



UNDERGROUND

Winter 2001

KERN COUNTY WATER AGENCY ENTERS HISTORIC AGREEMENT

AGWA member agency Kern County Water Agency (KCWA) has entered into a historic agreement, signifying the last transfer of rights of the Kern River from private ownership.

The Nickel family, which owns Nickel LLC - a farming company - has agreed to sell its rights to the lower Kern River to the agency for \$10 million and 10,000 acre-feet (AF) of water per year indefi-

nately from the California Aqueduct, which the family plans to sell on the open market.

In exchange, the water agency will get 50,000 AF of water per year and 20 percent of storage capacity in Lake Isabella. That portion can reach a maximum of 125,000 AF, according to KCWA. The deal is currently being finalized.

One of the prime benefits of the Kern River program is that the long-term rights to the Kern River will now remain in Kern County, said Jim Beck, Assistant General Manager for KCWA. Under private ownership, those rights could have been sold outside the county. It also means Kern River water will be secured as a drinking water supply for Bakersfield. The agreement also provides the agency with some storage rights in Lake Isabella that were previously retained by Nickel.

KCWA was able to make the purchase using money from Proposition 13, a \$1.97 billion bond issue earmarked for water storage projects approved by California voters in March 2000. The Nickel family is related to Henry Miller, who was at one time the largest landowner in the nation and fought with the Kern County Land Co. for the original rights on the Kern River. The sale means the Nickels will no longer have any rights along the Kern River.

The Nickel family has had the lower river rights since the 1960s, when George Nickel bought the Hacienda Ranch in Kern County. He later sold the Hacienda Ranch, but transferred the water rights to Rio Bravo Ranch in northeast Bakersfield.

As a result of the deal, KCWA will receive flows from the lower Kern River, which averages 50,000

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AF per year. The river has been diverted for agriculture and other uses over the years, so the Nickel portion is mostly a dry bed that begins where the river intersects with Highway 46 and goes north 20 miles to what once was the Tulare Lake.

Once the agreement has been finalized, the Kern River will be divided up by five public agencies: Kern County Water Agency; City of Bakersfield; North Kern Water Storage District; Kern Delta Water District; and the Buena Vista Water Storage District.

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CALIFORNIA'S ENERGY CRISIS IMPACTS AGWA MEMBERS

Though many California residents and businesses are conducting business as usual with the state's ongoing power crisis, area groundwater agencies are feeling the pinch.

In Orange County, AGWA member agency Orange County Water District (OCWD) experienced nine interruptions for a total of 31 hours offline between Nov. 1 and Dec. 31, 2000.

"We lost water production during that time totaling up to \$18,000, and when you start up and shut down the plant, it is stressful for the system," said Ron Wildermuth, OCWD's public information officer. "Before you start up again after a shut-down you have to reheat the line furnace, which takes extra natural gas. Also, you can have some o-ring problems with reverse osmosis membranes when taking the plant offline too many times. Each time you power down and start up, it takes 12 man hours of labor."

OCWD has the capability to recharge water from the Santa Ana River, which flows into the aquifer in north/central Orange County. As a result of power interruptions, the district lost about 75 acre-feet of water to the ocean, valued at \$18,000, because one of OCWD's pump stations that moves water into a storage percolation pond was offline, Wildermuth said.

Additionally, the district lost some production out of Water Factory 21, a water reclamation plant that takes secondary treated wastewater and purifies it to drinking water standards for injection into a seawater barrier along the coast.

Farmers Feeling the Pinch, Too

Although higher electrical expenses will undoubtedly affect all consumers to some degree, some of the biggest victims may be agricultural and farm operators. According to AGWA member agency San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District, the region's remaining citrus farmers are faced with the extra cost of pumping, which could further cut already slim profit margins and jeopardize their ability to sustain agriculture in the region.

Currently, the vast majority of water used in the Inland Empire comes from its huge underground water supply. That water is electrically pumped to the surface, pressurized (using more electrical power), and transported through pipelines to local customers.

According to the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District, it is relying on groundwater recharge to make it easier and less expensive to pump from wells and assure that water is in the right place at the right time, especially during the energy crisis.

[PRINT VERSION](#)

AGWA ANNOUNCES PROGRAM FOR CONJUNCTIVE USE CONFERENCE

AGWA has announced the program for its upcoming conference on Conjunctive Use of Ground Water and Surface Water, co-sponsored by AGWA and the American Ground Water Trust on April 11-12, 2001, in Ontario, Calif.

The conference, themed "Conjunctive Use - Successful Experiences and New Frontiers," will discuss how conjunctive use is emerging as a significant water management tool in meeting

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California's water supply needs into the next millennium. The conference will bring together water managers, engineers, scientists, planners and environmentalists who have developed successful conjunctive use programs and are planning programs to solve statewide, regional and local water supply programs.

On day one, the conference will focus on California's conjunctive use. Topics will include survival and growth and moving forward in the new millennium. Day one will also provide an opportunity to learn how conjunctive use programs have evolved to meet past challenges, such as changing regulations, institutional hurdles, and technical issues. On day two, the program will discuss emerging issues, along with the experiences of Arizona, Nevada and New Mexico. It will focus on emerging issues relative to maintaining and implementing conjunctive use programs, such as impacts of environmental regulations, agriculture fallowing and pressures of urban sprawl.

For more information or to sign up for the conference, visit www.agwt.org.

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AGWA CONJUNCTIVE USE REPORT NOW AVAILABLE

Prepared for the Association of Ground Water Agencies by the Water Education Foundation and Montgomery Watson, the AGWA Conjunctive Use Report is an excellent primer on conjunctive use - the practice of storing water underground in wet years to use in dry years. The spiral-bound booklet profiles the conjunctive use potential of 85 groundwater basins in Southern California. The full-color report includes 18 three-D rendered, 11-by-17-inch maps of the basins that include location description, cross-sections of basin structure, current total for stored water, safe yield and available storage. It is available for \$30.00. Visit www.agwa.org to purchase it online.

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AGWA SEEKS INFORMATION ON CONJUNCTIVE USE PROGRAMS

AGWA's primary goal for 2001 is to focus on the development of conjunctive use programs statewide. To further that goal, AGWA is asking that anyone who is aware of research or other information on such programs, either planned or already implemented, please contact us.

