



UNITED WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Water Management Plan *Summary Report*

September 26, 2007

DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Report No. UWCD-RP-2007-01
Version 1.0

United Water Conservation District's *Water Management Plan* sets priorities for projects and programs to be implemented over the next 20 years. The plan is intended to be flexible to accommodate an uncertain regulatory climate and to incorporate new information to be developed. The plan includes a 5-year Capital Improvement Projects plan. To better accomplish the District's mission, some water rates would increase. The earliest increases may go into effect in fiscal year 2008-09. That will allow time for United to obtain buy-in from its constituents. This *Summary Report* describes the recommended projects and programs, and provides preliminary estimates of costs and future water rates. This summary is written for those already familiar with the District's operations. For background information and further details, a more comprehensive report is posted on United's web site. Additional information on the need for new projects can be found in the Fox Canyon GMA's 2007 *Groundwater Management Plan*.

The plan will be circulated for public comments in 2007, followed by adoption by United's board in 2008.

The Need for New Projects and Programs

New projects and programs within United are needed for several reasons, including the following:

- ◆ The Oxnard Plain aquifers are still overdrafted, and seawater intrusion is still present. Although conditions have improved in some areas since the Freeman diversion was built, groundwater quality in other areas is still declining. Many areas could experience water quality degradation during future droughts. The Fox Canyon GMA's *Groundwater Management Plan* identifies several strategies for addressing problems on the Oxnard Plain. United's *Water Management Plan* describes the steps United will take to help solve these local problems.

You may send comments on this draft report to Jim Kentosh via email to jimk@unitedwater.org; or by regular mail to UWCD, 106 N. 8th Street, Santa Paula, CA 93060.

- The eastern part of the Oxnard Plain, from Point Mugu to Pleasant Valley, has experienced low water levels and, in some areas, declining water quality. Although the Conejo Creek project has improved conditions there, groundwater levels remain well below sea level, even after the 15-year wet period since the Freeman diversion was built, as shown on Figure 1. The GMA's *Groundwater Management Plan* suggests that without implementing new projects, pumping in this area would need to be reduced by 85% to attain groundwater basin management objectives.

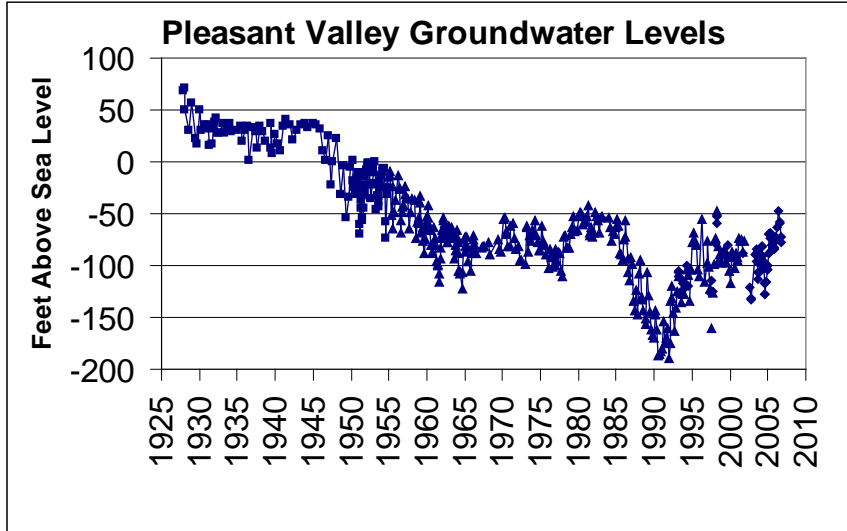


Figure 1. The lower aquifer in the Pleasant Valley area remains below sea level even after a 15 year wet cycle and the completion of the Conejo Creek project. Conditions will worsen during droughts.

- When the groundwater level in the Oxnard Forebay falls below a critical level, the State Board has stipulated that United should not deliver surface water for irrigation, and that the deep aquifer OH wells – high in iron and manganese – should be pumped to OH customers. This critical drought level has not been experienced since 1991. When it happens again, it will affect many on the Oxnard plain.
- The Santa Paula basin is approximately in balance between pumping and recharge. Nevertheless, the basin would benefit from additional groundwater recharge there.
- Water quality in the upstream groundwater basins is being degraded, partly due to wastewater discharges from Los Angeles County.
- Yields of United's existing facilities – the Freeman diversion, Santa Felicia Dam and the Piru diversion – will be reduced by additional water releases for endangered steelhead trout. (The amounts to be lost are not known at present.) This will require new projects to replace the lost water.

- ◆ Important maintenance and upgrade projects must be undertaken to preserve existing facilities for the future generations.

Due to their cost and scope, the necessary projects cannot be built all at once. Therefore, this *Water Management Plan* sets priorities, and schedules recommended projects so that they can be implemented and funded over time.

Another necessary element of the *Water Management Plan* is flexibility. Some recommended projects may reach regulatory roadblocks or other difficulties. In that case, priorities can be adjusted, and staff can focus on other projects.

Freeman Diversion and Related Projects

The *Water Management Plan* recommends the following projects related to the existing Freeman diversion:

1) Forebay Recharge Project – Phase 1

The first phase of this project will deliver 375 CFS – United’s present water right – into the Ferro pit and the Riverpark pits. It is planned to purchase all or part of the Ferro pit from Vulcan Materials Company, which is reclaiming the pit in accordance with the reclamation plan in its CUP. Under agreements overseen by the RiverPark Joint Powers Authority between Oxnard and United, ownership of the Riverpark pits will be transferred to United after Oxnard certifies that they meet the requirements of the approved reclamation plan. United has five years to decide whether to accept the pits.

