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*Annual
Irrigation
Water
Newsletter*

PCWA UPDATE

Placer County Water Agency

Volume 18 • Number 2 • April-May, 2004

Irrigation Season Opens Without Key Player

*Alex Dileo Retires
From 35-Year
PCWA Career*

Each spring, the opening of the PCWA irrigation season brings a flurry of activity, surprises and new challenges. For 35 years, Alex Dileo has been there to meet those challenges.

This year is different. Dileo, a PCWA employee since 1968, has written the final chapter of a lengthy public service career. He spent his last day on the job Mar. 19 and officially retired on Apr. 3.

Dileo, 58, retired as the agency's Deputy Director of Field Services, a position in which he led a staff of 24 in the operation and maintenance of the raw water delivery system.

He joined PCWA as a young man and worked his way up through the ranks, learning all the ins and outs of a complicated and extensive water system with more than 165 miles of canals.

(Please see Dileo, Page 3)



Changing of the Guard

Rick Allan, left, has been appointed to succeed Deputy Director of Field Services Alex Dileo who has retired from a 35-year PCWA career. They are pictured at McCrary Reservoir in Newcastle.

Lots of Water in Mountain Snowpack

With an above-average snowpack in the mountains, PCWA expects to meet the needs of irrigation water customers in all service zones during the 2004 irrigation season.

Early March snow surveys in the northern Sierra showed the snowpack held about 130 percent of average water content. A year ago at this time, water content was measured at about 70 percent.

Most PCWA customers are supplied from the Yuba and Bear river watersheds with water that is delivered to PCWA via the Pacific Gas & Electric Co. canal system.

As of mid-March, the agency anticipated full water deliveries this year from PG&E.

PCWA Meets the Water Needs of Agriculture in Placer County: 2004 Irrigation Season Runs April to October

More than 3,800 customers receive seasonal and year-around raw water services through the PCWA canal system.

The raw water canal system also supplies the agency's network of water treatment plants where clean drinking water is produced for domestic users.

The PCWA raw water distribution system includes 165 miles of canals and raw water pipelines that carry water to customers all along the Interstate 80 corridor, from Alta, through Auburn and Rocklin to agricultural lands west of Lincoln.

How Irrigation Water is Used

Irrigation water is used on large and small farms and ranches to grow crops and raise livestock. PCWA water irrigates pasture for cattle, sheep and other animals, home gardens, orchards, rice fields, vineyards and ranchettes. Nurseries and golf courses also are among PCWA customers.

Customers receive raw water by the miners' inch, a water measurement that dates to the Gold Rush. A miners' inch is equal to the amount of water that will flow through a one-inch-square orifice, or 11.22 gallons per minute. PCWA customers are presently purchasing anywhere from one-half to about 80 miners' inches, depending on need.

Others Rely on Canals

In addition to individual customers and water treatment plants, the canal system supplies a number of independent water suppliers who operate small community water systems.

PCWA employs a team of eight canal operators who are responsible for water flows, daily measurements, inspection, reporting and customer service. An ongoing maintenance program keeps the canal system in working order.



The Boardman Canal in Newcastle

Canal Outages Needed for Upkeep and Maintenance

Some canal outages will be needed this spring and summer so PCWA maintenance crews can catch up with improvement projects delayed by February rains.

Funding for much of this work has been obtained through grants from the federal Water Resources Development Act (WRDA).

Crews will apply gunnite canal lining to sections of the Penryn, Caperton and Rock Springs canals in Zone 1. Eight projects are planned on these canals.

In Zone 3, crews will be rebuilding a section of the Kingston Flume on the Boardman Canal below Colfax. Work is scheduled to begin in mid-April.

Irrigation water customers should always be prepared to deal with water outages, which can be the result of emergencies or planned maintenance projects. Many customers have found it helpful to add on-site water storage tanks or reservoirs that can be used when flows are interrupted.


PCWA does its best to limit water service interruptions and, when possible, notifies customers in advance of any planned maintenance outages.

Reminder on 2004 Water Rates

Most customers who purchase seasonal irrigation water will see rate increases of 3 percent in 2004.

Under the new rate schedule, approved in December by the PCWA board, a customer using 2 miners' inches of water will pay \$88.51 per month during the irrigation season, an increase of \$3.02.

Customers who also use raw water during the winter time will pay 7 percent more for winter water service.

The rate adjustments affect raw water customers in all service zones and became effective Jan. 1. 

Grant Funds Help Finance Water Efficiency Projects

PCWA has been successful in obtaining more than \$1 million in grant funding this year for water system efficiency improvements.

The agency is working to improve canal efficiency by adding gunnite lining to canal surfaces. This reduces leakage and water loss.

In Zone 1, \$1 million worth of efficiency improvements are slated, using Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) grant funding obtained through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which pays 75 percent of the total costs.

Another \$20,000, which is also on a 75/25 match, is designated to fund improvements in Zone 3.

