

# California Department of Water Resources

and

## Central Coast Water Authority

### Joint News Release

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## **Ceremony Marks Arrival of State Water To The Central Coast**

SANTA YNEZ - Nearly 300 state and local leaders gathered here today to mark the completion of the water project which brings State water to both San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties. The project was a joint effort between the State Department of Water Resources and the Central Coast Water Authority (CCWA), a local agency formed to finance, construct, and operate State water treatment and delivery facilities on behalf of Santa Barbara County project participants.

In an hour-long ceremony, under a hot Santa Ynez Valley sun, hundreds of local leaders, and State water project participants assembled at CCWA's Santa Ynez Pumping Facility to view the activation of the Coastal Branch Project which will deliver water to twenty-three project participants on the Central Coast.

Dan Masnada, Executive Director of the Central Coast Water Authority, acted as Master of Ceremonies

for the day.

Bob Puddicombe, Chairman of the Board for the Central Coast Water Authority, dedicated the Polonio Pass Water Treatment Plant to four individuals who played key roles in bringing State water to the Central Coast. Stanley Hatch, Clinton Milne, James Stubchaer, and Curtis Tunnell were presented with a plaque including their names that will be permanently placed at the treatment plant in Northeast San Luis Obispo County.

Stan Hatch serves as General Counsel to the Central Coast Water Authority and was instrumental in the negotiations that led to the Monterey Amendment to the State Water Contract. Clint Milne, the former San Luis Obispo Deputy County Engineer, is widely recognized as the foremost authority on San Luis Obispo County water supply matters. Jim Stubchaer served as Chief Engineer for the Santa Barbara County Flood Control and Water Conservation District for 31 years and consistently put his foresight and leadership behind the cause for State water. Curtis Tunnell was the Central Coast Water Authority's first Chairman of the Board and presided over its formation in 1991.

Bob Puddicombe also dedicated the Santa Ynez Pumping Facility to Thomas Petersen, the recently retired General Manager of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District Number 1. Throughout his nearly four decades of service, Petersen worked to conserve Santa Ynez Valley water resources and develop supplemental supplies to meet the growing municipal and agricultural needs of the valley. A plaque commending his legacy was presented and will be placed on the front wall of the Santa Ynez Pumping Facility.

David Kennedy, Director of the State Department of Water Resources, spoke of the spirit of cooperation and dedication among the individuals and organizations who helped accomplish this engineering marvel which includes 143 miles of pipeline, the state-of-the-art Polonio Pass Water Treatment Plant, storage tanks, and four pumping plants. Kennedy praised the Central Coast Water Authority for teaming together with DWR to help complete the project and overcome numerous technical and environmental challenges.

The keynote speaker for the day was James M. Stubchaer. As Chief Engineer for the Santa Barbara County Flood Control and Water Conservation District for 31 years, Stubchaer spoke of the research which led to the selection of the Coastal Branch as the preferred supplemental water supply alternative. He also gave his perspective on the importance this project holds for local purveyors who have subscribed for State water and the future of San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties.

The highlight of the event was the computerized activation of the facilities for twelve key entities that have contracted for State water. In a high-tech display, which was projected to the crowd via a large video wall, Mike Madigan, Vice Chairman of the California Water Commission, asked a representative from each of the twelve contracting agencies to, "Activate" their portion of the Coastal Branch.

One by one, representatives from the County of San Luis Obispo; the City of Guadalupe; the City of

Santa Maria; the Southern California Water Company; Vandenberg AFB; the City of Buellton; the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No. 1; the Goleta Water District; the La Cumbre Mutual Water Company; the City of Santa Barbara; the Montecito Water District; and the Carpinteria Valley Water District were called upon to step forward and "Approve Activation."

Each agency's approval of its connection to the Coastal Branch of the State Water Project was displayed on a large screen for the audience to see. After the final water agency, the Carpinteria Valley Water District, approved its activation, water began to flow from an open section of pipe into the pumping facility forebay to the delight of the assembled crowd.

