

Waterlines

MARCH 2006

The Top California Water Stories of the Month as Compiled by Orange County Water District

Huntington Beach Wave - 3-2-06 - Plans for the country's largest ocean water desalination plant won narrow Huntington Beach city approval, capping four years of environmental study and fierce community wrangling. Several agencies, including the California Coastal Commission, must still sign off on the \$250 million project.

Riverside Press Enterprise 3-17-06 - Differences between the Assembly and Senate, Republicans and Democrats, California's seemingly endless water wars, and even the governor's appetite for political extravaganzas contributed to the failure to put a public works bond (including water bond) on the June ballot. Senator Minority Leader Dick Ackerman, R-Tustin, said. "We were unable to come together on all of the parts in time to make it on the June ballot." In a related story (Inside Bay Area 3-17-06), legislative leaders vowed to put a bond proposal before the voters in November.

AP 3-17-06 - An international summit on the world's water crisis opened with dire warnings of shortages and inequalities and a heated debate over the privatizations that have forced growing numbers of poor people to buy expensive bottled water. The demand is growing especially in developing countries, where many get by on less than 4.5 gallons of water per day.

San Francisco Chronicle 3-18-06 - If California suddenly went dry and no rain or snow fell for two straight years, the state would still have enough water to go around thanks to this year's wet winter, meteorologists and water experts say.

Reuters 3-20-06 - The overuse of water for farming is the biggest environmental threat to the world's freshwater resources and damage is likely to worsen until 2020. The leading academic who helped draw up the report predicted more frequent conflicts over water in the future as

supplies became scarce. Problems could be solved by better planning, often simply growing crops in regions where they did not demand vast irrigation.

LA Times 3-27-06 - A panel of experts recommended the EPA lower the maximum safety limit of fluoride in water from its current 4 milligrams per liter. An estimated 200,000 people across the U.S. have drinking water that naturally contains this amount or higher. The National Research Council panel cited damage to children's teeth and a possible heightened risk of bone fractures in the elderly. (California limit is already 2 milligrams per liter).

Riverside Press Enterprise 3-27-06 - State engineers, acting on a request by Southern California water agencies, said draining Lake Perris for good is part of the wide range of options under consideration for the popular water reservoir and recreational haven in western Riverside County. On the other extreme, officials say, that they will still look at increasing the size of the lake to hold almost eight times more water. That would require raising or replacing the existing dam, which engineers have determined might not be able to withstand a powerful earthquake.

Arizona Daily Star 3-13-06 - Needing more water to keep up with growth, Arizona and the six other Colorado River Basin states are looking to the sky. The states plan to hire a consultant this spring to evaluate cloud-seeding and make recommendations for whether, where or how to pursue it. The purpose is to create more snowfall in the Upper Rockies to feed the Colorado River and its tributaries.

Waterlines is a monthly e-mail news summary prepared by the Orange County Water District (OCWD) to keep you abreast of this changing water environment. Attached is a summary of statewide news reports on key water issues. As the manager of the groundwater basin that supplies 60 percent of Orange County's water supply, OCWD provides this handy, condensed news report to save you time while still keeping you abreast of water news that affects Orange County. We hope this will help you in the performance of your duties by keeping you up-to-date on key water stories affecting your organization and your constituents. If you have any questions, or know anyone who would like to receive this update, please contact Lisa Sanchez at (714) 378-3323 or lisasanchez@ocwd.com.