Projects listed on the previous page are part of this work.

PCWA, NID Will Work Together on Water and Power Issues

The primary water suppliers in Placer and Nevada counties have adopted an agreement of cooperation on future water and power matters.

The memorandum of understanding was approved Jan. 28 by the Nevada Irrigation District (NID) board and on Feb. 5 by the PCWA board.

The agreement covers future water service in the growing Lincoln area, where both agencies supply water.

It also pledges cooperation on the federal relicensing of the PCWA and NID hydroelectric power systems. The 50-year licenses held by both agencies expire in 2013.

Dileo Retires

Continued from Page 1

Dileo went to work for PG&E shortly after graduating from Placer High School in 1963 and was working for the utility company when PCWA assumed control of the South Placer water system in 1968.

"They came over and recruited," he recalled in an interview just before his retirement. "I was one of 14 employees on the original PCWA field crew. I'm the last one here."

Dileo remained with the Field Services Division throughout his career. He worked as a helper, canal operator, canal operations supervisor, canal foreman, raw water superintendent and deputy director.

Agency Meets Changing Needs

During his career, he has seen significant changes in land use and water use in Placer County and feels the agency has done a very good job in meeting the growing and changing water needs of the county.

"The agency has been an excellent place to work," the Auburn resident said. "I'm grateful that I've been able to live and work here in the community."

Dileo plans to enjoy retirement in Auburn with his wife, Donna. They have three daughters and four grandchildren.

He plans to continue as a member of Auburn Fire Department Hook and Ladder Co. No. 1 and to do other volunteer work, along with some travel, scuba diving and golfing.



Alex Dileo

Rick Allan Named Deputy Director

Veteran PCWA administrative employee Rick Allan has been appointed to the position of Deputy Director of Field Services. He succeeds the retiring Alex Dileo.

As deputy director, Allan reports to Director of Field Services Mike Nichol and oversees raw water systems. Deputy Director Tom Reeves is in charge of treated water systems.

Range of Experience

Allan, a resident of Auburn, has been with the water agency since 1981. He spent 13 years as purchasing agent and eight years as Hydroelectric Division administrative specialist.

For the past year, he has served as a Field Services deputy director in charge of grant administration, water flow measurement programs and algae control.



Rick Allan

PCWA Resumes Algae Control Effort

After two difficult summers without treatment, PCWA is resuming its chemical algae control program.

The successful program was suspended following a March, 2001 federal appeals court ruling involving an Oregon irrigation district. The decision, in effect, said that anyone using aquatic pesticides in "waters of the United States" should be governed by federal permit.

Suspension of the program proved difficult for PCWA canal water users, many of whom had to manually clean their service outlets on a daily or hourly basis.


PCWA has used copper sulfate as a primary algae control method. It is dripped into canals in carefully measured amounts.

As part of a newly-developed permitting process, PCWA has



Manual algae removal has been difficult for PCWA employees and customers.

studied environmental impacts of algae control and will monitor to see if any threatened fish, frogs or beetles are living in canal treatment areas.

In addition, the agency plans to replace the powdered copper sulfate with Cutrine-Plus, a liquid copper product, which is reported to be safer to fish and wildlife and more effective in algae control. 

IN BRIEF

American River Water

The federal Bureau of Reclamation in October, 2003 began a project to replace PCWA's former pump station on the American River and to restore a section of the river to its natural channel. The agency anticipates that 35,500 acre-feet of water per year will be available when the pumps go online in mid-2005.

Sacramento River Water

Environmental studies have begun on a proposal to divert water from the Sacramento River north of the airport for use in western Placer and northern Sacramento counties.

How to Contact Your Elected PCWA Board of Directors

PCWA is an independent public agency governed by an elected Board of Directors.

Your directors are:

- DISTRICT 1, Pauline Roccucci
Roseville, (916) 782-2708
- DISTRICT 2, Alex Ferreira
Lincoln, (916) 645-2072
- DISTRICT 3, Lowell Jarvis
Auburn, (530) 889-8836
- DISTRICT 4, Mike Lee
Loomis, (916) 645-6705
- DISTRICT 5, Otis Wollan
Colfax, (530) 346-7967

Be Safe Near Streams, PCWA Canals

Children and adults should be aware of water safety, especially during spring runoff when rivers, streams and irrigation canals can be running high and fast.

Canals can be dangerous. They may look inviting, but banks are steep and slippery. Discharge pipes can pull a person under the water. Screens and trash racks designed to trap debris can also trap a person.

PCWA reminds parents, children and recreationists to use good judgment near fast water and to stay safely away from canals.

Public Meetings

The Placer County Water Agency Board of Directors meets regularly the first and third Thursdays of each month at 3 p.m. in the Placer County Board of Supervisors chambers, 175 Fulweiler Avenue in Auburn. The public is welcome.

www.pcwa.net

This newsletter is published as a public service of the

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