Conjunctive use is the integration of surface and groundwater resources for the optimal use of those resources. Typically it involves the conservation of surface water for recharge into groundwater basins in times of surplus and subsequent withdrawal in times of shortage.

If you or someone you know has additional information on conjunctive use programs, please contact:

Charles E. Bryant, General Manager
Hi-Desert Water District
6955 Old Woman Springs Rd.
Yucca Valley, CA 92284
(760) 365-8333

You may also send an email to agwa@agwa.org.

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BREAKTHROUGH ACHIEVED IN SAN GABRIEL VALLEY GROUNDWATER CLEANUP; AEROJET AND SIX OTHER COMPANIES SIGN AGREEMENT WITH LOCAL WATER AGENCIES

Seven companies that allegedly contributed to San Gabriel Valley groundwater pollution will pay more than \$4 million in cleanup costs immediately and work to enter into a broader, 15-year cleanup plan by a Feb. 1 deadline, under an agreement announced recently by AGWA member agency Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster.

By signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with several key companies, the Main San

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Gabriel Basin Watermaster, the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority (WQA) and three local water providers ended years of unsuccessful negotiations over clean up of one of the nation's largest Superfund sites. Several companies, including Aerojet General Corp., have been identified as pollution sources in the Azusa, Baldwin Park and Irwindale areas.

"This is a significant step toward a comprehensive cleanup agreement that will meet local water supply needs," said Carol Williams, executive officer of the Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster. "The repayment of the water agencies' project costs is an encouraging indication of the responsible parties' commitment to work with us and reach a definitive agreement."

The seven participating companies are among 19 that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has identified as responsible for cleanup costs in areas near Baldwin Park that were hardest hit by groundwater contamination in the San Gabriel Basin. The contaminants include industrial solvents, perchlorate and nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA).

The MOU requires immediate reimbursement of \$4.1 million in costs for a new treatment plant in the Baldwin Park area. The La Puente Valley County Water District Treatment Project, which was completed last year, is the first plant in the nation to remove perchlorate and other contaminants to produce a source of local drinking water.

The broader cleanup agreement, described in the memorandum as the Definitive Agreement, would entail funding on a much larger scale. Last June, the EPA ordered Aerojet and 18 other responsible parties to design and build a cleanup project for the Azusa, Baldwin Park and Irwindale areas, then estimated to cost \$200 million. The MOU now signed represents an effort by seven of those companies to begin meeting their obligations under the EPA order.

The projects to be covered by a Definitive Agreement would remove contaminants from heavily polluted groundwater in the Baldwin Park area, and also ease a threatened water shortage in the

San Gabriel Valley by expanding the supply of clean water available to consumers. In addition, the projects would help prevent the spread of contamination through Whittier Narrows into the neighboring Central Basin.

The seven companies that signed the memorandum, in addition to Aerojet General Corporation, are Azusa Land Reclamation; Hartwell Corporation; Huffy Corporation; Oil and Solvent Process Company; Reichhold, Inc. and Wynn Oil Company. Under terms of the MOU, other companies may join at a later date.

Joining the Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster and the WQA in signing the MOU were La Puente Valley County Water District, Valley County Water District of Baldwin Park and the San Gabriel Valley Water Company. As with the responsible parties, other water producers and agencies also may join in the agreement later.

In addition to the \$4.1 million payment for the La Puente project, the companies have agreed in the MOU to pay \$5.2 million for other treatment projects already built, but only after a Definitive Agreement is signed. The MOU establishes principles for the Definitive Agreement under which the water entities will build and operate the required water treatment facilities with funding from the responsible parties. The scope of work and project schedule will be spelled out in the Definitive Agreement in accordance with EPA's requirements.

Groundwater contamination was first discovered in the San Gabriel Basin in 1979. The EPA placed four major areas of the basin on its Superfund list in 1984. In 1995, the EPA began naming parties responsible for the contamination, and a group of them worked with water agencies to develop a cleanup plan. Those plans, however, were scuttled in 1997, when perchlorate was discovered in the basin and there was no established technology to remove it. Since then, the La Puente Valley County Water District treatment plant and other projects have demonstrated ways to clean up perchlorate and other recently detected pollutants.

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CHROMIUM 6 POLLUTION IN SAN FERNANDO VALLEY LINKED TO LOCKHEED MARTIN CORP.

AGWA member and Los Angeles area Watermaster Mel Blevins has released evidence suggesting that Lockheed Martin Corp. discharged water containing high levels of chromium 6 directly into the San Fernando Valley aquifer.

Reviewing old records and exploring the memories of water quality workers now in their 70s and 80s, Blevins is now focusing on wastewater discharges at Lockheed's former Plant B-1. It was the heart of the firm's defense production from the 1930s through the Cold War.

Blevins said he bases his conclusion on state and county records showing that Lockheed dug wells in the 1940s to draw hundreds of millions of gallons of water from the aquifer for its air-conditioning system, then returned the water to the aquifer through separate return wells.

The findings could make Lockheed liable for millions of dollars in costs to clean up the aquifer, which supplies 15 percent of Los Angeles' drinking water.

"It's our understanding that Lockheed used chromium 6 that was later injected into groundwater, using wells on their property," said Blevins. "That water, with high concentrations of chromium 6, was pumped and delivered to water customers by nearby cities, including Burbank, Glendale and Los Angeles," he said.

Lockheed Martin spokeswoman Gail E. Rymer confirmed to the Los Angeles Times that the company used chromium 6 in cooling towers for its air-conditioning system until 1966. The used coolant was not treated before it was discharged into the ground, she said.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has also given the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board \$500,000 to investigate the sources of chromium 6 contamination in the Valley aquifer.

The board is surveying companies that may have used or discharged chromium 6. Blevins is reviewing old industrial discharge logs and regional water board documents. He also plans to file motions in Los Angeles County Superior Court to take testimony from four retired water quality workers, now in their late 70s and 80s, who tested industrial runoff from Lockheed. The workers, who were then employed by the county Department of Public Works, kept handwritten logs, dating back to the 1940s, showing that levels of chromium 6 as high as 80,000 parts per billion were flowing into the storm drains and the Los Angeles River. While much of the chromium 6 flowed to the ocean, Blevins said high discharges seeped into the groundwater through almost 10 miles of unlined waterways and storm drains.