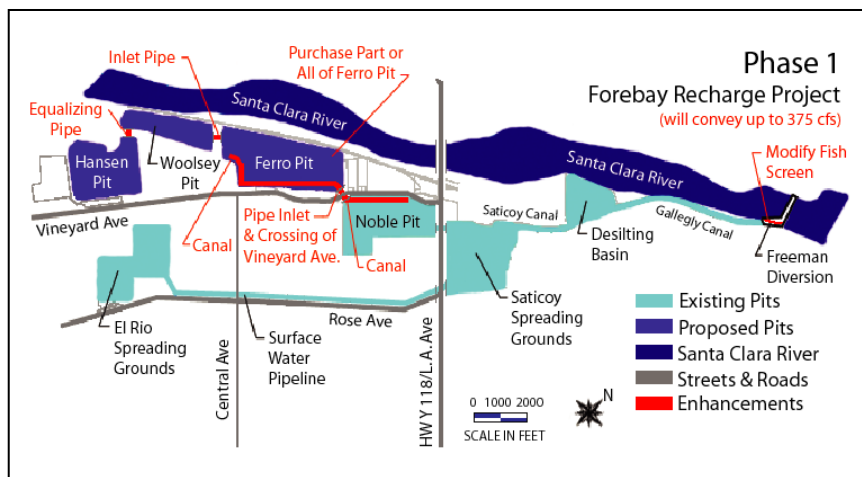


Figure 2. The first phase of the Forebay Recharge Project will deliver up to 375 CFS into the Riverpark and/or Ferro pits.

This project will increase the average yield of the Freeman diversion by around 3,000 AF/Yr, for a total cost of around \$21 million (including \$7 million for the Ferro pit).

The project is planned with flexibility, so that it can proceed with either the Ferro pit, the Riverpark pits, or both. The preferred option is to acquire all of the pits. However, if the Riverpark pits are not adequately stabilized against the risk of slope failure, or if contaminated soils are found there, the project could be built initially with only the Ferro pit. The latest appraisal of the Ferro pit places its current fair-market value at \$7 million. If the Ferro pit cannot be acquired for any reason, an easement across the Ferro pit could be obtained to deliver water only to the Riverpark pits.



Figure 3. The Ferro pit may be acquired as part of the Forebay Recharge Project – Phase 1.

The Phase 1 project is also flexible in which components are built first. The full project includes the following major components, listed approximately in order of their priority, highest to lowest:

- Purchase the Ferro Pit*
- Vineyard Avenue crossing (pipeline)*
- Acquire the Riverpark pits
- Ferro to Woolsey conduit
- Equalization pipeline
- Grand canal inlet upgrade*
- Levees and spillways in the Ferro pit*
- Pond B improvements
- Fish screen improvements

New canal in United's Noble pit
 Ferro spillway into the flood control channel*
 Saticoy canal bridge upgrade

Many of these features can be phased in over time, while still allowing additional recharge. The minimum functioning project would consist of the Ferro pit and a pipeline under Vineyard Avenue to convey water from United's Noble pit. The planned Phase 1A components, to be built first, are marked with an asterisk. Components can be added or deferred as cost information becomes available. For example, if the Ferro pit costs more than expected, other components could be postponed while maintaining a stable rate structure. If grant money becomes available, some components could be moved ahead.

It is planned to complete the EIR in 2007-08, for which funds are already available through the Riverpark JPA. That will be followed by acquisition of the Ferro pit, final design, and construction around 2010. The project will likely be built in two phases: Phase 1A will convey water into the Ferro pit from the District's nearby Noble pit, and Phase 1B will then convey water from the Ferro pit into the Riverpark pits.



Figure 4. The Phase 1B Forebay Recharge Project would connect the Riverpark pits (including the Woolsey pit) into United's groundwater recharge system.

2) Forebay Recharge Project – Phase 2

The second major phase of this project will increase United's water diversion rights from the Santa Clara River from 375 to 1,000 CFS. The existing Freeman canal would be extended and a new canal would be constructed to convey the increased flow to the Ferro and Riverpark pits. This project would develop another 7,000 AF/year of yield, depending on final fish release requirements.

The water rights process is time consuming and uncertain, requiring environmental studies and hearings at the State Water Resources Control Board. It is unlikely that a new water right will be obtained in less than 10 years. The water rights process will be complicated by the presence of federally endangered steelhead trout in the Santa Clara River watershed. There is sometimes enough water in the Santa Clara River for United to divert more from the river without adversely affecting steelhead trout. It is intended to operate the Phase 2 facility in a way that should not reduce migration opportunities for steelhead. Nevertheless, steelhead passage will be the most difficult issue to handle in the regulatory and water rights process.

Because of the expected duration and difficulties, the initial application for a new water right will not be made until around 2012, after the complete Phase 1 project is constructed. That will allow District staff to focus on one major effort at a time.

This Phase 2 project represents a long-term commitment by the District, but will be necessary to further develop local water resources.

