

**MINUTES  
OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
SAN JOAQUIN RIVER EXCHANGE CONTRACTORS WATER AUTHORITY  
HELD FRIDAY, JULY 10, 2020 AT 9:00 A.M.**

The Board of Directors of the *San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority (SJRECWA)* met in Regular Session on Friday, July 10, 2020 in the Board Room of the *San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority*, 541 “H” Street, City of Los Banos, County of Merced, State of California.

The following persons were present:

**REPRESENTATIVES:**

**Central California Irrigation District (CCID):** James O’Banion, Chairman

**STAFF MEMBERS:**

Chris White, Executive Director; Steve Chedester, Director of Policy and Program; Joann White, Director of Finance and Administration; Adam Hoffman, Water Resources Specialist; and Darlene O’Brien, Administrative Assistant

In accordance with the Governor’s Executive Order (N-29-20) and the declared State of Emergency as a result of the threat of COVID-19, the following members of the Exchange Contractors’ Board of Directors and staff, and members of the public participated via teleconference:

**REPRESENTATIVES:**

**CCID:** Jarrett Martin, Manager

**San Luis Canal Company (SLCC):** James Nickel, Director; John Wiersma, Manager

**Firebaugh Canal Water District (FCWD):** Mike Stearns, Director; Jeff Bryant, Manager

**Columbia Canal Company (CCC):** Chris Cardella, Vice-Chairman (9:05 a.m.); Randy Houk, Manager

**OTHERS:**

Paul Minasian, Minasian, Meith, Soares, Sexton & Cooper LLP; Kimberly Brown, CCC Director; David Cory, Consultant; Eric Ruckdaschel, Landowner; Rick Iger, Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group; Don Wright, Journalist; Mike Henry, Consultant; Danielle Duncan, Wonderful; Lauren Layne, Baker, Manock & Jensen; and Geoff Vandenheuvel, Milk Producers Council

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman O’Banion opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and asked Darlene O’Brien to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman O’Banion then announced that the meeting’s Board actions would be done by roll call. The Executive Director asked for staff present to introduce themselves and then proceeded to take roll call of the Board members on teleconference and announce others on the call.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The unapproved minutes from the June 5, 2020 Board meeting were presented. A motion was made by Director Stearns and seconded by Director Nickel to approve the minutes as presented. Upon a roll call vote, the motion was passed by a 4-0 vote with Manager Houk voting on behalf of CCC as their alternate.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

There were no public comments presented.

**BOARD TO APPROVE THE JUNE, 2020 EXPENDITURES AND FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT:**

Joann White presented the June 2020 Expenditure list and provided a summary of the Financial Memo included in the meeting packet for June, 2020

Director Nickel made a motion to accept the June 2020 Expenditure List and Financial Report as presented. The motion was seconded by Director Stearns. A roll call vote was requested, and the motion passed by a 4-0 vote.

The Finance Committee meeting minutes of June 1, 2020 were included for informational purposes.

**WATER REPORT:**

Water Resources Specialist, Adam Hoffman provided a review of his water report that included the following data: Exchange Contractors' total demands: 2,503 c.f.s., with 1,857 c.f.s. from the Mendota Pool and 646 c.f.s. from the Delta Mendota Canal (DMC). He then reported that releases from Friant Dam into the San Joaquin River are 420 c.f.s., with 194 c.f.s. at Gravelly Ford. Currently, there is 91 c.f.s. entering the Mendota Pool from the San Joaquin River, with 75 c.f.s. going past Sack Dam as part of the San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) flows.

Mr. Hoffman next reported on the following current reservoir storage: Shasta – 3,035,752 a.f.; Millerton – 369,074 a.f.; and San Luis Reservoir – 1,032,868 a.f., noting that the Federal share in the San Luis Reservoir is 247,809 a.f., with the State project water at 785,059 a.f. Pine Flat is 579,023 a.f. of storage and the Los Banos Creek Detention Dam is at 20,165 a.f.

