

# Water Horizons

November, 2005

## Valley Water Alliance Update

### Feinstein and Radanovich Continue to Seek Resolution

Senator Dianne Feinstein and Congressman George Radanovich continue their efforts to find consensus in the long-running dispute between Friant Water Users Authority (FWUA) and the Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC). Litigation focusing on restoring portions of the San Joaquin River with water from Friant Dam is at the heart of the dispute. As the progress towards a resolution continues Friant members are guardedly optimistic about the eventual success of the negotiations. Meetings between the parties involved are occurring on a nearly daily basis in their concerted effort to reach an agreement. Senator Feinstein and Congressman Radanovich must be commended for their efforts in moving the process forward and finding a resolution which provides water supply reliability for the long-term San Joaquin River water users, while taking into consideration the need to meet the demands of the environment.

### Bank of the West Steps Up

Without the generous contributions of so many friends and supporters of the Valley Water Alliance we would not be able to outreach to the public and advocate on behalf of the San Joaquin River water users and the numerous communities, from Merced to Kern county, who rely on the river for their survival. The economic impacts of any water loss on the San Joaquin River must be realized as we move forward in our attempt to find a resolution to the river restoration questions. To that end, we would like to thank Bank of the West for their recent contribution of \$5000 to the Valley Water Alliance. It is the generation support of the hundreds of companies and individuals, such as Bank of the West, which will give the Alliance an opportunity to make a difference. Thank you Bank of the West, for your continued and overwhelming support of our efforts.

### Alliance Board Visits with the Fresno Bee Editorial Board

Recognizing that part of reaching out to the public about San Joaquin River issues is making sure we have provided the media with the information and tools they need to write informed stories about local water issues, the Valley Water Alliance and Friant Water Authority board members visited with the Fresno Bee Editorial board in October. Participants primarily discussed the need for our community to support the efforts of Senator Feinstein and Congressman Radanovich to find a resolution and for viable river

restoration to take into consideration the social, cultural and economic impacts. It is the Alliance's hope all parties left the meeting with a better understanding of the San Joaquin River water issues. The Alliance has also requested editorial board meetings with the Visalia Times Delta and Bakersfield Californian as part of our continuing outreach efforts.

### Alliance Director's Meet with Resource Secretary Chrisman

Alliance directors Supervisor Connie Conway and Joel Nelsen met with Resource Secretary Mike Chrisman earlier this month to review the state's actions regarding San Joaquin River Restoration, the legal case and the political side and practical aspects of the subject. The meeting was triggered by State communications to Senator Dianne Feinstein and Congressman George Radanovich regarding their efforts to stimulate dialogue with all stakeholders involved in the on-going litigation being pursued by the Natural Resource Defense Council. A letter was also forwarded by Cabinet Secretary Chrisman and EPA Secretary Dr. Allen Lloyd expressing opposition to Radanovich and Feinstein's efforts supported by the Alliance.

The Alliance had suggested the State's communication was ill conceived and somewhat tardy given the actions that had taken place in the past several months. Chrisman disagreed with the characterization and outlined an aggressive effort by the

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administration to help resolve the issue and terminate the litigation. Additional discussion revolved around the Water Board's termination of funds for studies and an amicus brief filed by the State Water Board in Judge Karlton's courtroom. Conway and Nelsen also brought to the Secretary's attention the Alliance's disappointment that the administration had not expressed any opposition, let alone concern, to SB 350. Senator's Mike Machado's effort during the most recent State legislative session to codify a preliminary decision by Judge Karlton.

Ultimately all parties in the meeting agreed to disagree on a couple of points. However, the administration would review the political activity in Sacramento and the Secretary's office would provide a detailed letter to the Valley Water Alliance expressing several positive actions currently underway. It was agreed the letter would then be circulated to Alliance supporters.

### **California EPA Cabinet Secretary Tamminen Visits the South Valley**

Cabinet Secretary Terry Tamminen was in the San Joaquin Valley recently meeting with California Citrus Mutual, Friant leadership, the Valley Water Alliance. He also attended a public listening session sponsored by Senator Roy Ashburn at the Tulare Agri-Center. The Cabinet Secretary is considered to be point for the Governor's environmental agenda and Tamminen admits to being a card-carrying environmentalist.

In all the forums he noted the State was "water broke" and more storage was necessary to satisfy the approximately 530,000 new citizens entering the State each year. He spoke to the waste existing in Southern California where too much run-off proceeds through cement conveyances rather than being used to satisfy water demands. He argued that better use of this water would reduce demand for Central and Northern California water. He also acknowledged San Joaquin River restoration should be reviewed very closely but not at the expense of agriculture and the economy in this Valley.

### **Call for Resolutions of Support Has Had a Significant Response**

The Valley Water Alliance has been busy this summer gathering supporting resolutions from the cities and counties who will be impacted by any water supply losses on the San Joaquin River. We now have more than 20 resolutions of support from Merced County to Kern County and the numerous communities and organizations in between. As we make a made rush to complete our efforts by the end of the year we encourage you to contact us if you would like to lend your efforts to the process and pass a resolution in your community. Contact Alfreda Sebasto at 559-291-0184 or [info@valleywateralliance.org](mailto:info@valleywateralliance.org) if you are interested in assisting in the effort.

### **Join VWA in Our Outreach Efforts**

The Alliance encourages you to continue your efforts in educating and advocating your friends, neighbors, business associates, community groups and elected officials. Without reaching out and telling our story we will not be able to make a difference as the fight for San Joaquin River water continues. Over the past month Alliance members having spoken to Rotary groups, the CAPCA organization, Kings County Board of Supervisors workshop day and numerous other organizations throughout the region.

The Alliance has developed materials that you may want to consider requesting for distribution to community organization in which you are involved and for inclusion in billings and other monthly mailings from your business or organization. A tri-fold brochure, which summarizes the VWA's efforts and how others can become involved is currently available. Think about displaying the brochures in your place of business to indicate your support of preserving our water and our future, while encouraging others to do the same. If you are interested in receiving any of these documents 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.*



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