Stay tuned to *Notes From the Underground* for updates on this continuously developing story.

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EPA SETS MARCH 5 DEADLINE, ALLOWING GLENDALE TO CONTINUE DUMPING ITS WATER

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has extended a deal that permits the City of Glendale to dump millions of gallons of drinking water into the Los Angeles River instead of sending it to homes.

AGWA member and Los Angeles area Watermaster Mel Blevins estimates that more than \$1 million worth of water already has been wasted in the first three months that Glendale water has been dumped into the river and channeled to the ocean.

On Oct. 13, 2000, as discussed in the Fall 2000 edition of *Notes from the Underground*, the EPA ruled that Glendale must take contaminated water out of the ground and treat it, but that Glendale didn't have to give the treated water to residents to drink through the end of the year. The decision allowed the city to continue discharging the water into the river without any fines.

Officials from the City of Glendale are concerned over the amount of chromium 6 in the water. Although the water meets the current state standard of 50 parts per billion (ppb), officials are concerned since it does not meet a proposed public health goal of .2 ppb. The water contains chromium 6 levels as high as 16 ppb, according to Glendale water services administrator Donald R. Froelich.

Blevins suggests shutting down two wells, which contain the highest chromium 6 concentrations, and then blending the treated water from the remaining wells to lower the level of chromium 6.

"By removing these two wells from service and blending the treated water with the Metropolitan Water District supply, the chromium 6 levels can be reduced to approximately two to four parts per billion," Blevins said.

Blevins said that he feels the continued discharge of the treated groundwater is a serious waste of a precious resource and that the discharge will continue to be deducted from Glendale's Stored

Water Credits. He added that, pending EPA approval, there is the potential that the Glendale Treatment Plant will close down for several years until the issue is resolved.

[PRINT VERSION](#)

EASTERN MWD SAYS THERE WILL BE WATER FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS AND BEYOND

In a report adopted by its board of directors Dec. 13, 2000, AGWA member agency Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD) says it will have the water it needs to meet demand in its 555-square-mile service area of western Riverside County for the next 10 years, as well as for the longer term.

The district's primary source of water will continue to be imported water it buys from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD). Currently, about 75 percent of Eastern's water comes through MWD from the Colorado River or Northern California.

According to the report, EMWD will serve 109,000 acre-feet (AF) of water this year, including 25,000 AF of recycled water that is used for certain irrigation purposes. By 2020, that figure is projected to grow to 182,000 AF, of which 39,000 will be recycled and another 12,000 AF will be desalinated water produced from currently unusable groundwater in the area.

The district is currently building its first groundwater desalination plant.

EMWD fully complies with all 14 of the statewide water conservation Best Management Practices (BMPs) administered by the California Urban Water Conservation Council, the report says. The district was one of the charter signatories to the BMP document that outlines steps water agencies should take to stretch the state's water supply.

Population of the district's service area is expected to double to more than 800,000 people in the next 15 to 20 years.

Although not addressed in the report, EMWD

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earlier this year announced plans for \$170 million in infrastructure improvements throughout its service area to ensure adequate facilities are available to provide water deliveries and reliable wastewater service for its customers. District officials now say that figure will likely grow.

EMWD's five-year plan addresses specific questions and issues suggested by the California Department of Water Resources, which must receive the report by Dec. 31.

EMWD provides water, wastewater service and recycled water to 440,000 people from Moreno Valley southward along the I-215 corridor to Temecula and eastward to Hemet and San Jacinto.

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ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT SPONSORS \$2,500 SCHOLARSHIP

AGWA member agency Orange County Water District (OCWD) is seeking student applicants for the Water Scholar 2001 scholarship. The \$2,500 scholarship program is being sponsored by OCWD and the Water Awareness Campaign.

For the second year in a row, the California Water Awareness Campaign and other water agencies in California are offering the scholarship to students interested in a career in the water industry. Recipients of the scholarship not only receive a monetary contribution toward their studies but are also given the opportunity to learn more about water and related careers.

Winners of the Water Scholar 2001 will be invited to Sacramento in May to participate in Water Awareness Month activities where they will be recognized and awarded their scholarships at the State Capitol.

Students interested in applying for the \$2,500 scholarship must be a senior in high school or a first-year college student exhibiting interest - or pursuing a career - in the water industry. Applications are due Feb. 15 and can be obtained by accessing the California Water Awareness Cam-

aign website at www.wateraware.org or by calling OCWD at (714) 378-3228.

Water Drops

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced Jan. 18 the adoption of its rule for arsenic in drinking water. Calling for a reduction in arsenic levels from 50 down to 10 parts per billion (ppb), the landmark rule will affect water utilities nationwide.
- The Clinton administration has left office without changing a federal rule that requires additives such as ethanol or MTBE in California gasoline. The decision may force Gov. Gray Davis into a difficult political choice: either import costly ethanol from the Midwest, or continue to use its alternative, MTBE -- a controversial additive that pollutes water supplies - beyond a Dec. 31, 2002, deadline he had ordered for it to be banned statewide.
- The Department of Water Resources (DWR) is implementing Gov. Davis' emergency order of Jan. 17 to negotiate contracts and arrangements for the sale and purchase of electricity to help the state mitigate effects of the electrical shortage. DWR is experienced in this task, having done it for many years for the State Water Project. During Stage 3 alerts, DWR plans to interrupt up to 300 megawatts (MW) per hour of pump load from the State Water Project through March 31. DWR also plans to supply up to 150 MW per hour of generation during peak load hours on a single day during the same time period.

AGWA Meeting Happenings...

Nov. 20, 2000

- Mr. Shane Campbell of Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) gave a presentation on the status of changes to MWD's rate structure.
- Director Blevins reported on the discovery of chromium 6 in the San Fernando Valley and the Upper Los Angeles River Area. Mr. Fred Fudacz of Nossaman, Guthner, Knox and Elliott, stated that the state legislature will likely take up this

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issue in its next session, and added that the legislature may impose public health goals on the water industry instead of maximum contaminant levels.