The Upper San Joaquin Basin combined storage is 494,623 a.f., which is about 101% of average. The accumulated full natural flow into Shasta Lake is 57% of average.

Mr. Hoffman then reviewed the Delta Operations and River Forecast Center's data. Concluding his report, he referred to the additional material included in his report as informational.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

**San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP)** – Executive Director White gave a brief update on the current issues we are facing with SJRRP. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has proposed a shift of the Mendota Pool control structure from the center to the edge of the river which is now delaying the project four to six months. We are currently trying to re-achieve the 30% design level. The land acquisition process continues to be a challenge. At Sack Dam, the fish passage component is now being proposed as a “nature like fishway” by Reclamation, and even though San Luis Canal Company had previously determined it as not feasible in that location mainly because of the subsidence issue in that area.

**Water Resources Plan –**

- ***Orestimba Creek*** – The project continues to move along, PG&E has been connected to the recovery well and will continue to pump the well to develop it and improve the extraction rate which will complete the pilot portion of the project. CCID and Del Puerto Water District have worked together and achieved an \$800,000 grant from the State of California to take on the next phase which will expand the 20-acre site to an 80-acre site with extraction wells. An additional storm water grant has been applied for to obtain matching funds, in addition to the FEMA grant.
- ***Los Banos Creek*** – Reclamation has applied for an extension of the temporary permit to store water at the facility. We are expecting to build a pipeline from San Luis Water District's (SLWD) pumping plant #8 into the reservoir and hoping to put water into the reservoir this year.

**Subsidence** – We continue to work with Triangle T Water District. They have recently hired their new expert who will be working with Dr. Ken Schmidt to produce this year's subsidence report.

**Legislative** – Our water resource plan projects are continuing to be placed in front of legislature for inclusion where possible on the various infrastructure bills. We are working with Congressman Costa's office for updated language which would qualify for additional funding on the Sack Dam fish passage project.

**Operations** – Working with Reclamation on responding to State Water Resources Control Board on the temperature plan.

**DIRECTOR OF POLICY & PROGRAM REPORT:**

Steve Chedester provided a report on the following issues:

**San Joaquin River Restoration Program** –We are still anticipating the revised Appraisal Plan from Reclamation by mid-summer, with the costs portion being released in the fall. Jacobs Engineering (Jacobs) has provided a revised technical memo to the Exchange Contractors and Reclamation. Close coordination between Jacobs and the Technical Service Center (TSC) in Denver is critical to moving the redesign forward. On the reverse flow facility, three design alternatives

have been provided to Reclamation, the preferred design has not been selected. We have also received the 30% design on the fish recapture facility on July 6<sup>th</sup>. There is a meeting planned next week with Reclamation to work on the master schedule for all projects. Mallory Bridge construction is still anticipated for this fall, and a TSC team has been selected to design CCC's siphon. A video meeting will be conducted to review the initial concept design. The land acquisition process continues to be a challenge.

**WATER TRANSFER COMMITTEE REPORT:**

The Executive Director presented the proposed transfers that had recently been reviewed and recommended for approval by the Water Transfer Committee. He further explained that the CCID proposal will be brought back to the August meeting for Board action as it will go before CCID's board for approval in July; therefore, is included for informational purposes only.

- CCID Groundwater Exchange Transfers – Maximum of up to 20,500 AF – Transfer from CCID of up to 143 AF to San Luis Water.
- FCWD Conserved Water Transfer Proposals to Panoche Water District up to 2,000 AF; to Westlands Water District up to 6,000 AF, and San Luis Water District of up to 2,000 AF.

A motion was made by Director Nickel and seconded by Director Cardella to approve the three FCWD transfer proposals as recommended. Upon a roll call vote, the motion was passed unanimously by a 4-0 vote.

The Water Transfer Committee meeting minutes of May 20, 2020 were included as informational purposes.