3) Reface the Freeman Diversion Dam

The Freeman dam was built with roller compacted concrete, RCC, which is softer than normal concrete. After some very large storms since it was built, the face of the dam has eroded a small amount. Some cracks in the dam also need repair. These problems are not considered to be hazardous. Nevertheless, to prevent further degradation, it is recommended to reface the dam and inject grout into the cracks. This project will be done in 5 to 9 years, during a dry period. The project can be moved ahead in the event of delays in other projects, or delayed further if the risk of further damage is minimal. The cost of this project is estimated to be \$2.4 million.

These projects would affect the rates paid by pumpers on the Oxnard Plain. The Freeman pump charge has been steady at \$15.00/\$45.00 per AF (ag/M&I) since 1992. Once the EIR for the Forebay Recharge Project is adopted and the Ferro pit is ready to be acquired, one option is to increase the Freeman charge to \$21.00/\$63.00. That would fund the construction of all Phase 1 facilities, and could be implemented as early as fiscal year 2008-09. However, delays to the project – which are likely to occur – would delay future rate increases. It is important to note that a Freeman charge of \$21.00 (for ag) has the same value in 2007 dollars that the original Freeman charge of \$15.00 had in 1992.

The Freeman pump charge will remain in effect until 2011, when the loans for the original construction of the Freeman diversion are paid off. It is the expiration of those loans that allows funding new projects with moderate rate increases. At that time, the Freeman pump charge will be terminated. It will be replaced by an "Overdraft Replenishment Charge." The Overdraft Charge would pay not only for Freeman-related projects, but also for other projects that will help solve seawater intrusion on the Oxnard Plain. In the *Water Management Plan*, the proposed projects and programs are phased so that the Overdraft Charge should not exceed \$21.00 (agriculture) in today's dollars. If the Overdraft Charge is maintained at that value, all of the Freeman projects, including the

Phase 2 Forebay Recharge Project, can be constructed with future rate increases that simply keep up with inflation. With delays in some projects, as is likely, there could also be funding available for other projects that reduce overdraft, such as a seawater barrier.

General Fund Projects

To benefit all of United's customers, the *Water Management Plan* recommends the following projects and programs related to the general fund:

1) Import Additional State Water

The City of Ventura and Casitas MWD have rights to 10,000 and 5,000 AF per year, respectively, of water from the State Water Project. Although they have been paying for the SWP facilities, neither agency has received any State water to date. In 2004, United imported 2,000 AF of Ventura's State water, as a pilot program. United paid for the variable cost of the water and reimbursed Ventura for DWR's Turnback Pool amounts.

In the *Water Management Plan*, it is recommended that United purchase some or all of Ventura and/or Casitas MWD's State water in favorable years. DWR would release the water from Pyramid Lake into Piru Creek, where it would flow into Lake Piru and be released downstream toward the Santa Clara River as part of United's normal water conservation releases. GMA credits would be received for the portion of the State water that is diverted at the Freeman diversion. Most of those GMA credits would likely be "retired." It is recommended to import an average of 5,000 AF per year.

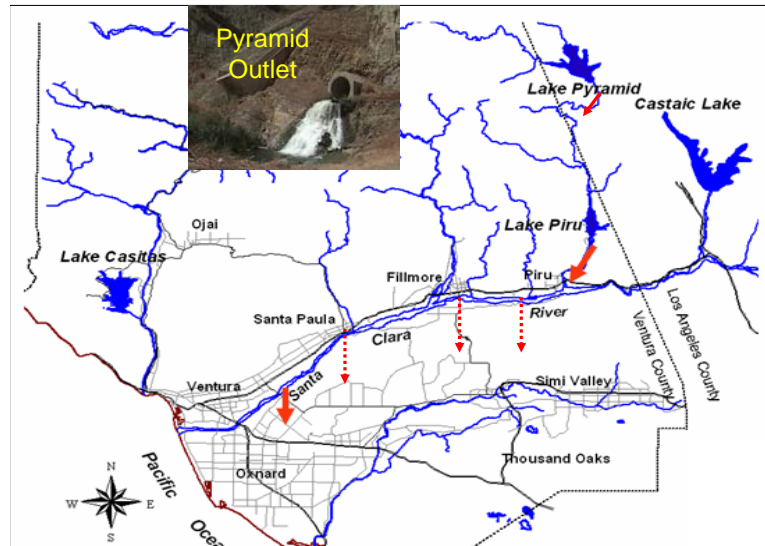


Figure 5. Additional State water would be released from Pyramid Lake into Piru Creek, which flows into Lake Piru. The water would be released from Lake Piru to recharge groundwater basins downstream.

All pumpers in United's service area would benefit from higher groundwater levels and a more reliable supply during droughts. Each basin affects other basins, and pumping from a basin that is not overdrafted can adversely affect areas in overdraft. Therefore, all pumpers in these interconnected basins would contribute to the cost of importing water, via United's general fund pump charge. Exceptions will be considered for existing customers of Calleguas MWD and for the City of Ventura.

To implement the program, agreements between United Water and Ventura and/or Casitas MWD will be required. An agreement with DWR will be required to allow a new point of delivery and a higher release rate. Agreements with Calleguas MWD and MWDSC may also be necessary if their customers contribute to the program. An EIR must be done to study the effects of the additional water on middle Piru Creek. With federally endangered *arroyo toads* present in the creek, environmental issues must be carefully addressed.

This program would remain in effect until Casitas/Ventura start receiving State Water to meet their own demands, or make other arrangements for their water. After that time, deliveries to United would decline, and eventually end.