- On a motion by Director Blevins, seconded by Director Cavender, and unanimously carried, Mr. Bill Mills was re-elected to the office of Chairman and Mr. Ron Palmer was re-elected to the office of Vice Chairman for calendar year 2001.
- Director Palmer reported that the Salinity Management Coalition is working on federal legislation to obtain funding for salinity control measures. He then reported that the Coalition also is working on a proposal to modify the salinity control standards of the Regional Water Quality Control Boards throughout the state in order to create consistency and continuity between the agencies. He next reported that the Coalition is planning to hold a Salinity Summit in March 2001.
- Director Palmer reported that the current focus at MWD is the rate structure and that MWD will hold its public hearing on the Urban Water Management Plan on Nov. 28, 2000.
- Director Blevins reported that the fall newsletter is complete and will be posted on AGWA's website in the next few days.
- Director Blevins reported that the American Ground Water Trust (AGWT) is continuing its planning and coordinating efforts for the Conjunctive Use Conference, which is scheduled for April 11-12, 2001, at the Ontario Convention Center. He stated that the AGWT will provide \$25 per registrant to AGWA for its participation in the conference.
- Chairman Mills reported that the Water Education Foundation (WEF) is handling the sale and distribution of the conjunctive use report on behalf of AGWA. He noted that the retail price of the report will be \$35.33 per copy, which includes \$25 for AGWA, \$5 for WEF and \$5.33 for shipping costs and sales tax.
- Ms. Beilstein reported that she has been in

contact with WEF and Montgomery Watson staff regarding the distribution of the report to AGWA members, and added that WEF will mail the "free" copies to each member agency in the next few weeks.

- On a motion by Director Blevins, seconded by Director Palmer, and unanimously carried, AGWA authorized the use of the data in the conjunctive use guide by DWR, and further directed staff to provide a copy of the report to DWR.
- On a motion by Director Neufeld, seconded by Director Palmer, and unanimously carried, staff was directed to provide 30 copies of the conjunctive use report to the Governor's Advisory Drought Planning Panel.

Dec. 18, 2000

- Fred Fudacz of Nossaman, Guthner, Knox and Elliott reported that the Raymond Basin Management Board submitted comments to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department regarding the critical habitat designation for the Arroyo Southwestern Toad. He next stated that a designation of 50,000 acres for a critical habitat for the kangaroo rat was proposed on Dec. 8, 2000, in San Bernardino County. He noted that comments are due by Feb. 6, 2001.
- Mr. Marv Shaw, of Cadiz, Inc., gave a presentation on the proposed groundwater storage and dry-year supply program in the Cadiz and Fenner valleys.
- Director Blevins discussed the status of the Glendale Operable Unit in regard to the discovery of chromium 6.
- Chairman Bill Mills reported that he is concerned about the impact of MWD's new rate structure on the availability of replenishment water in the future. Following discussion, AGWA agreed to send a letter to MWD requesting involvement in the IRP process and stating AGWA's concern about long-term replenishment water supplies.
- Director Palmer reported that MWD's Board of Directors would decrease in size in January

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2001 from 51 members to 37 members. He noted that the voting power of the member agencies will remain the same. He next stated that MWD's Board adopted the principles for the new rate structure. He added that MWD will work on the details of the new rate structure during 2001, with implementation scheduled for July 1, 2002. He also stated that the reorganization of MWD operations is on-going.

- Director Blevins reported plans for the conjunctive use conference in April 2001.
- Director Blevins reported that the Conjunctive Use Guides are available through the Water Education Foundation. Ms. Beilstein then stated that AGWA received 100 copies of the report and inquired about distributing the report to federal, state and local officials. Following discussion, Chairman Mills requested that this item be placed on the agenda for the January meeting.
- Mr. Kelly Rowe reported that he is working to establish a southern California section of the American Water Resources Association. He stated that he has set up a series of meetings for the second Wednesday evening of each month, and added that the meetings will address various technical issues.
- Director Palmer reported that he received information from ACWA regarding pending legislation pertaining to well abandonment procedures.
- Director Palmer also reported that the Salinity Management Coalition held a meeting in November with representatives of the Regional Boards and discussed salinity controls. He added that the Salinity Summit will be held in the spring of 2001.

January 22, 2001

- Director Blevins discussed the regulations regarding storm water runoff that were adopted by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board in order to protect ocean waters from urban pollution. He stated that he would invite assistant watermaster for San Fernando Valley, Mr. Mark Mackowski, to

address this topic in greater detail at the next meeting. Chairman Mills suggested drafting a letter to the State Water Resources Control Board and DHS on this issue. Director Blevins stated that he would handle drafting the letters.

- Director Palmer reported that the Salinity Management Coalition met last week, and he added that the Coalition formed a task force to address issues with the Regional Water Quality Control Boards. He next reported that the Coalition finalized plans for the Salinity Summit II, which will be held on May 31, 2001 at Loyola Marymount.
- Mr. Alfred Smith of Nossaman, Guthner, Knox and Elliott reported that the deadline for submitting comments regarding the critical habitat designation for the kangaroo rat is February 6, 2001. He also reported that Raymond Basin Management Board is waiting to hear from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding a critical habitat designation for the Southwestern Arroyo Toad.
- Director Blevins reported on the latest information regarding the discovery of chromium 6 in the San Fernando Valley. He stated that records indicate that Lockheed may have contributed to the contamination of the groundwater supplies by using chromium 6 in its operation.
- Chairman Mills introduced Mr. Ron Linsky of the National Water Research Institute (NWRI). Mr. Linsky stated that NWRI recently completed a study regarding the impacts of MTBE on groundwater supplies, and added that NWRI would like to expand on the work done in the MTBE study by initiating a study of other oxygenated fuels, including methanol and ethanol. He reported that the Oxygenated Fuels Association (OFA) will sponsor and fund the new study and NWRI would like to invite AGWA to become a project sponsor. Following discussion, the directors expressed their general support for joining the study as a project sponsor; however, the directors requested a formal written proposal for review at the February board meeting.

