



# Water Update

UNITED WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

106 North 8th Street ♦ Santa Paula ♦ California 93060 ♦ (805) 525-4431 ♦ [www.unitedwater.org](http://www.unitedwater.org)

*Spring 2010*

## Lake Piru Ready for Family-Friendly Summer

With the return of warmer weather the number of visitors to Lake Piru is on the up-swing. Though the past winter's rainfall was only able to bring the lake up to 51,000 acre-feet, well short of its 84,000 acre-foot capacity, there is still plenty of water for boating and fishing. Last year at this time, the lake held only about 44,000 acre-feet after two successive below normal rainfall years.

This summer marks a change from previous ones at the Lake Piru Recreation Area in that consumption of alcohol will no longer be allowed, except in association with special events. United's Board of Directors felt the need to adopt this policy this past January to deal with an increasing number of disturbances over the last few years. The common denominator with most of these incidents, which threatened safety at the lake and drove away some law-abiding visitors, has been alcohol.

Though the majority of lake visitors have proven they can drink their beer and wine responsibly, the Board decided, after examining what other lakes are doing and looking at various options, that the only practical way to get in front of the alcohol problem was to institute a ban. Many visitors have already expressed their appreciation for the change, especially for the quieter atmosphere it brings to the campground in the evening. In the months and years to come United will continue to evaluate the situation and further adjust the policy as needed.

Otherwise, staff from United and Recreation Resource Management, the concessionaire running the recreation facilities at the lake, have done much to get ready for summer. The biggest improvement is the new boat docks at the marina. The new docks' 84 boat slips are 18 more than the previous boat docks. Other recreation area improvements include a nine-hole Frisbee golf course and a recently upgraded and expanded menu at



the Condor Point Snack Bar.

Additionally, the swim beach at the Juan Fernandez Boat Launch area is currently undergoing enhancement to enlarge the size of the beach, providing visitors more room to enjoy the sand, sun and water. Evening and day fishing tournaments have also been added to the list of activities at the lake. All of this is on top of the existing campground, picnic area, five-lane boat ramp and other facilities.

United is happy to be able to provide the community with Lake Piru as a recreation opportunity. For additional information about Lake Piru Recreation Area hours, amenities and reservations please call 521-1500 or visit [www.lake-piru.org](http://www.lake-piru.org).



# UWCD Approves 2010-11 Budget

At its regular meeting on June 9, United's Board of Directors approved a budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2010. The budget includes an increase in the District-wide Groundwater Extraction Charge of 18.5 percent, which corresponds to a change from \$49.35 per acre-foot to \$58.50 per acre-foot for water pumped for municipal and industrial use and from \$16.45 per acre-foot to \$19.50 per acre-foot for water pumped for agricultural use.

This increase was necessary primarily to provide for costs associated with District regulatory compliance and legal issues, including fish passage improvement at the Vern Freeman Diversion Dam, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission requirements at Santa Felicia Dam, development of a Habitat Conservation Plan pursuant to the Endangered Species Act, and Probable Maximum Flood analysis of Santa Felicia Dam. It was also necessary in light of United's purchase last December of the Ferro and Rose properties, former gravel quarry sites which are located in the Oxnard Forebay and are key to development of the District's planned Forebay Recharge project.

The approved 2010-11 budget also includes a \$10.00 per acre-foot increase to the Pleasant Valley Pipeline delivery rate, a \$20.00 per acre-foot increase in the Pumping Trough Pipeline delivery rate, and a \$4.00 per acre-foot increase in the Saticoy Well Field delivery rate to reflect the full operating costs of those systems. There will be no increase in the coming year to the Freeman Fund Groundwater Extraction Charge. All increases were done in full compliance with Proposition 218 requirements.

The budget includes total revenues of \$19.6 million, including nearly \$3.4 million of property tax revenue of which \$1.4 million is assessed locally for importing



## Strawberry Watering Study Shows Promising Results

A joint project among the Cal Poly Irrigation Training and Research Center (ITRC), United and John Deere Water Technologies (JDWT) has been underway for the past two years to see if there is a more water-efficient way to irrigate strawberry seedlings, and the study has shown good results.

During the first four to six weeks following planting, the conventional method to irrigate the young strawberry plants is with sprinklers. This is done even though drip tape is in place in the beds, and the beds are covered with plastic sheeting, thus leading to most of the sprinkled water running off of the plastic. The sprinkled water is applied to provide bed preparation and salinity control before switching to drip irrigation once the young plants are established.

To find out if there was a way to save water by reducing runoff during this early stage of a strawberry crop, the study partners identified two growers, Reiter Affiliated Companies and Eclipse Berry Farms, to help perform tests. One of the tests attempted to irrigate the plants exclusively with drip tape from the time of planting, but in the first year of the study these plants experienced a 30-percent die-off. This, of course, was a discouraging result; however, modifications were made to the watering protocol to address salinity issues which were found to be the cause of the die-off, and tests in the second year of the study were much more successful.

In fact, when a comparison was made between tests of three different irrigation methods (the conventional sprinkler method, a partial sprinkler method and drip tape only) the yields at the two farms were the same for all three.

With these positive results in hand, ITRC is getting the word out to growers through a variety of means, and it is hoped that water usage for strawberries will begin to decline. This water usage is of special concern for United during the month of October when most strawberries are planted. As more strawberries have been planted in recent years, the high October demand for water have made it difficult at times for United to meet demands on its Pumping Trough Pipeline system.

For more information about the study visit the ITRC website at <http://itrc.org/projects/jdwt.html>.

