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NEWS RELEASE

July 22, 2011

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

PCWA Board Hears Presentation on Proposed Garden Bar Dam

AUBURN -- Directors of the Placer County Water Agency on Thursday (July 21) heard a presentation on studies for a new multi-million-dollar reservoir that is envisioned on the Bear River along the Placer-Nevada county line.

The Garden Bar reservoir project is under study by the Sutter County-based South Sutter Water District (SSWD) in association with five other water suppliers in the northern and southern parts of California.

SSWD General Manager Brad Arnold and consultant Lyndel Melton of RMC Water & Environment in Walnut Creek attended the PCWA board meeting to present a preliminary study on the reservoir project.

The study shows four potential reservoir sizes, ranging from 245,000 acre-feet to 400,000 acre-feet, with costs ranging from \$415.5 million to \$674.5 million.

The reservoir would be more than double the size of SSWD's 104,000 acre-foot Camp Far West Reservoir which is located 4.5 miles downstream. It would be significantly larger than the upstream Combie (5,555 acre-feet) and Rollins (65,988 acre-feet) reservoirs operated by the Nevada Irrigation District.

Although water rights for the project have yet to be determined, the study indicates that a Garden Bar reservoir could provide from 100,000 to 150,000 acre-feet of water per year. Revenues from hydroelectric power sales would help offset operating costs.

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The preliminary report shows a planning timeline that extends into 2019, with construction seen in 2019-2022.

SSWD, based in Trowbridge, Sutter County, is a small district that supplies irrigation water to a 36,000-acre area in Sutter and Placer counties. Rice farming accounts for about 82 percent of the water it supplies.

Melton said the district and its five partners have developed a memorandum of understanding for studies of the expensive water project. Other participants include the City of Napa, City of American Canyon, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District, Palmdale Water District and Castaic Lake Water Agency.

He said SSWD is looking for additional local partners in the project and seeking confirmation from existing partners of a desire to continue. Development of a specific project description is seen as a next step.

The proposal has attracted the attention of Sierra Watch, a Nevada City-based conservation group. Field Director Peter Van Zant attended the meeting and noted the reservoir would cover 900 acres that have been conserved by land trusts in both Placer and Nevada counties. He also presented maps showing earthquake faults in the project area.

PCWA has been following the Garden Bar proposal since it was introduced more than a year ago. General Manager David Breninger said the agency will continue to track the project to determine what benefits it may create for the agency, its water users and Placer County.

In other business, PCWA directors:

- learned from Director of Financial Services Joseph Parker that after their recent review, the Standard & Poor's rating service has upgraded the credit profiles of three PCWA bond issues. Bonds on the Middle Fork Hydroelectric Project have been upgraded from AA to AAA. PCWA Certificates of Participation (COPs) issues of 2007 and 2008 have been upgraded from AA to AA+. A diverse ratepayer base, ample and inexpensive local water supplies and strong financial performance were cited as reasons for the upgrade.

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- voted to annex the Dry Creek Fire Station No. 100 property off Cook-Riolo Road into PCWA's Zone 1 service area. The 2.19-acre property, owned by Placer County, has been using well water.

The next regular meeting of the PCWA Board of Directors will be held at 2 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 4, 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. PCWA information is also posted at www.pcwa.net.

Map courtesy of South Sutter Water District