**WATER RESOURCES PLAN (WRP) – UPDATE:**

**Del Puerto Creek Reservoir Project (DPCR):** The Executive Director presented Woodard & Curran's memorandum included in the Board packet, noting that the DPCR team spent the majority of June working back and forth with Reclamation on initial questions and comments on the draft Feasibility Study. Public outreach continues through video presentations and the website. Barnard Construction Company has been contacted to analyze the PG&E utility relocation and cost estimates, adding that it would be a cost savings by going through this process.

**BAY-DELTA WATER QUALITY AND REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD (RWOCB) REPORT:**

Consultant David Cory gave an update on the following matters:

**Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP):** The Central Valley irrigated lands coalitions submitted a jointly developed groundwater protection formula to the Regional Board on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Coalitions are working to develop a realistic method of characterizing the specific groundwater conditions for each township. Given the regulatory environment in the state, it is in the grower's best interest to develop accurate formulas, values and targets.

**CV-SALTS:** The Central Valley Regional Board sent Notices to Comply to dischargers of nitrates in Priority 1 sub-basins in accordance with CV-SALTS back in May. The Westside San Joaquin Water Coalition is in a Priority 2 basin and therefore will not be sent a Notice to Comply for approximately two years but are watching and learning how Priority 1 areas will comply with the new regulations.

**LEGISLATIVE REPORT:**

**State:** Executive Director White presented Dominic DiMare’s report and discussed the current budget status of the state.

**Federal:** The Executive Director referred to Nancy Williams’ report stating that legislation has been involved in three areas: COVID-19 and the Heroes Act; social justice issues; and providing funding for infrastructure projects in the “Moving Forward Act.”

**ATTORNEY’S REPORT:**

Legal counsel briefly discussed the Friant Court of Claims litigation and the court’s decision regarding the State of California and environmental organizations’ request for Preliminary Injunction on the new Biological Opinion.

**FOUR ENTITIES’ MANAGER REPORTS:**

**Central California Irrigation District:**

Manager Martin stated that June was a typical month for water deliveries and expecting peak demands in the next two weeks. The CCID Board will be working with the City of Dos Palos over their recent water issue. Aquatics continue to be a problem and they are also working with Merced County on joint participation on failed road crossings on pipelines.

**Columbia Canal Company:**

Manager Houk reported heavy water use for June and continued issues with aquatics in the Mendota Pool. He is anticipating that growers will need to start watering again in the next week.

**Firebaugh Canal Company:**

Manager Bryant reported FCWD was able to acquire the use of copper in their closed irrigation system to control their algae issue which has been very successful. On the Drainage JPA, a manager has been hired and will start at the end of July. FCWD continues to try to finish the cultural resources process of the environmental work to be able to break ground on the canal lining projects. Water deliveries have been normal.

**San Luis Canal Company:**

Manager Wiersma reported that SLCC deliveries was just below average in June. In the field, maintenance is working on cleaning out the hyacinth at their headworks. The office is working on an influx of shareholder initiated canal and drain realignments and also working on their conservation projects. SLCC is preparing for their construction season in which they have six capital projects in the works.

**CLOSED SESSION:**

Chairman O'Banion adjourned the meeting to Closed Session at 10:17 a.m.

The Chairman returned the meeting to Open Session at 11:40 a.m. and announced the following action was taken: A motion was made by Director Stearns and seconded by Director Nickel to send a letter of support of filing a Petition for Rehearing of the Stanford Vina Ranch Irrigation Company case to the Supreme Court contingent upon review of the letter by the Board. Upon a roll call vote, the motion was passed by a 4-0 vote.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:41 a.m.

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JAMES O'BANION, CHAIRMAN

Attest a true record of proceedings had  
And taken at the foregoing meeting, our  
Presence thereat and our consent thereto.

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CHRIS WHITE, SECRETARY

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JAMES NICKEL, DIRECTOR

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MIKE STEARNS, DIRECTOR

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CHRIS CARDELLA, VICE-CHAIRMAN