## Noticias de United Water Conservation District

- El 9 de junio la Junta Directiva de United aprobó un presupuesto para el ejercicio económico 2010-11. El presupuesto incluye un aumento a la Carga Distrito-Ancho de la Extracción de la Agua Subterránea del 18 por ciento.
- La Gestión del Recurso de la recreación, el concesionario de United para el campo de deportes de Lago Piru, y el personal Unido han estado preparando lago facilidades para el verano ocupado. Desde enero, el consumo de alcohol ya no es permitido en el lago menos acontecimientos especiales.
- Un estudio de métodos de irrigación para fresas ha mostrado gran promesa para reducir la cantidad de agua necesaria para establecer semilleros de fresa.

# GROUNDWATER CONDITIONS

## UWCD Automating Moss Screen Facility

United is in the process of automating operation of the gates at its Moss Screen facility, a project which is expected to allow for an additional average delivery of 3,500 acre-feet of water to the El Rio Spreading Grounds and the diversion of an additional 500 acre-feet per year at the Freeman Diversion.

The Moss Screen facility is situated on the edge of United's Saticoy Spreading Grounds and is used to deliver surface water diverted at the Freeman Diversion to El Rio for groundwater recharge and to the Pumping Trough and Pleasant Valley agricultural irrigation systems.

United strives to maximize the amount of water it provides to the two irrigation pipelines to minimize the pumping of groundwater in overdrafted areas of the Oxnard Plain.

It is also preferable to recharge groundwater in the El Rio area, rather than nearer the Freeman Diversion at Saticoy, for two reasons. First, the water is needed to help manage high nitrate levels in the groundwater in El Rio. Second, groundwater tends to mound in the Saticoy area in wetter years, limiting the amount of water which can be recharged. El Rio is the beginning of United's Oxnard-Hueneme System which provides treated groundwater to the cities of Oxnard and Port Hueneme in order to keep those two cities from needing to pump groundwater from wells near the coast.

The Moss Screen facility is actually a collection of screens, drums and gates within a steel-walled building and is so named because its main function is to filter algae, moss, seeds and other floating debris from the diverted water before it is put into the pipelines. Since the Moss Screen's original construction over 50 years ago it has been operated by manual adjustment of its gates.

This manual system has generally served United well; however, it has greatly limited responsiveness to the variable demands of the two irrigation pipelines through the course of a day. Currently, during the evening hours the gates are conservatively set to avoid overflow at the Moss Screen, but this practice limits the amount of water that can be spread at El Rio for a large portion of the day.

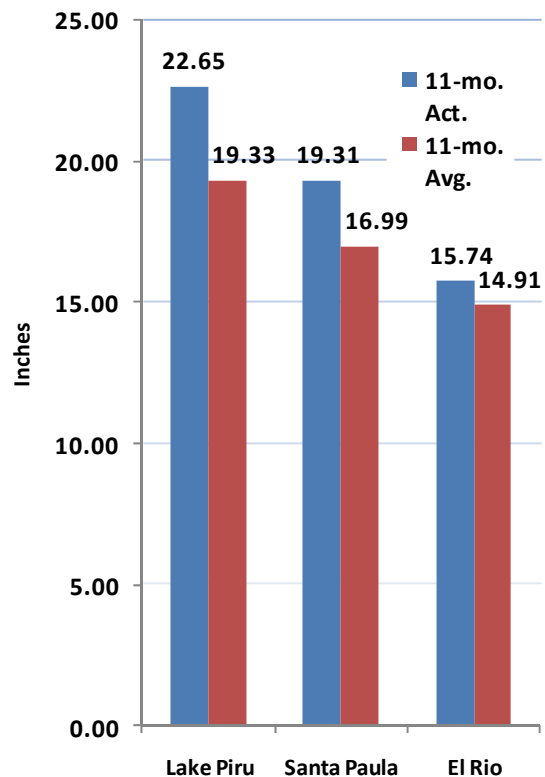
To remedy this situation, United is replacing gates at the Moss Screen and automating their operation through the SCADA (Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition) system it has been developing over the last four years. When completed the system will be able to automatically adjust to changing irrigation demand and ensure that as much water as possible can be delivered throughout the day to El Rio. As stated above this is expected to amount to an average of 3,500 acre-feet per year. And because this water will be moved to El Rio, rather than being spread at Saticoy, the project will avoid groundwater mounding at Saticoy and allow an additional average of 500 acre-feet to be diverted per year.



72-inch gates at UWCD's Moss Screen facility

United has applied for grant funds from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for the project, but will complete it, regardless. Given the water benefit of automating the Moss Screen gates, the project's cost of less than \$200,000 represents a very good return, even if the grant application is unsuccessful.

## District Rainfall YTD (October 2009 - May 2010)





**Mission Statement**  
 United Water Conservation District shall manage, protect, conserve and enhance the water resources of the Santa Clara River, its tributaries and associated aquifers, in the most cost effective and environmentally balanced manner.

# United Water Conservation District

## Calendar

- July 14 - Board Meeting  
1:00 pm, UWCD Board Room
- July 15 - AWA Annual BBQ at Lake Castias
- August - NO BOARD MEETING
- September 8 - Board Meeting  
1:00 pm, UWCD Board Room
- September 16 - AWA Reception for Elected  
Officials, 5:00 pm, Reagan Library

**UNITED WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
 106 North 8th Street  
 Santa Paula, CA 93060  
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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Robert Eranio**, President  
 Division 3, Ventura

**Daniel C. Naumann**, Vice President  
 Division 6, Oxnard

**Lynn E. Maulhardt**, Secretary/Treasurer  
 Division 4, Oxnard

**Sheldon G. Berger**  
 Division 7, Oxnard & Port Hueneme

**Bruce Dandy**  
 Division 5, Oxnard

**Roger E. Orr**  
 Division 2, East Ventura & El Rio

**F.W. Richardson**  
 Division 1, Piru, Fillmore & Santa Paula

### GENERAL MANAGER

**E. Michael Solomon**



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