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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Auburn - A current project to upgrade PG&E canals that carry water to western Placer County is a week ahead of schedule and could be complete by Nov. 14, it was reported at Thursday's (Nov. 6) meeting of the Placer County Water Agency Board of Directors.

PCWA Director of Field Services Mike Nichol briefed the board on the annual maintenance outage, which is planned each fall by the Pacific Gas & Electric Company. PCWA relies on PG&E canals for its source water.

"Good weather has allowed PG&E to expedite work, which means they may finish in four weeks, but if heavy weather interrupts work, they may need the fifth week," Nichol said of the outage, which was originally planned at five weeks.

During this year's work, which began Oct. 19, PCWA has rerouted and augmented water supplies, encouraged customers to conserve water and has also conducted rolling outages on irrigation water canals.

The agency has used its temporary pumps on the American River to pump maximum flows to the Foothill Water Treatment in Newcastle, Nichol reported.

PG&E completed work on the Bear River Canal Oct. 19 through Nov. 4 and is working on Rock Creek Reservoir and the Lower Wise Canal Nov. 6-12. Work on the South Canal is planned Nov. 10-14.

Nichol said PCWA would return to normal canal operations as soon as the construction work is complete.

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In other business, directors:

- adopted an update of a 1998 groundwater management plan for western Placer County. The update was prepared under new state guidelines established in September 2002 and could help the agency is obtaining state grants for groundwater management.

- declared an additional 6400 feet of water available to serve new development in western Placer County. The water, to be made available through water efficiency savings, is seen as necessary to meet demand until the American River Pump Station is completed in 2005.

- approved two planning grants under the agency's financial assistance program for local water purveyors. Alpine Springs County Water District at Alpine Meadows was granted \$20,000 for a water conservation study and plan while the Squaw Valley Public Service District was granted two \$50,000 grants for a Truckee River water rights allocation and a water resources feasibility analysis.

The next regular meeting of the PCWA Board of Directors will be held at 3 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 20, in the Placer County Board of Supervisors chambers, 175 Fulweiler Avenue, in Auburn. PCWA board meetings are open to the public.