

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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AUBURN -- About 150 people gathered beside the American River on Thursday (May 29) as local and federal officials hosted a dedication ceremony for the new Placer County Water Agency American River Pump Station.

The event was hosted by PCWA and the federal Bureau of Reclamation to celebrate completion of the \$75 million pump station and river restoration project at a site once planned for the Auburn Dam.

In his welcoming remarks, PCWA General Manager David A. Breninger recalled the agency's lengthy campaign to restore the agency's permanent, year-around access to American River water.

"In 1993, the agency began a process that culminates today," Breninger said.

U.S. Rep. John T. Doolittle and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Robert Johnson traveled from Washington D.C. to take part in the dedication, which attracted many local city, county and water industry leaders.

Congressman Doolittle spoke of government's important role in building good infrastructure, including water and sewer systems and roads. He applauded PCWA and the bureau for the pump station and encouraged local leaders to preserve water rights for an Auburn Dam that may someday be needed.

"As you know, I've been bigger on dams than I have on river restorations, but I'll have to admit, this looks pretty good," the congressman commented.

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Johnson focused his remarks on successful collaboration between the bureau and local agencies for the benefit of local communities. In a special recognition, he said, “Congressman Doolittle, without your help we wouldn’t be here today.”

Members of the PCWA Board of Directors also applauded Doolittle’s work on the project and presented him with a plaque recognizing his achievement. The Congressman responded with a framed copy of a Congressional bill that transferred ownership of the pump station to PCWA.

Donald Glaser, Mid-Pacific Regional Director for the bureau, also took part in the program. He noted that the project is being completed at a time that California faces some of the greatest water challenges of the past 50 years.

A demonstration of the project’s unique water diversion structure followed the ceremony. Water flows through tiny slots in river bottom screens into an underground piping system that carries it uphill to the pump station, where it is pumped more than 250 feet up the canyon wall to the three-mile-long Auburn Tunnel. Tours of the pump station itself were also offered.

Guests at the event parked their vehicles at the American River Canyon Overlook Park in Auburn and were shuttled down into the steep river canyon.

The pump station gives PCWA the ability to pump up to 35,500 acre-feet of water from the American River to water users in Placer County.