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- Mr. Linksy announced an upcoming workshop on urban watershed issues, to be held June 13-14 at the Costa Mesa Hilton. It will address watershed management issues unique to urban areas. He next invited AGWA to lend its support to this workshop as a project sponsor. Chairman Mills then accepted Mr. Linksy's invitation to have AGWA become a sponsor of the National Urban Watershed Conference. Mr. Linksy added that he would send conference brochures to AGWA's membership.
- Director Palmer reported that the MWD board of directors was reorganized in January, decreasing in size from 51 members to 37 members. He then reported that action by MWD on the Cadiz Groundwater Storage and Dry Year Supply Program was deferred to the February board meeting.
- Director Palmer reported that MWD received 15 proposals from member agencies for conjunctive use programs and received \$45 million through Proposition 13 for conjunctive use projects. Mr. Frank Forbes reported that MWD reorganized its committee structure and formed smaller committees. He next stated that MWD will hold a special workshop to further discuss and review the Cadiz project. He then reported that, due to MWD's reorganization, the number of Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District's directors on the MWD Board went from two to one. He added that Upper District and several other smaller member agencies are encouraging MWD to add a provision for alternate directors so that member agencies will not lose their voting power should the appointed director not be available to attend a meeting.
- Director Blevins reported that plans for the conjunctive use conference are going well and that the program committee has finalized the conference schedule and has confirmed all program speakers.
- Chairman Mills inquired about distribution of 100 copies of the Conjunctive Use Guide. Ms.

Beilstein reported that, based on previous direction from AGWA, staff plans to send copies of the report to the Department of Water Resources, members of the state legislature, members of ACWA's Groundwater Committee, representatives of CALFED, and to university libraries in California.

[PRINT VERSION](#)

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Once the agreement has been finalized, the Kern River will be divided up by five public agencies: Kern County Water Agency; City of Bakersfield; North Kern Water Storage District; Kern Delta Water District; and the Buena Vista Water Storage District.

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Additionally, the district lost some production out of Water Factory 21, a water reclamation plant that takes secondary treated wastewater and purifies it to drinking water standards for injection into a seawater barrier along the coast.

Farmers Feeling the Pinch, Too

Although higher electrical expenses will undoubtedly affect all consumers to some degree, some of the biggest victims may be agricultural and farm operators. According to AGWA member agency San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District, the region's remaining citrus farmers are faced with the extra cost of pumping, which could further cut already slim profit margins and jeopardize their ability to sustain agriculture in the region.

Currently, the vast majority of water used in the Inland Empire comes from its huge underground water supply. That water is electrically pumped to the surface, pressurized (using more electrical power), and transported through pipelines to local customers.

According to the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District, it is relying on groundwater recharge to make it easier and less expensive to pump from wells and assure that water is in the right place at the right time, especially during the energy crisis.

AGWA ANNOUNCES PROGRAM FOR CONJUNCTIVE USE CONFERENCE

AGWA has announced the program for its upcoming conference on Conjunctive Use of Ground Water and Surface Water, co-sponsored by AGWA and the American Ground Water Trust on April 11-12, 2001, in Ontario, Calif.

The conference, themed "Conjunctive Use - Successful Experiences and New Frontiers," will discuss how conjunctive use is emerging as a significant water management tool in meeting California's water supply needs into the next millennium. The conference will bring together water managers, engineers, scientists, planners and environmentalists who have developed successful conjunctive use programs and are planning programs to solve statewide, regional and local water supply programs.

On day one, the conference will focus on California's conjunctive use. Topics will include survival and growth and moving forward in the new millennium. Day one will also provide an opportunity to learn how conjunctive use programs have evolved to meet past challenges, such as changing regulations, institutional hurdles, and technical issues. On day two, the program will discuss emerging issues, along with the experiences of Arizona, Nevada and New Mexico. It will focus on emerging issues relative to maintaining and implementing conjunctive use programs, such as impacts of environmental regulations, agriculture fallowing and pressures of urban sprawl.

For more information or to sign up for the conference, visit www.agwt.org.

AGWA CONJUNCTIVE USE REPORT NOW AVAILABLE

Prepared for the Association of Ground Water Agencies by the Water Education Foundation and Montgomery Watson, the AGWA Conjunctive Use Report is an excellent primer on conjunctive use - the practice of storing water underground in wet years to use in dry years. The spiral-bound booklet profiles the conjunctive use potential of 85 groundwater basins in Southern California. The full-color report includes 18 three-D rendered, 11-by-17-inch maps of the basins that include location description, cross-sections of basin structure, current total for stored water, safe yield and available storage. It is available for \$30.00. Visit www.agwa.org to purchase it online.

AGWA SEEKS INFORMATION ON CONJUNCTIVE USE PROGRAMS

AGWA's primary goal for 2001 is to focus on the development of conjunctive use programs state-wide. To further that goal, AGWA is asking that anyone who is aware of research or other information on such programs, either planned or already implemented, please contact us.

Conjunctive use is the integration of surface and groundwater resources for the optimal use of those resources. Typically it involves the conservation of surface water for recharge into groundwater basins in times of surplus and subsequent withdrawal in times of shortage.

If you or someone you know has additional information on conjunctive use programs, please contact:

Charles E. Bryant, General Manager
Hi-Desert Water District
6955 Old Woman Springs Rd.
Yucca Valley, CA 92284
(760) 365-8333

You may also send an email to agwa@agwa.org.

BREAKTHROUGH ACHIEVED IN SAN GABRIEL VALLEY GROUNDWATER CLEANUP; AEROJET AND SIX OTHER COMPANIES SIGN AGREEMENT WITH LOCAL WATER AGENCIES

Seven companies that allegedly contributed to San Gabriel Valley groundwater pollution will pay more than \$4 million in cleanup costs immediately and work to enter into a broader, 15-year cleanup plan by a Feb. 1 deadline, under an agreement announced recently by AGWA member agency Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster.

By signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with several key companies, the Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster, the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority (WQA) and three local water providers ended years of unsuccessful negotiations over clean up of one of the nation's largest Superfund sites. Several companies, including Aerojet General Corp., have been identified as pollution sources in the Azusa, Baldwin Park and Irwindale areas.

