

# Water Horizons

January 2006

## Valley Water Alliance Update

### Negotiations Continue

Negotiations between the Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC) and Friant Water Users Authority (FWUA) continue to progress. Efforts initiated in late 2005 by U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein and Congressman George Radanovich, supported by the entire Central Valley delegation, have been on-going for several months. All parties involved continue to report progress is being made and remain resolute about achieving an outcome. Valley Water Alliance remains supportive of the settlement discussions and will be critically assessing any deal once it becomes public.

At press time Judge Lawrence Karlton had once again postponed the court date for the case as a result of the positive progress report he received concerning negotiations.

### Making Our Voices Heard In 2006

The Valley Water Alliance board of directors continues their efforts to reach out to our elected officials on all levels – local, state and federal, to make sure they know the critical importance of the San Joaquin River to the economy of the region. To that end, planning is in process for the scheduling of visits to legislators in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. during the 2006 sessions of the State Legislature and U.S. Congress. VWA encourages you to stay in touch for periodic updates concerning our progress and the positions of our elected leaders through the monthly newsletter and organization website.

### Educating our Community

The Alliance encourages you to continue your efforts in educating and advocating your friends, neighbors, business associates, community groups and elected officials about the critical importance of the San Joaquin River to the region. Without reaching out and telling our story we will not be able to make a difference and obtain water supply certainty for the region.

If you are interested in receiving additional information for mailing and distribution, or for your own personal reference, please contact Alfreda Sebasto at [info@valleywateralliance.org](mailto:info@valleywateralliance.org) or 559-291-0184. All documents are also available for download on the Alliance's website at [www.valleywateralliance.org](http://www.valleywateralliance.org).

Please contact the Valley Water Alliance at [info@valleywateralliance.org](mailto:info@valleywateralliance.org) if you have any questions or need additional information. To

be placed on the Alliance's mailing list, or to provide edits or submissions for our monthly newsletter please contact Alfreda Sebasto at [info@valleywateralliance.org](mailto:info@valleywateralliance.org) or call 559-291-0184.

*The following guest editorial was submitted to the Bakersfield Californian.*

### Focusing on Tomorrow

*By Joel Nelsen, president The Valley Water Alliance*

More than sixty years ago, when the foundation of our economy was based predominately in agriculture, the San Joaquin Valley was failing because the industry did not have a reliable water supply to meet demand. The State of California and Federal government recognized the need for a stimulus to provide continued growth and economic expansion. A developed water supply, and thus the efficient use of the resource, was determined to be a priority for economic stimulus by local, state and federal officials.

The construction of Friant Dam and associated canals by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation would create the environment necessary to achieve water supply reliability and continued economic growth. The decision subsequently created the number one agricultural region in the world. Eventually, diversified growth has manifested into a thriving economy of families, communities, businesses, both small and large, and agriculture.

But we still have a problem. A problem threatening our families, communities, businesses and agriculture, a problem we should all care about solving. The Friant water system created an incredibly productive region and that region could be lost if water supply reliability is not assured in conjunction with a desire for restoration of the San Joaquin River. Restoration, which depending on how it is completed, could erode the very foundation for our Valley's economy that was constructed more than a quarter century ago.

For the past 17 years litigation initiated by the Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC) has attempted to undermine our South Valley's water supply. Notwithstanding the agreement of all official forums of government and local citizens, a federal judge in San Francisco ruled in 2004 an obscure state law must be given priority and the San Joaquin River restored sufficiently to become a fish habitat.

The essence of the judge's ruling was to mandate turning back the clock more than sixty years in the River's history that would have a profound affect on our Valley economy and our existing way of life. The threat