To provide another source of funding for this State water, some constituents may be allowed to participate in the program directly. By directly funding the purchase of some additional State water, some pumpers on the Oxnard Plain could receive GMA credits for imported water, subject to approval by the GMA. To receive credit for one acre-foot of water, pumpers would purchase two acre-feet of State water, providing a net benefit to the aquifers. By "banking" surplus credits in wet years for use in dry years, United could guarantee deliveries under the program. This element of the program would be limited to customers located entirely within United's boundaries and within the GMA; and other restrictions may apply. At a two-to-one ratio, the approximate cost would be \$400 per acre-foot, which is less than the GMA penalties of \$725 per acre-foot.

Other constituents overlying upstream basins, outside the GMA, may also be able to participate in the State water importation program without receiving GMA credits.

It may take three years to reach agreements with other agencies, to complete an EIR, and to conclude an endangered species consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service (if required), before the water could be imported. An additional factor is that DWR might need to obtain an amendment to their FERC license in order to release the State water. Despite the endangered species and FERC issues, DWR has expressed support of our current efforts to utilize Ventura County's entitlement to State water. If all goes well, the first deliveries could be made around 2010.

2) Piru Diversion Upgrade – Phase 1

The Piru diversion was constructed in 1931 without a fish screen. Other than temporary fish screens of the non-self-cleaning type, the diversion has been without a permanent screen since it was built. United intends to install a new fish screen at

the diversion. However, due to understaffing within Fish and Game, the project is advancing more slowly than anticipated.

A new fish screen can be constructed entirely within or landward of the footprint of existing concrete structures. The Corps of Engineers has advised us that we should not need a 404 permit for this project, which will simplify the regulatory process. Without additional delays by Fish and Game, and possibly NMFS, a new fish screen could be constructed by December 2008. We estimate a construction cost of \$1,100,000. To keep down costs, we hope Fish and Game and NMFS will authorize a simple design, similar to the traveling screens installed a few years ago at United's moss screen facility in Saticoy. Costs could increase if special design features are added to the conceptual design submitted to Fish and Game in August 2006.

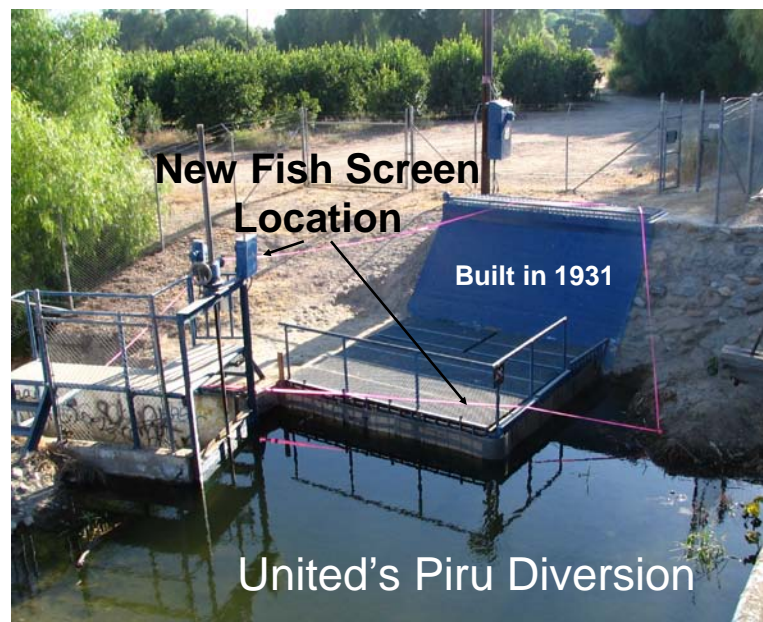


Figure 6. A modern self-cleaning fish screen will be installed at the Piru diversion. The new facility will be built within the footprint of existing concrete structures.

3) Piru Diversion – Phase 2

Since the construction of the Piru diversion in 1931, the bed of Piru Creek has lowered perhaps six feet, partly because Santa Felicia Dam blocks sediment upstream. Each decade it becomes more difficult to reconstruct the earth berm to form the diversion. The use of a natural fishway, which will likely be stipulated by our new agreement with Fish and Game, will also require more material to be excavated from the creek bed every few years when the fishway is washed out by lake spills. Eventually, it may become cost-effective to install some permanent grouted rip-rap to reduce the amount of material washed out. The fishway (formerly referred to as the "bypass channel") would be made more permanent. The

existing sluice gate would be replaced by a larger gate to accommodate higher flows without washing out the earth berm. This will be a fairly substantial project in the creek bed, requiring an extensive permitting process.

The Phase 2 project could be configured to develop United's full water right of 80 CFS. Due partly to the lower creek bed, the diversion can handle only about 50 CFS at present.

The second phase of the Piru diversion upgrade will probably not be needed until around 2019. At that time, combining United's Piru diversion with Piru Mutual Water Company's diversion, located about 1/4 mile upstream, could also be considered.

4) Moss Screen Gate Upgrade Project

Water passing through the moss screen facility at Saticoy is sent to the El Rio spreading grounds by pipeline. At present, the gates at the moss screen are not automated. Since United's staff are not on duty 24 hours a day, the operators set the flow through the moss screen at a rate that is not likely to overflow there if irrigation shuts off in the middle of the night. The result is that the amount of water delivered for spreading at El Rio is less than the recharge capacity of the spreading grounds. Seldom are we limited by recharge capacity at El Rio; instead we are limited by the need to prevent the moss screen from overflowing, and by irrigation demands. The result is that sometimes water flows to the ocean while the Freeman is not able to handle 375 CFS, and El Rio is not being used to full capacity. By automating the gates, the full spreading capacity at El Rio can be utilized.