"This is a significant step toward a comprehensive cleanup agreement that will meet local water supply needs," said Carol Williams, executive officer of the Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster. "The repayment of the water agencies' project costs is an encouraging indication of the responsible parties' commitment to work with us and reach a definitive agreement."

The seven participating companies are among 19 that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has identified as responsible for cleanup costs in areas near Baldwin Park that were hardest hit by groundwater contamination in the San Gabriel Basin. The contaminants include industrial solvents, perchlorate and nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA).

The MOU requires immediate reimbursement of \$4.1 million in costs for a new treatment plant in the Baldwin Park area. The La Puente Valley County Water District Treatment Project, which was completed last year, is the first plant in the nation to remove perchlorate and other contaminants to produce a source of local drinking water.

The broader cleanup agreement, described in the memorandum as the Definitive Agreement, would entail funding on a much larger scale. Last June, the EPA ordered Aerojet and 18 other responsible parties to design and build a cleanup project for the Azusa, Baldwin Park and Irwindale areas, then estimated to cost \$200 million. The MOU now signed represents an effort by seven of those companies to begin meeting their obligations under the EPA order.

The projects to be covered by a Definitive Agreement would remove contaminants from heavily polluted groundwater in the Baldwin Park area, and also ease a threatened water shortage in the San Gabriel Valley by expanding the supply of clean water available to consumers. In addition, the projects would help prevent the spread of contamination through Whittier Narrows into the neighboring Central Basin.

The seven companies that signed the memorandum, in addition to Aerojet General Corporation, are Azusa Land Reclamation; Hartwell Corporation; Huff Corporation; Oil and Solvent Process Company; Reichhold, Inc. and Wynn Oil Company. Under terms of the MOU, other companies may join at a later date.

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Joining the Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster and the WQA in signing the MOU were La Puente Valley County Water District, Valley County Water District of Baldwin Park and the San Gabriel Valley Water Company. As with the responsible parties, other water producers and agencies also may join in the agreement later.

In addition to the \$4.1 million payment for the La Puente project, the companies have agreed in the MOU to pay \$5.2 million for other treatment projects already built, but only after a Definitive Agreement is signed. The MOU establishes principles for the Definitive Agreement under which the water entities will build and operate the required water treatment facilities with funding from the responsible parties. The scope of work and project schedule will be spelled out in the Definitive Agreement in accordance with EPA's requirements.

Groundwater contamination was first discovered in the San Gabriel Basin in 1979. The EPA placed four major areas of the basin on its Superfund list in 1984. In 1995, the EPA began naming parties responsible for the contamination, and a group of them worked with water agencies to develop a cleanup plan. Those plans, however, were scuttled in 1997, when perchlorate was discovered in the basin and there was no established technology to remove it. Since then, the La Puente Valley County Water District treatment plant and other projects have demonstrated ways to clean up perchlorate and other recently detected pollutants.

CHROMIUM 6 POLLUTION IN SAN FERNANDO VALLEY LINKED TO LOCKHEED MARTIN CORP.

AGWA member and Los Angeles area Watermaster Mel Blevins has released evidence suggesting that Lockheed Martin Corp. discharged water containing high levels of chromium 6 directly into the San Fernando Valley aquifer.

Reviewing old records and exploring the memories of water quality workers now in their 70s and 80s, Blevins is now focusing on wastewater discharges at Lockheed's former Plant B-1. It was the heart of the firm's defense production from the 1930s through the Cold War.

Blevins said he bases his conclusion on state and county records showing that Lockheed dug wells in the 1940s to draw hundreds of millions of gallons of water from the aquifer for its air-conditioning system, then returned the water to the aquifer through separate return wells.

The findings could make Lockheed liable for millions of dollars in costs to clean up the aquifer, which supplies 15 percent of Los Angeles' drinking water.

"It's our understanding that Lockheed used chromium 6 that was later injected into groundwater, using wells on their property," said Blevins. "That water, with high concentrations of chromium 6, was pumped and delivered to water customers by nearby cities, including Burbank, Glendale and Los Angeles," he said.

Lockheed Martin spokeswoman Gail E. Rymer confirmed to the Los Angeles Times that the company used chromium 6 in cooling towers for its air-conditioning system until 1966. The used coolant was not treated before it was discharged into the ground, she said.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has also given the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board \$500,000 to investigate the sources of chromium 6 contamination in the Valley aquifer.

The board is surveying companies that may have used or discharged chromium 6. Blevins is reviewing old industrial discharge logs and regional water board documents. He also plans to file motions in Los Angeles County Superior Court to take testimony from four retired water quality workers, now in their late 70s and 80s, who tested industrial runoff from Lockheed. The workers, who were then employed by the county Department of Public Works, kept handwritten logs, dating back to the 1940s, showing that levels of chromium 6 as high as 80,000 parts per billion were flowing into the storm drains and the Los Angeles River. While much of the chromium 6 flowed to the ocean, Blevins said high discharges seeped into the groundwater through almost 10 miles of unlined waterways and storm drains.

Stay tuned to *Notes From the Underground* for updates on this continuously developing story.

EPA SETS MARCH 5 DEADLINE, ALLOWING GLENDALE TO CONTINUE DUMPING ITS WATER

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has extended a deal that permits the City of Glendale to dump millions of gallons of drinking water into the Los Angeles River instead of sending it to homes.

AGWA member and Los Angeles area Watermaster Mel Blevins estimates that more than \$1 million worth of water already has been wasted in the first three months that Glendale water has been dumped into the river and channeled to the ocean.

On Oct. 13, 2000, as discussed in the Fall 2000 edition of *Notes from the Underground*, the EPA ruled that Glendale must take contaminated water out of the ground and treat it, but that Glendale didn't have to give the treated water to residents to drink through the end of the year. The decision allowed the city to continue discharging the water into the river without any fines.

Officials from the City of Glendale are concerned over the amount of chromium 6 in the water. Although the water meets the current state standard of 50 parts per billion (ppb), officials are concerned since it does not meet a proposed public health goal of .2 ppb. The water contains chromium 6 levels as high as 16 ppb, according to Glendale water services administrator Donald R. Froelich.

Blevins suggests shutting down two wells, which contain the highest chromium 6 concentrations, and then blending the treated water from the remaining wells to lower the level of chromium 6.