The day's event included several interesting and notable features. Amazing footage of the pipeline construction process was filmed by DWR and CCWA and set to video by DWR. The video ran in a continuous loop prior to the ceremony. Guests were allowed to view the five, 250-horsepower pumps and high-tech monitoring equipment which are housed in a sound-proof room at Santa Ynez Pumping Facility. The facility pumps State water the last eight miles from the Santa Ynez area to Lake Cachuma.

For the first time, Central Coast guests tasted State water from the Coastal Branch project. To keep attendees well hydrated under the hot July sun, event organizers served 100 gallons of cool State water treated at CCWA's Polonio Pass Water Treatment Plant as a testament to its quality.

The State Water Project moves water more than 400 miles from its Sierra Nevada watershed, down the Feather and Sacramento Rivers, into the California Aqueduct, and finally, into the Coastal Branch which brings water from Kern County through Vandenberg AFB, and then to Lake Cachuma.

Project construction started in late 1993 to connect the Central Coast to the State Water Project. CCWA and DWR worked together to construct various parts of the project which took three years of construction and includes 143 miles of pipeline, a water treatment plant, storage tanks, and pumping facilities. The project consists of the 101-mile long DWR Coastal Branch pipeline from Kern County to Vandenberg Air Force Base in Santa Barbara County and the 42-mile long CCWA pipeline from Vandenberg AFB to Lake Cachuma.

The newly-completed Coastal Branch can supply as much as 47,816 acre-feet per year to supplement supplies from area reservoirs and groundwater basins. A major reason for completing the Coastal Branch and providing a new source of water for the Central Coast is to reduce dependence on groundwater. Partially as a result of the devastating drought of 1987-92, groundwater aquifers were being overdrafted. With the new source of State water, the aquifers can be restored and groundwater banked for future use.

Construction of the 143-mile pipeline and ancillary facilities is an engineering accomplishment. Engineers used the latest "trenchless" technologies to cross several streams and the Santa Ynez River. Boring machines tunneled underneath the stream beds and crews bored under Highway 101 in three locations. The entire 143 mile pipeline is buried at least four to five feet below ground surface and is made up of about 20,000 sections of coated and lined steel pipe. Particularly challenging to the project

were the drilling of new tunnels in rugged Calf Canyon and West Corral de Piedra in San Luis Obispo County. In addition, engineers renovated existing tunnels, including the mile-long tunnel through 1,400 foot Cuesta Grade, and refurbished and lined tunnels with concrete.

Experts call the project an environmental achievement as well. The pipeline crossed eighteen environmentally sensitive communities along the route, including habitat for dozens of protected plant and animal species, ranging from the San Joaquin kit fox to the burrowing owl and red-legged frog. Before construction began, environmental specialists built miles of fence and captured endangered blunt-nose leopard lizards, transporting them to other suitable habitat. Habitat was also protected for kit foxes, red-legged frogs, and California tiger salamanders.

Revegetation of areas affected by construction is also a component of the project effort. Revegetation began before construction was completed and will continue for five years. Efforts include restoration and careful monitoring of special biological communities along the pipeline route, including riparian, oak woodlands, and chaparral habitats. More than 60,000 acorns were collected and planted as part of the revegetation work.

The project takes advantage of the latest technology. State-of-the-art equipment monitors seismic movement along the entire route. In case of a pipeline rupture, operations can be quickly stopped to make repairs and reduce water loss. Fiber optic cable runs along the entire length of the pipeline and is part of the project's automated monitoring and control system. This system allows technicians at the Polonio Pass Water Treatment Plant (SLO County) and in Sacramento to monitor and operate the facilities around the clock. In addition, technicians in the field are able to use portable, hand-held computers to monitor and modify operations.

The Central Coast Water Authority will conduct its final test of the pipeline's communications and monitoring equipment and plans to deliver State Water to contracting agencies during the next month. In total, more than twenty-three entities have contracted for State water either directly or indirectly with CCWA.

Much of today's event costs were paid for by the generous support of our consultants and contractors. The video and brochures were written, produced, and funded by the DWR, who also underwrote some of the event costs. We appreciate the generous contributions and hard work by all who helped with this event.

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*The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs. The State Water Project provides water to two-thirds of California's population.*

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