The project will consist of replacing the existing gates with heavy duty gates suitable for continuous duty, and installing control system components to operate the gates from the District's existing SCADA system.

This is one of the most cost-effective projects in the *Water Management Plan*. It is possible to develop an additional yield of 1,000 AF/Yr at a cost of around \$250,000. A simple upgrade project like this is not subject to CEQA or endangered species consultations. (The moss screen is located 3/4 mile from the river.) Under the operating criteria currently being reviewed by NMFS as part of our Section 7 consultation for the Freeman diversion, the migration of steelhead should not be affected by the project.

Design work on this project will start in 2008, followed by construction in 2009-10. This project can be done independently of the moss screen building replacement scheduled for late 2007.

This project recharges groundwater and therefore would be funded by the general fund.

5) Santa Paula Basin Recharge Facilities

Around 1931 United's predecessor agency operated spreading grounds in Santa Paula to recharge the Santa Paula basin. The facility was abandoned in 1942 because the lease for the land expired. Since then, it has been determined that the Santa Paula basin is not easily recharged from the Santa Clara River. Although not yet in overdraft, the Santa Paula basin could benefit from additional recharge.



Figure 7. Diversion to spreading grounds in Santa Paula around 1930. This facility was abandoned in 1942.

To provide additional recharge, few options may be available. One possibility would be to construct new recharge ponds over the basin and recharge them with water diverted from the Harvey diversion dam on Santa Paula Creek. That diversion has pre-1914 water rights, some of which are not fully utilized. There are only a few places where effective recharge of the basin can be done. Unfortunately, there is little unused land left in those areas. The existing pipeline from the Harvey diversion could convey water to new spreading grounds when irrigation demands are low and surplus pipeline capacity is available. Other options could also be considered, such as recharge from wells outside the basin or utilization of State water released down the Santa Clara River. The City of Santa Paula has some limited water rights and could play a role in a recharge project. Nevertheless, it is uncertain whether recharge ponds in the Santa Paula basin would be feasible and cost-effective.

To provide information to support future planning efforts, United will prepare a feasibility study for a new Santa Paula recharge facility. The study will search for potential sites for spreading grounds, evaluate pipeline alternatives, and provide cost estimates. The study would commence in 2007-08. After it is completed, a decision could be made whether to pursue a Santa Paula spreading grounds at some time in the future.

Bottom Elevation at SFD Outlet Tower

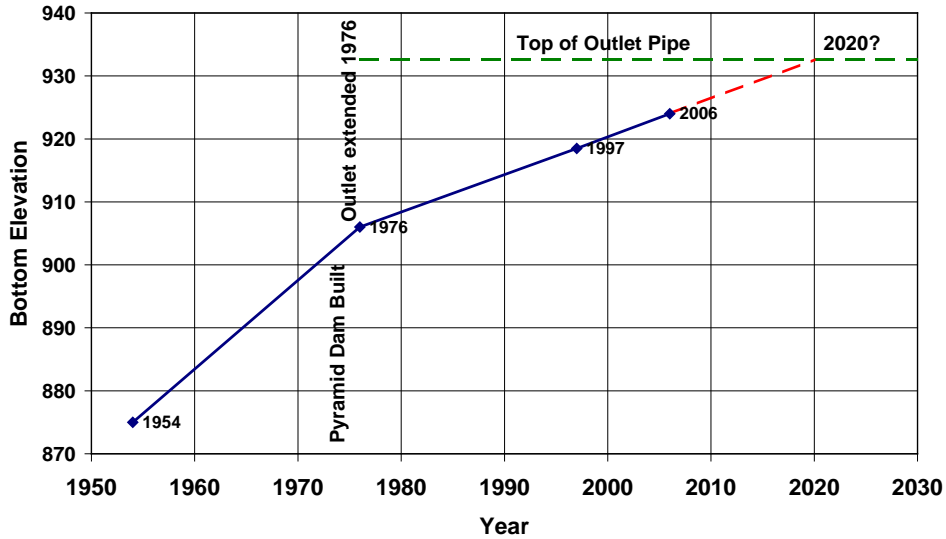


Figure 9. The blue line shows the bottom elevation of Lake Piru at the outlet tower since its construction in 1954. Sedimentation has slowed since Pyramid Dam was built upstream in 1972. Nevertheless, sediment could reach the top of the intake tower by around 2020.

The next time the outlet tower is raised, it will not be a simple fix. A new outlet structure could cost tens of millions of dollars. It may extend above the surface of the lake. The lake must be nearly drained to expose the outlet works. Flows from Piru Creek would need to be diverted around the outlet during the work. Vast quantities of mud must be dealt with. One potential solution would be to build a cofferdam around the outlet structure, and pump lake water over the spillway at the rate water flows into the lake.

Dredging the lake is not an attractive alternative. About 27 million cubic yards of silt has accumulated in Lake Piru since 1954. Compare that to the removal of Matilija Dam, which must remove only 6 million cubic yards of mud at a total project cost, including removing the concrete dam, of around \$145 million.

It is recommended that a preliminary design report for a new outlet structure be done fairly early, in 2010. That will allow more time to plan for upgrading the outlet works by 2020.

