

District Receives Bids for Reservoir Project

On March 4th the District opened bids for the reservoir covering projects for the North and Northside Reservoirs. We received bids from seven contractors; the apparent low bid came from Pacific Hydrotech with a price of \$4,909,720. The covers will be paid for from the District's Capital Reserve Fund. There is a chance the projects will qualify for funding from the Economic Stimulus Package through the State Revolving Fund Loan Program. The three lowest bids were within two percent of each other, so the bidding was very competitive.

The covering project is needed to comply with new regulations regarding open storage reservoirs. The policy requires that open reservoirs either be covered or have the water treated when it leaves the reservoir. For North and Northside the most cost effective option was the covers. North Reservoir holds about 7.8 million gallons; Northside has a capacity of 22.8 million gallons.

According to District Engineer, Brian Lee, the projects include more than just covering the reservoirs. "We will be modifying the pipelines going in and out of the reservoirs to help maintain water quality. The work will be done at North Reservoir first, and once that cover is in place we will move on to Northside, so we always have one of the two reservoirs in service."

Lee also had high praise for the volunteer Engineering and Budget and Finance committees that helped move the projects forward. "Both committees played vital roles. The Engineering Committee worked with staff, the Board of Directors and consultants reviewing multiple scenarios to comply with the new regulations and ultimately settled on the covers. The Budget and Finance Committee helped figure out how we were going to fund the projects."

The District's Board of Directors will consider awarding the contract during the regular board meeting scheduled for March 24 beginning at 1:00 p.m.

Water Supply Update

A couple of recent events may have a significant impact on our water supply. On February 27 Governor Schwarzenegger proclaimed a statewide State of Emergency and issued an executive proclamation directing the Administration to implement a variety of water management actions. The declaration calls for a statewide water conservation campaign and directs state offices and commissions to streamline regulatory and approval processes for new water supplies, such as desalination and recycled water.

It also requires the Department of Water Resources to provide the Governor with an update on the state's drought condition by March 30, and if "emergency conditions have not been sufficiently mitigated" the Governor may institute mandatory water rationing. A copy of the Governor's Proclamation can be found on the web at <http://gov.ca.gov/proclamation/11557/>.

On March 4 the California Fish and Game Commission voted unanimously to list the Longfin Smelt as a threatened species under the California Endangered Species Act. Commissioners also voted to classify the Longfin's cousin, the tiny Delta Smelt, as an endangered species. Although not unexpected by water managers, the listings will significantly impact the operation of the State Water Project and will limit our ability to receive water from Northern California.

What does all of this mean for customers of RMWD? We are 100 percent reliant on imported water supplies, and the wholesale agencies are considering mandatory cutbacks of between 15 and 20 percent maybe as early as July of this year. In addition the dwindling supply means having to pursue more costly water supplies, so the price of water will likely increase as well. We will continue to update you as new information is available.

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Plant of the Month—the Coyote Brush (*Baccharis pilularis consanguinea*) is a true California Native and can be found in coastal scrub from San Diego to Oregon. Even though it has no resemblance to its taller more colorful cousin it is a member of the sunflower family. Coyote Brush is a wiry and woody perennial evergreen that looks like a bush. Its numerous small and stiff grey-green leaves have a waxy coating that reduces the amount of moisture lost to evaporation into the air. Best of all, the leaves are fire-retardant, meaning that they have a chemical makeup that reduces their ability to catch on fire. The leaves become fragrant and sticky with resinous oils on hot summer days. These oils are unappetizing and may protect the plant from being eaten.

The Coyote Brush's large root system extends many yards out from the plant to make use of any rain that might fall in its dry habitat. Branches grow from a crown that forms at the ground and spreads out. Because of the dense root crown, Coyote Brush is able to survive and regenerates quickly from such things as fire, floods, or clearing.

Coyote shrubs provide shelter for wildlife and nectar for bees, butterflies and other insects. It is considered a pioneer species because it is one of the first shrubs to appear after other plants have been removed by cultivation or fire.

THE COMMUNITY LOSES A LEADER AND FRIEND

On January 11 the District and surrounding community lost a good friend; Larry Pearce passed away. Mr. Pearce served as the Chairman of RMWD's Budget and Finance Committee from its inception, and played a vital role in helping establish the Capital Reserve Program currently in place. In addition to his Chairmanship, he frequented other committee meetings and was a regular participant in our monthly board meetings. Larry also served on numerous committees and associations outside the water district.

At the February board meeting RMWD's Board of Directors issued a resolution commending Larry Pearce for his service to the District.

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**EMPLOYEE  
CERTIFICATION**

In February, Steve Coffey, System Operator, achieved his Water Distribution Operator Grade 4 certification.

Congratulations, Steve!

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**DROUGHT STATUS AND MANDATORY
CONSERVATION
FOR MARCH 2009**

<u>CUSTOMER CLASS</u>	<u>CONSERVATION LEVEL</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
Domestic	Voluntary 10%	
SAWR	Voluntary 10%	
IAWP	Mandatory 30%	Don't forget your new allocation started with the January bill. Check your allocation each month on your water bill