"By removing these two wells from service and blending the treated water with the Metropolitan Water District supply, the chromium 6 levels can be reduced to approximately two to four parts per billion," Blevins said.

Blevins said that he feels the continued discharge of the treated groundwater is a serious waste of a precious resource and that the discharge will continue to be deducted from Glendale's Stored Water Credits. He added that, pending EPA approval, there is the potential that the Glendale Treatment Plant will close down for several years until the issue is resolved.

EASTERN MWD SAYS THERE WILL BE WATER FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS AND BEYOND

In a report adopted by its board of directors Dec. 13, 2000, AGWA member agency Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD) says it will have the water it needs to meet demand in its 555-square-mile service area of western Riverside County for the next 10 years, as well as for the longer term.

The district's primary source of water will continue to be imported water it buys from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD). Currently, about 75 percent of Eastern's water comes through MWD from the Colorado River or Northern California.

According to the report, EMWD will serve 109,000 acre-feet (AF) of water this year, including 25,000 AF of recycled water that is used for certain irrigation purposes. By 2020, that figure is projected to grow to 182,000 AF, of which 39,000 will be recycled and another 12,000 AF will be desalinated water produced from currently unusable groundwater in the area.

The district is currently building its first groundwater desalination plant.

EMWD fully complies with all 14 of the statewide water conservation Best Management Practices (BMPs) administered by the California Urban Water Conservation Council, the report says. The district was one of the charter signatories to the BMP document that outlines steps water agencies should take to stretch the state's water supply.

Population of the district's service area is expected to double to more than 800,000 people in the next 15 to 20 years.

Although not addressed in the report, EMWD earlier this year announced plans for \$170 million in infrastructure improvements throughout its service area to ensure adequate facilities are available to provide water deliveries and reliable wastewater service for its customers. District officials now say that figure will likely grow.

EMWD's five-year plan addresses specific questions and issues suggested by the California Department of Water Resources, which must receive the report by Dec. 31.

EMWD provides water, wastewater service and recycled water to 440,000 people from Moreno Valley southward along the I-215 corridor to Temecula and eastward to Hemet and San Jacinto.

ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT SPONSORS \$2,500 SCHOLARSHIP

AGWA member agency Orange County Water District (OCWD) is seeking student applicants for the Water Scholar 2001 scholarship. The \$2,500 scholarship program is being sponsored by OCWD and the Water Awareness Campaign.

For the second year in a row, the California Water Awareness Campaign and other water agencies in California are offering the scholarship to students interested in a career in the water industry. Recipients of the scholarship not only receive a monetary contribution toward their studies but are also given the opportunity to learn more about water and related careers.

Winners of the Water Scholar 2001 will be invited to Sacramento in May to participate in Water Awareness Month activities where they will be recognized and awarded their scholarships at the State Capitol.

Students interested in applying for the \$2,500 scholarship must be a senior in high school or a first-year college student exhibiting interest - or pursuing a career - in the water industry. Applications are due Feb. 15 and can be obtained by accessing the California Water Awareness Campaign website at www.wateraware.org or by calling OCWD at (714) 378-3228.

Water Drops

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced Jan. 18 the adoption of its rule for arsenic in drinking water. Calling for a reduction in arsenic levels from 50 down to 10 parts per billion (ppb), the landmark rule will affect water utilities nationwide.
- The Clinton administration has left office without changing a federal rule that requires additives such as ethanol or MTBE in California gasoline. The decision may force Gov. Gray Davis into a difficult political choice: either import costly ethanol from the Midwest, or continue to use its alternative, MTBE -- a controversial additive that pollutes water supplies -- beyond a Dec. 31, 2002, deadline he had ordered for it to be banned statewide.
- The Department of Water Resources (DWR) is implementing Gov. Davis' emergency order of Jan. 17 to negotiate contracts and arrangements for the sale and purchase of electricity to help the state mitigate effects of the electrical shortage. DWR is experienced in this task, having done it for many years for the State Water Project. During Stage 3 alerts, DWR plans to interrupt up to 300 megawatts (MW) per hour of pump load from the State Water Project through March 31. DWR also plans to supply up to 150 MW per hour of generation during peak load hours on a single day during the same time period.

AGWA Meeting Happenings...

Nov. 20, 2000

- Mr. Shane Campbell of Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) gave a presentation on the status of changes to MWD's rate structure.
- Director Blevins reported on the discovery of chromium 6 in the San Fernando Valley and the Upper Los Angeles River Area. Mr. Fred Fudacz of Nossaman, Guthner, Knox and Elliott, stated that the state legislature will likely take up this issue in its next session, and added that the legislature may imposed public health goals on the water industry instead of maximum contaminant levels.
- On a motion by Director Blevins, seconded by Director Cavender, and unanimously carried, Mr. Bill Mills was re-elected to the office of Chairman and Mr. Ron Palmer was re-elected to the office of Vice Chairman for calendar year 2001.

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- Director Palmer reported that the Salinity Management Coalition is working on federal legislation to obtain funding for salinity control measures. He then reported that the Coalition also is working on a proposal to modify the salinity control standards of the Regional Water Quality Control Boards throughout the state in order to create consistency and continuity between the agencies. He next reported that the Coalition is planning to hold a Salinity Summit in March 2001.
- Director Palmer reported that the current focus at MWD is the rate structure and that MWD will hold its public hearing on the Urban Water Management Plan on Nov. 28, 2000.
- Director Blevins reported that the fall newsletter is complete and will be posted on AGWA's website in the next few days.
- Director Blevins reported that the American Ground Water Trust (AGWT) is continuing its planning and coordinating efforts for the Conjunctive Use Conference, which is scheduled for April 11-12, 2001, at the Ontario Convention Center. He stated that the AGWT will provide \$25 per registrant to AGWA for its participation in the conference.
- Chairman Mills reported that the Water Education Foundation (WEF) is handling the sale and distribution of the conjunctive use report on behalf of AGWA. He noted that the retail price of the report will be \$35.33 per copy, which includes \$25 for AGWA, \$5 for WEF and \$5.33 for shipping costs and sales tax.
- Ms. Beilstein reported that she has been in contact with WEF and Montgomery Watson staff regarding the distribution of the report to AGWA' members, and added that WEF will mail the "free" copies to each member agency in the next few weeks.
- On a motion by Director Blevins, seconded by Director Palmer, and unanimously carried, AGWA authorized the use of the data in the conjunctive use guide by DWR, and further directed staff to provide a copy of the report to DWR.
- On a motion by Director Neufeld, seconded by Director Palmer, and unanimously carried, staff was directed to provide 30 copies of the conjunctive use report to the Governor's Advisory Drought Planning Panel.