Such a project will provide an opportunity to do a complete rehabilitation of the dam’s outlet works after 60-plus years of operation. The 72-inch butterfly valve in the tunnel would be rehabbed or replaced. The penstock pipe must be inspected and recoated on the inside. The asphalt-asbestos exterior coating of the penstock must also be replaced.

7) Habitat Conservation Plan

Operating facilities in the Santa Clara River and on Piru Creek causes incidental "take" of endangered steelhead trout. Although United expects to obtain a Biological Opinion for the Freeman diversion from NMFS under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, that opinion may expire in 2011 after the Freeman loans are paid off and the Bureau of Reclamation is no longer eligible to act as lead federal agency for the Freeman diversion project. A Biological Opinion for the FERC relicense of Santa Felicia Dam (in progress) will not cover all of our up-river operations. To better comply with the Endangered Species Act, United must prepare a "Habitat Conservation Plan" for steelhead, to satisfy Section 10 of the Act. That will allow United to "take" some steelhead during normal operations without violating the law.

To prepare a Habitat Conservation Plan, United will contact and invite participation by all local agencies that may affect steelhead in the Santa Clara River. The plan will take until 2011 to complete. It will require numerous studies and meetings with interested parties. The HCP process will also include public participation and outreach.

The HCP may also be written to cover other important aquatic species, including tidewater gobies and Pacific lamprey.

Since the Habitat Conservation Plan will also cover District-wide facilities, including Santa Felicia Dam and the Piru diversion, its costs will be paid by the general fund.

8) Oxnard/Calleguas Intertie to the El Rio Spreading Grounds

Oxnard's Del Norte blending station is located adjacent to the El Rio spreading grounds. A 36-inch pipeline delivers water from Calleguas MWD to the station. That provides an opportunity for an emergency connection between United's spreading grounds and the Calleguas supply. In a water quality emergency – high nitrates, MTBE's, or a hazardous chemicals spill – water from Metropolitan Water District could be delivered into the spreading grounds. MWDSC allows water to be "wheeled" through its system, with limits; or Oxnard could receive the water as a customer of Calleguas MWD. Unlike many of our other projects, this project has few environmental constraints.



Figure 10. An emergency interconnection between Oxnard's Del Norte Blending Station and United's El Rio spreading grounds will improve reliability during a water quality emergency.

As an emergency connection, such a project may qualify for grant funding. State grant funding has trended towards projects that provide regional benefits. Connecting the Oxnard Plain aquifers to Metropolitan's extensive water system would constitute a regional project. It is planned to prepare a preliminary design report for the connection in 2010. That report will support a search for grant funding for the project. Priorities for grant awards are usually given to projects that are ready to proceed.

As a groundwater recharge project, startup costs and matching funds would be provided from the general fund.

9) El Rio Bypass Pipeline Project

The "Interim Water Supply Project," also called the El Rio Bypass Pipeline Project, was a condition of the Riverpark development. During the permitting for that development, concern was expressed that United might not assume ownership of the Riverpark gravel pits under some circumstances. (Under the present agreements, United can opt out of acquiring the pits.) In that case, ongoing evaporation from the pits would reduce the groundwater supply in the Oxnard plain, relative to the original permit conditions that required the pits to be partially filled in. The Bypass Pipeline was intended to deliver some of United's surface water into the County detention basins in Riverpark. That would develop some additional yield to offset evaporation from the Riverpark pits.

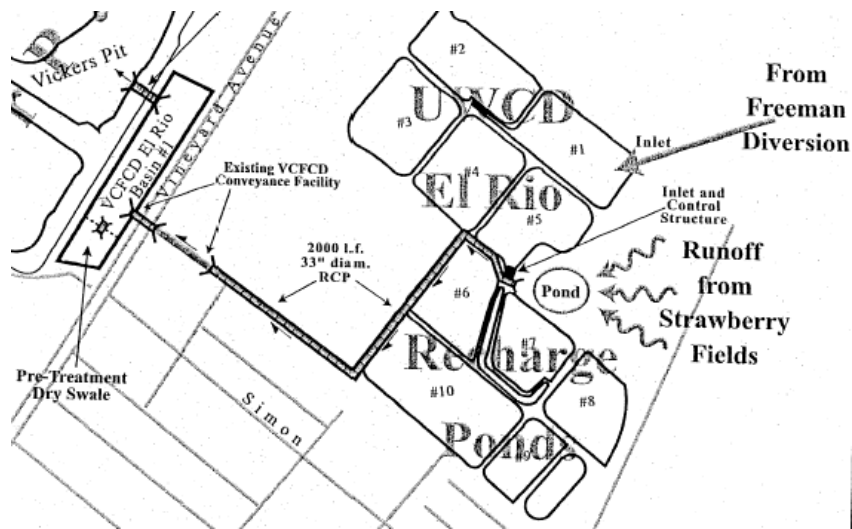


Figure 11. The El Rio Bypass Pipeline will route local runoff away from the El Rio wellfield into the existing Ventura County storm drain system. Some river water would also be delivered there.

During the permitting for the Riverpark project, the developer was required to deposit \$500,000 for the Bypass Pipeline into the Riverpark JPA's account. Those funds are now available to construct the project. A "Four-Party Agreement" between Oxnard, United, Riverpark, and the Riverpark JPA requires those funds to be used for the Bypass Pipeline, or some agreed alternative, within 10 years. The project was delayed while another alternative was investigated, but is now back on track.

