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NEWS RELEASE

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Water Leaders Gather in Auburn, Tour American River Pump Station

AUBURN -- Water industry leaders from across Northern California gathered Friday (June 12) in Auburn for a business meeting and tour of the Placer County Water Agency's innovative American River Pump Station.

The occasion was a joint meeting of the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA), Region 3; and the Mountain Counties Water Resources Association (MCWRA). Co-hosted by PCWA and the Nevada Irrigation District (NID), the meeting attracted about 80 people to the The Ridge Golf Club and Event Center in Auburn.

Featured speakers were John Woodling, executive director of the Sacramento-based Regional Water Authority (RWA) and Victoria Whitney, chief of the Division of Water Rights of the California Water Resources Control Board.

Woodling's presentation focused on the governor's call for a statewide 20 percent reduction in urban water use by the year 2020. He said a "one size fits all" approach to water conservation will not work and that conservation can best be accomplished by local agencies. "Under our existing regional plan we will achieve a 20 percent reduction by 2025," he said.

Whitney provided an overview of the state's role in the often complicated world of water rights. She explained the many different kinds of water rights in California, including "area-of-origin" rights held by many of the mountain counties represented at the meeting.

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Following the business meeting, guests traveled to the American River canyon for a guided tour of the PCWA American River Pump Station. The \$76 million pump station and river restoration project is designed to supply American River water to Placer County while restoring the American River to its natural channel at the site where an Auburn Dam was once planned.

Completed in 2008, the project combines a whitewater channel that allows recreational use with an adjacent underground diversion structure built into the river bottom. The horizontal screen diversion reduces sedimentation while providing for the safe passage of both fish and recreational watercraft.

“This project returned three miles of river to the public, and PCWA regained access to a critical water supply,” said PCWA Deputy Director of Technical Services Brent Smith, who led the tour.

Based in the Placer County seat of Auburn, PCWA holds rights to 280,000 acre-feet of water and serves more than 250,000 people. The agency operates the Middle Fork American River Project which produces hydroelectric energy as well as water for home, business and agricultural uses.