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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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AUBURN-- Through good stewardship, efficient water use and a united front, California mountain counties will be positioned to protect and preserve their water supplies in face of changing downstream demands.

This was the message of a presentation by Jim Chatigny, interim executive director of the Mountain Counties Water Resources Association (MCWRA), at Thursday's (Jan. 20) meeting of the Placer County Water Agency Board of Directors.

The MCWRA includes all or portions of 12 counties, ranging from Plumas County on the north to Madera and Fresno counties on the south. It includes the watersheds of 10 major rivers from the Feather to the San Joaquin, and measures 15,758 square miles, or about 9.9 percent of the State.

The association is made up of water purveyors, government agencies and related interests up and down the western slope of the Sierra. PCWA is a longtime member and PCWA Board Chairman Lowell Jarvis is currently a member of the Mountain Counties executive board.

Chatigny traced a history of water development in California, from the Gold Rush to the post-WW II boom years and today's focus of solving water and environmental issues of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.

During that time, Chatigny said, California water planning has grown from early investigations to complex statewide water planning. The MCWRA has been successful, he said, in having a volume about the mountain counties included in the California Water Plan.

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Chatigny, who retired as general manager of the Nevada Irrigation District in Grass Valley, said today's detailed water planning and well-financed downstream water interests make it imperative for the mountain counties to work together.

"We're the stewards of our water supplies; we have to move forward," he said. "Like water, we cannot be stagnant."

He said local agencies need to be prepared to better defend their water supplies and to plan accordingly.

In a related matter, PCWA legal adviser Janet Goldsmith provided an update on current planning activities in the Delta, where the Delta Stewardship Council is planning to complete a Delta Plan and environmental impact report this year.

Delta planning efforts are expected to impact upstream areas in a wide area of California, including PCWA, Goldsmith noted. Directors authorized Goldsmith and General Manager David Breninger to continue to work with the MCWRA and other regional water organizations to be participants in the Delta planning process.

In other business, PCWA directors:

- welcomed Josh Huntsinger, Placer County's new Agricultural Commissioner and Sealer of Weights and Measures. Huntsinger, a Grass Valley native and Cal Poly graduate with a degree in fruit science, has been with the department 10 years, the last four as deputy commissioner. He succeeds Christine Turner, who retired.

- heard an update from Director of Strategic Affairs Einar Maisch and Resource Development Administrator Andy Fecko on the PCWA Middle Fork American River Hydroelectric Project relicensing program. The agency submitted its Draft License Application to the federal government on Sept. 27, is now responding to comments on the draft, and will submit its Final License Application by Feb. 28. A new license is expected in 2013.

The next regular meeting of the PCWA Board of Directors will be held at 2 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 3, at the PCWA Business Center, 144 Ferguson Road, in Auburn.

Information on PCWA board meetings may be obtained through the Clerk to the Board at (530) 823-4850 or (800) 464-0030.