For some time, there has been concern about agricultural runoff flowing into United's El Rio spreading grounds, which are adjacent to the OH wellfield. In fact, some of the OH wells are within 50 feet of standing water in the ponds. Recent tracer studies show that recharged water travels quickly to the wells. About 10 years ago, some of United's OH customers expressed their concern about potential contamination. An advantage of the Bypass Pipeline is that agricultural drainage that now flows into Pond 6 in El Rio would be routed around the El Rio grounds. That should improve water quality in the OH wellfield and protect it from contamination. Even without additional yield, the proposed project will protect the quality of drinking water consumed by around 180,000 people. Therefore, it is recommended that the Bypass Pipeline Project proceed based on its own merits. It will develop some additional yield and protect water quality in the El Rio area. It should be a feasible project from a regulatory perspective.

In order for this project to be most effective, the moss screen automation project must also be completed. Only then would new yield be developed by this project.

There is a potential development that could complicate the Bypass Pipeline Project. An adjacent property owner is considering building affordable housing on the land around the El Rio spreading grounds. If that happens, the pipeline route could be affected. A new development would be required to route local drainage into the existing County storm drain. That might allow United to build a shorter bypass pipeline, to connect to a nearby storm drain rather than to the existing drain farther away. Nevertheless, United would still need to build the conveyance from Ponds 5 and 6 to the new storm drain.

10) Santa Felicia Dam Spillway

Ongoing hydrologic and hydraulic studies have found that the present spillway of Santa Felicia Dam may be deficient for passing the most probable maximum storm flows. These studies are continuing, in an effort to find a cost-effective solution. A recommended solution has not been developed, nor are cost projections available. This project could have some effect on United's future water rates.

Eastern Oxnard Plain Projects

The *Water Management Plan* recommends the following projects to improve conditions in the Pleasant Valley area and eastern Oxnard Plain:

1) Pilot ASR Well Near Hueneme Road

For many years, a seawater intrusion barrier in the Oxnard Plain has been under consideration. Oxnard is planning a barrier as part of its GREAT program. But while Oxnard overlies only a portion of the plain, the benefits of a seawater barrier extend well beyond the city limits and sphere of influence. To fund a barrier, Oxnard is limited to collecting fees from its citizens or from willing customers outside its boundaries. Oxnard does not have the ability to collect payments from all entities that would benefit from the project.

For a regional project like a seawater intrusion barrier, it would be appropriate for an agency covering a wider geographic area to play an active role. United's boundaries cover most of the area that would benefit from a seawater intrusion barrier. United has the authority, to be used judiciously, to establish zones and rates to ensure that those who benefit from projects also help fund them. United could operate a barrier to benefit all of its constituents on the Oxnard Plain. United also has water for blending with Oxnard's reclaimed water, should that be injected. It is reasonable for United to have a role in any seawater intrusion barrier project.

It is recommended that United participate in the construction and operation of one or two pilot ASR wells (Aquifer Storage and Recovery) near Hueneme Road. This general location has been selected in one of Oxnard's GREAT reports as the most suitable site for an ASR pilot project. The final location will be selected based on modeling, hydrogeologic investigations, and rights-of-way availability.

This pilot ASR well would be a joint project with the City of Oxnard. Oxnard has already done considerable work on the project, including an EIR. United and Oxnard would share funding and other responsibilities for the project. Details will have to be worked out between Oxnard and United. Agreements would be developed to define how the project would proceed, and how future expansions would be handled. One option would be to form another joint powers authority between Oxnard and United; another option would be to operate through a memorandum of understanding.

For the pilot ASR project, one or more wells would be constructed near Hueneme Road. Land to be acquired by Oxnard would provide a site, to be leased to United. Water for injecting into the well would be received from the Ocean View pipeline in Hueneme Road, owned by Oxnard and supplied by the OH System. In essence, shallow aquifer water from the Oxnard Forebay would be injected into the lower aquifer east of the fault zone in the lower aquifer. The ASR well would include a pump and motor to backwash the well during the pilot injection program and to test extractions. The site should be near a drainage ditch for discharge of pumped water. The well would also have the ability to pump water back into the Ocean View pipeline.

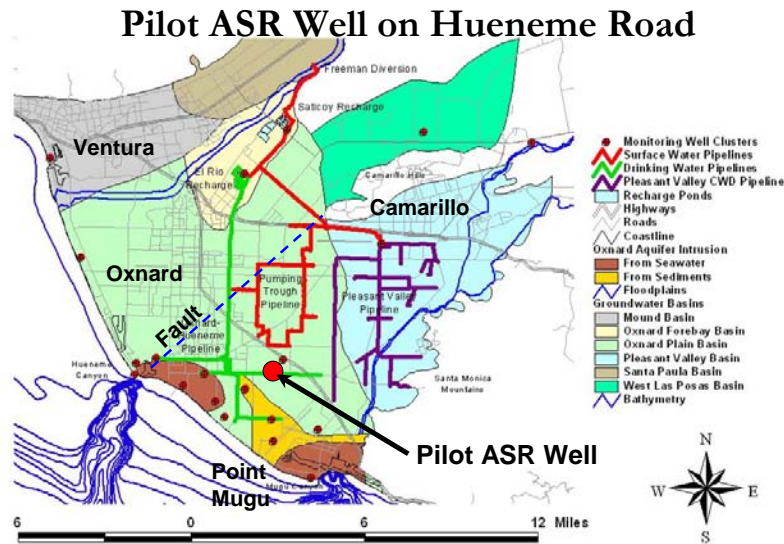


Figure 12. As part of a joint project with Oxnard, one or more pilot ASR wells (aquifer storage and recovery) would be constructed along Hueneme Road. Potable water would be injected into the deep aquifer for several years while monitoring the impacts on groundwater.

