Relief In The West

There seems to have been a huge sigh of relief in a large portion of the West in the wake of agreement among four Southern California water agencies and the Interior Department on use of Colorado River water.

"This is a tremendously important deal for the entire Colorado River region and much of California," said Family Farm Alliance Executive Director Craig Smith. "The Alliance has members and friends on all sides of this issue and we believe it is to everyone's best interest to have an agreement in place."

THERE IS CERTAINLY nothing new about fights over Colorado River water but this controversy was particularly complex and in many ways unique. The deal was signed quietly in Los Angeles October 10. During a ceremony a week later at Hoover Dam on the Colorado River, the "quantification agreement" was signed by Interior Secretary Gale Norton.

Less than 11 months ago with no such agreement in place when a deadline she had established was reached, Secretary Norton made good on a promise to immediately end California's overuse of Colorado River water. Among other things, the new agreement will put back in place an arrangement under which California will be weaned gradually from using more than its Colorado River entitlement in order to meet demands from other rapidly growing Colorado River user states.

Signing onto the agreement were two agricultural agencies, the Imperial Irrigation District and Coachella

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Alliance's Annual Meet Coming Up

Mark your 2004 calendar now for the Alliance's Annual Meeting, March 11-12, at the Monte Carlo Resort and Casino in Las Vegas.

Fremont-Madison Transfer Approved

Another Reclamation project will soon be in the hands of a local agency.

Congress has approved and President Bush has signed legislation transferring Reclamation facilities to the Fremont-Madison (IDAHO) Irrigation District.

The Family Farm Alliance worked closely for many years with Fremont-Madison and Reclamation officials as well as members of Congress and Congressional staff members to help make the transfer become reality.

Dale Swenson, district manager, said Fremont-Madison and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation must still finalize an environmental assessment and quit claim documents.

"The biggest benefit of the transfer is that it will put these fully paid-out facilities under local control," Swenson said of the seven-year-long effort.

The transfer involves Cross Cut Dam, a 475-foot concrete gravity weir built in 1938, that diverts water from Henry's Fork into the seven-mile long Cross Cut Canal, which FMID has operated and maintained since it was built. Also transferred were five Teton exchange wells developed by the

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COLORADO RIVER DEAL IS A BIG RELIEF IN THE WEST

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Valley Water District, along with the giant Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and San Diego County Water Authority.

"Each party was asked to acquiesce on certain points and I commend their willingness to compromise rather than let the deal fail," said Rep. Ken Calvert (R-CALIFORNIA), who chairs the House Water and Power Subcommittee.

THE QUANTIFICATION AGREEMENT'S key step toward becoming reality when it was approved 3-2 by Imperial Irrigation District directors October 2.

The deal means that California is committed to reducing the Golden State's over-reliance on the Colorado to make it possible for other Southwestern states to utilize their full entitlements under a compact agreed upon seven decades ago.

"We're following through with the promises that were made 70 years ago," Secretary Norton said. "Had we not resolved it now it could have been a serious obstacle to meeting the water needs throughout the Colorado River system for the long-term future."

As reported in news accounts, the quantification agreement will:

- Result in specific, incremental steps for California to gradually reduce its use of Colorado River water over the next 14 years to its basic annual allotment of 4.4 million acre feet.

- Provide Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming with certainty by permitting those states to take their full allotments to meet future water needs.
- Restore privileges of California and Nevada to use extra Colorado River water to meet urban needs in Southern California and Las Vegas.
- Transfer as much as 30 million acre-feet of water from farms to cities in Southern California over the next 75 years.
- Settle a lawsuit between the Imperial Irrigation District and Interior Department. Interior had launched an effort to reduce IID's allocation on grounds it was allegedly wasting water.
- Create an ambitious program aimed at reducing rising salinity in the Salton Sea.
- Provide for \$163 million to offset environmental impacts of the water transfer from the arid Imperial Valley and help fund Salton Sea restoration.
- Fund a \$200 million project to line the earthen All-American Canal, which delivers Colorado River water to the Imperial Valley, with concrete. Water conserved by cutting seepage will be sold to San Diego.
- Quantify for the first time the total Colorado River allotments for water districts within California.

FREMONT-MADISON

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Bureau 30 years ago. They were to have provided groundwater in exchange for Teton Reservoir storage water but the 1976 Teton Dam failure made the wells the only supplemental water source to irrigate lands affected by the Teton Dam failure.

The district has long been involved in the Henry's Fork Watershed Council, a grassroots community forum that has used a non-adversarial, consensus-based approach to problem solving and conflict resolution. The district and council worked together to help frame the transfer.

ALLIANCE WATER SUPPLY SURVEY

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The Alliance's broadly-based initiative is to identify projects, as well as program and policy changes that could help meet the West's future water needs. A California engineering firm, Provost and Pritchard, is conducting the survey, compiling a database and preparing a report.

"We want to hear about every possible project," Smith said. "We hope that can be done immediately but even after this initial report is finished it will be important to continue compiling information." (See www.familyfarmalliance.org for survey forms.)

NAMES IN THE NEWS

- ◆ **Steve Haugen** (CALIFORNIA) is the newly named Kings River Watermaster. Haugen, who has served as Assistant Watermaster for the past two years, was appointed October 21 by Kings River Water Association directors during a meeting in Fresno (CALIFORNIA). Haugen, formerly a long-time staff member with the Kings River Conservation District, succeeds Tim O'Halloran, who took a new management job with the Yolo County (CALIFORNIA) Flood Control and Conservation District.

FAMILY FARM ALLIANCE

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