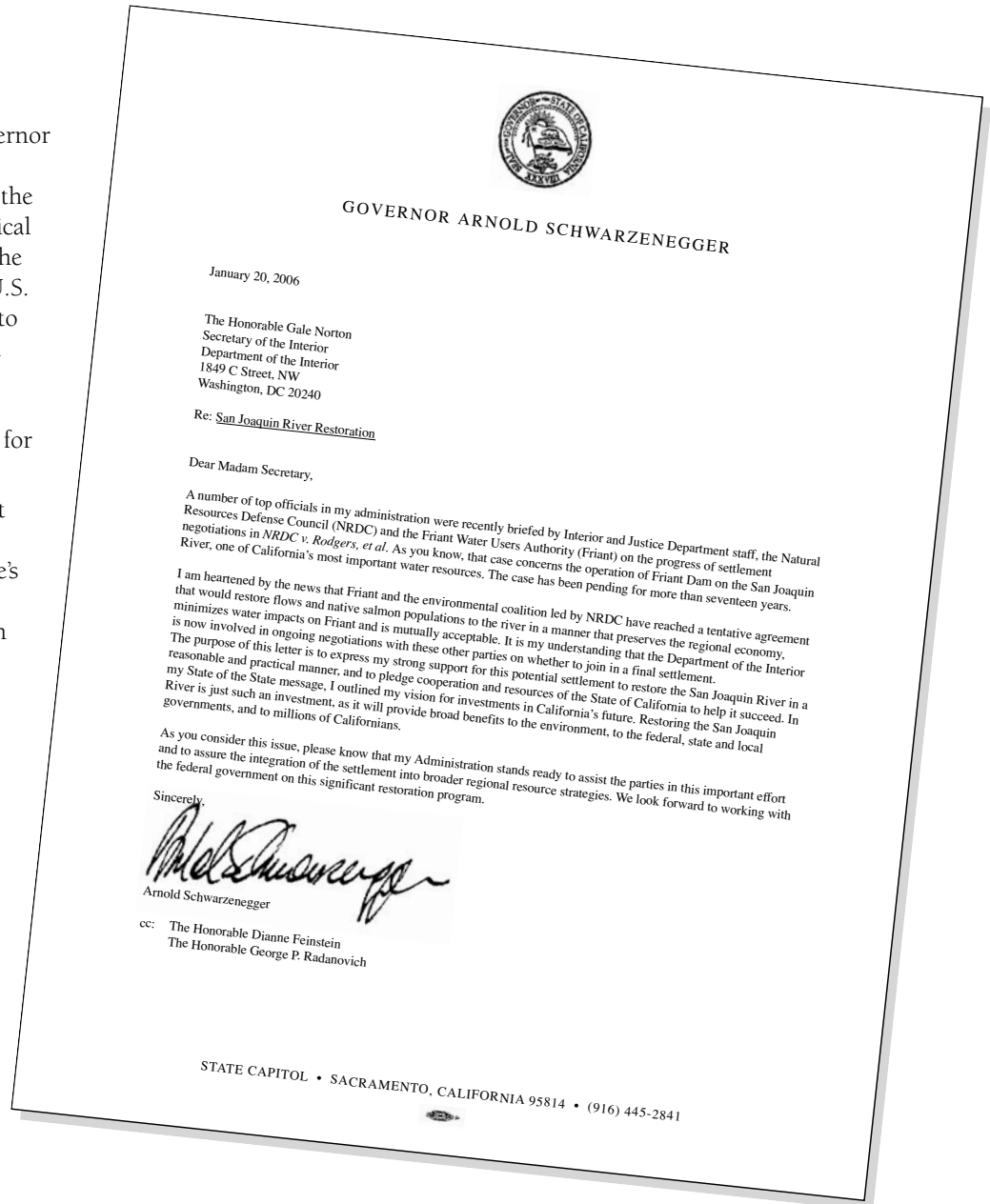
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## Governor Schwarzenegger Lends His Support

The VWA is pleased to report California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger recently lent his full support to the potential settlement to restore the San Joaquin River, "in a reasonable and practical manner." The cooperation and resources of the State of California in collaboration with the U.S. Government will certainly make a difference to the Valley's future. Without the collaboration between the State and Federal government regarding the issue, it will be very difficult to implement any regional restoration strategies for the San Joaquin River.

The Governor's support and acknowledgment that the restoration program is vital to our future is greatly appreciated. It is the Alliance's hope the support of the Governor will encourage the settlement discussions between NRDC and FWUA to continue in a positive manner.

The full text of the letter from Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton is attached for your reference.



### Focusing, from page 1 .....

to decrease our water supplies mobilized communities, citizens, and businesses, ultimately leading to the formation of the Valley Water Alliance (VWA). The Alliance has focused on educating as many people as possible about the huge negative impact the judge's decision could have on our region.

Meanwhile, two prominent elected leaders, and the entire state and federal delegation in the Central Valley have worked to negotiate a solution. Senator Feinstein and Congressman Radanovich have facilitated face-to-face discussions with the opposing parties in the lawsuit. Their intent has been to find a solution that would bring water supply certainty to the

region, support the Valley's economic growth and result in reasonable river restoration.

This is a path the VWA and all our citizen advocates are encouraged to support. The importance of these discussions and this issue cannot be taken lightly. Our families, our communities, and our businesses will all be effected, which ultimately impact our way of life and the economic excitement taking place in our Valley.

We cannot return to yesterday. We must focus on tomorrow.

**Please contact the Valley Water Alliance at [info@valleywateralliance.org](mailto:info@valleywateralliance.org) if you have any questions or need additional information. To be placed on the Alliance's mailing list, or to provide edits or submissions for our monthly newsletter please contact Alfreda Sebasto at [info@valleywateralliance.org](mailto:info@valleywateralliance.org) or call 559-291-0184.**