Dec. 18, 2000

- Fred Fudacz of Nossaman, Guthner, Knox and Elliott reported that the Raymond Basin Management Board submitted comments to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department regarding the critical habitat designation for the Arroyo Southwestern Toad. He next stated that a designation of 50,000 acres for a critical habitat for the kangaroo rat was proposed on Dec. 8, 2000, in San Bernardino County. He noted that comments are due by Feb. 6, 2001.
- Mr. Marv Shaw, of Cadiz, Inc., gave a presentation on the proposed groundwater storage and dry-year supply program in the Cadiz and Fenner valleys.
- Director Blevins discussed the status of the Glendale Operable Unit in regard to the discovery of chromium 6.
- Chairman Bill Mills reported that he is concerned about the impact of MWD's new rate structure on the availability of replenishment water in the future. Following discussion, AGWA agreed to send a letter to MWD requesting involvement in the IRP process and stating AGWA's concern about long-term replenishment water supplies.

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- Director Palmer reported that MWD's Board of Directors would decrease in size in January 2001 from 51 members to 37 members. He noted that the voting power of the member agencies will remain the same. He next stated that MWD's Board adopted the principles for the new rate structure. He added that MWD will work on the details of the new rate structure during 2001, with implementation scheduled for July 1, 2002. He also stated that the re-organization of MWD operations is on-going.
- Director Blevins reported plans for the conjunctive use conference in April 2001.
- Director Blevins reported that the Conjunctive Use Guides are available through the Water Education Foundation. Ms. Beilstein then stated that AGWA received 100 copies of the report and inquired about distributing the report to federal, state and local officials. Following discussion, Chairman Mills requested that this item be placed on the agenda for the January meeting.
- Mr. Kelly Rowe reported that he is working to establish a southern California section of the American Water Resources Association. He stated that he has set up a series of meetings for the second Wednesday evening of each month, and added that the meetings will address various technical issues.
- Director Palmer reported that he received information from ACWA regarding pending legislation pertaining to well abandonment procedures.
- Director Palmer also reported that the Salinity Management Coalition held a meeting in November with representatives of the Regional Boards and discussed salinity controls. He added that the Salinity Summit will be held in the spring of 2001.

January 22, 2001

- Director Blevins discussed the regulations regarding storm water runoff that were adopted by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board in order to protect ocean waters from urban pollution. He stated that he would invite assistant watermaster for San Fernando Valley, Mr. Mark Mackowski, to address this topic in greater detail at the next meeting. Chairman Mills suggested drafting a letter to the State Water Resources Control Board and DHS on this issue. Director Blevins stated that he would handle drafting the letters.
- Director Palmer reported that the Salinity Management Coalition met last week, and he added that the Coalition formed a task force to address issues with the Regional Water Quality Control Boards. He next reported that the Coalition finalized plans for the Salinity Summit II, which will be held on May 31, 2001 at Loyola Marymount.
- Mr. Alfred Smith of Nossaman, Guthner, Knox and Elliott reported that the deadline for submitting comments regarding the critical habitat designation for the kangaroo rat is February 6, 2001. He also reported that Raymond Basin Management Board is waiting to hear from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding a critical habitat designation for the Southwestern Arroyo Toad.
- Director Blevins reported on the latest information regarding the discovery of chromium 6 in the San Fernando Valley. He stated that records indicate that Lockheed may have contributed to the contamination of the groundwater supplies by using chromium 6 in its operation.
- Chairman Mills introduced Mr. Ron Linsky of the National Water Research Institute (NWRI). Mr. Linsky stated that NWRI recently completed a study regarding the impacts of MTBE on groundwater supplies, and added that NWRI would like to expand on the work done in the MTBE study by initiating a study of other oxygenated fuels, including methanol and ethanol. He reported that the Oxygenated Fuels Association (OFA) will sponsor and fund the new study and NWRI would like to invite

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AGWA to become a project sponsor. Following discussion, the directors expressed their general support for joining the study as a project sponsor; however, the directors requested a formal written proposal for review at the February board meeting.

- Mr. Linksy announced an upcoming workshop on urban watershed issues, to be held June 13-14 at the Costa Mesa Hilton. It will address watershed management issues unique to urban areas. He next invited AGWA to lend its support to this workshop as a project sponsor. Chairman Mills then accepted Mr. Linksy's invitation to have AGWA become a sponsor of the National Urban Watershed Conference. Mr. Linksy added that he would send conference brochures to AGWA's membership.
- Director Palmer reported that the MWD board of directors was reorganized in January, decreasing in size from 51 members to 37 members. He then reported that action by MWD on the Cadiz Groundwater Storage and Dry Year Supply Program was deferred to the February board meeting.
- Director Palmer reported that MWD received 15 proposals from member agencies for conjunctive use programs and received \$45 million through Proposition 13 for conjunctive use projects. Mr. Frank Forbes reported that MWD reorganized its committee structure and formed smaller committees. He next stated that MWD will hold a special workshop to further discuss and review the Cadiz project. He then reported that, due to MWD's reorganization, the number of Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District's directors on the MWD Board went from two to one. He added that Upper District and several other smaller member agencies are encouraging MWD to add a provision for alternate directors so that member agencies will not lose their voting power should the appointed director not be available to attend a meeting.
- Director Blevins reported that plans for the conjunctive use conference are going well and that the program committee has finalized the conference schedule and has confirmed all program speakers.
- Chairman Mills inquired about distribution of 100 copies of the Conjunctive Use Guide. Ms. Beilstein reported that, based on previous direction from AGWA, staff plans to send copies of the report to the Department of Water Resources, members of the state legislature, members of ACWA's Groundwater Committee, representatives of CALFED, and to university libraries in California.