The ASR well would be operated as a pilot injection program, using potable OH water, for a period of around five years. The program would be closely monitored and data would be collected to evaluate the injection. Several key questions could

be answered during the pilot program:

- Is there compatible chemistry between the shallow and deep aquifers?
- Does the injected water act to trap seawater behind the barrier?
- Where does the injected water flow and at what rate?
- How much of the injected water migrates toward the ocean?
- What is the detention time to the nearest potable wells?
- What is the decay of the injection rate with time?
- How much backwashing is needed and how effective is it?

A complete monitoring program would be established, in partnership with Oxnard and its consultants. The data collected will support permitting for potential injection of reclaimed water into the aquifers, if that is shown to be feasible.

Injecting reclaimed water into a drinking water aquifer is a big step, only to be undertaken with care. Concerns about contaminants, pharmaceuticals, heavy metals, and pathogens must be addressed. A pilot program is essential to build confidence in the approach among agencies, regulators, pumpers, and the public.

Upon completion of the pilot program, the well could be used in several ways:

First Seawater Barrier Well The well could become the first of a series of seawater intrusion barrier wells, as part of Oxnard's GREAT program or a joint program with United. It could be used for injecting potable or reclaimed water for that purpose.

Sixth PTP Well If the Ocean View Pipeline is converted to an irrigation line and connected to the PTP system, another PTP well will be needed in the south to supply peak demands. The pilot well could then be used as a sixth PTP well.

Ocean View Peaking Well The Ocean View pipeline has suffered from pressure problems during high demand periods. If more irrigation customers are hooked up to the Ocean View pipeline, those pressure problems would return. In that case, the well could be used to supplement peak flows in the Ocean View line, or as a valuable backup for the OH System during shutdowns.

One issue to be coordinated with Oxnard relates to the standards to be used for the pilot ASR well. As an agency that serves both agriculture and M&I, United tries to adopt the most economical approach for new facilities. For example, all of United's wells are located outside, exposed to the weather. By comparison, Calleguas MWD's ASR wells are located inside spacious buildings, some with dual-use well motors capable of hydropower generation. This top-of-the-line approach drives up

costs. Since agriculture will benefit from the project and may help pay for it, a more economical approach should be considered.

Another issue to be decided is how to share costs between United and Oxnard. This would be covered in agreements between the two agencies. Oxnard has actively pursued grant funding for its GREAT program that could be utilized for this project.

United's Board, in consultation with its constituents, will also have to decide how to pay for the project. As a groundwater recharge effort, the project could be partially funded by the general fund. As a project that offsets seawater intrusion, it could be funded through the Overdraft Charge to be established in 2011. Since the project would benefit pumpers in the east, a new zone could be established in that area. More than likely, costs for this project would be shared by more than one fund. Another issue is that the 3:1 ratio of water rates between M&I and agriculture should be maintained. Funding recommendations are provided in a later section.

2) Seawater Intrusion Barrier

After completion of the pilot injection program in five years, a decision will be made by United and Oxnard, in conjunction with United's other constituents, whether to proceed with a full-scale seawater intrusion barrier. The water supply could come from recycled water, pumped water, or some combination.

It is important to consider how a barrier would function. If Oxnard injects reclaimed water into the barrier and pumps the same amount of water out of the Forebay to meet the City's demands, the aquifers will benefit. But the same benefit is obtained by pumping water out of the Forebay and injecting it directly into the barrier. The effect on the aquifers is the same (not considering water quality). However, in the latter case, Oxnard does not benefit directly. Deciding how to apportion benefits to Oxnard and benefits to the aquifers will drive the cost sharing for this project.

3) PTP Extension

For many years, an extension of the PTP system has been considered, without success. The PTP system was designed to deliver around 12,000 AF per year, but actual deliveries have been around 9,000 AF per year. There is surplus capacity in the system. There are pumpers south of the PTP system who could receive PTP water. Delivering more PTP water to irrigators provides in-lieu recharge to the eastern Oxnard Plain, and slightly increases the yield of the Freeman diversion. United's new Saticoy wellfield will also provide more water to be pumped from the Forebay to the east through the PTP extension.

Nevertheless, it is recommended that the PTP extension project be delayed for a few years. That will allow time for relevant information to be developed: the long-range status of the Conejo Creek project, the status of Camrosa's *Renewable Water Resource Management Program*, the future disposition of Calleguas' brine line, and

the direction of Oxnard's GREAT program. All of those projects could affect the source and availability of water for the PTP extension.

In 2011, a planning study of the PTP system extension will be prepared. Potential customers will be contacted, and the extension components will be designed. The extension could include several elements:

- New pipelines to future customers, generally to the south
- A new booster pump near Highway 101 to move water to the south
- A new reservoir in the southern part of the system
- A new PTP well(s) for peaking and backup
- Connection of the Ocean View pipeline to the PTP system
- Connections to the GREAT project, Camrosa's project, or the brine line
- An irrigation well manifold to some of the OH wells

After the planning study is complete, design and construction of facilities would begin, around 2012. The PTP extension could be built in pieces, with some pipelines built in the first year, a booster plant in the second year, a well in the third year, etc. One option is to spread the construction out so that the work can proceed on a pay-as-you-go basis. Another option is to raise bonds to build a big part of the project at once.

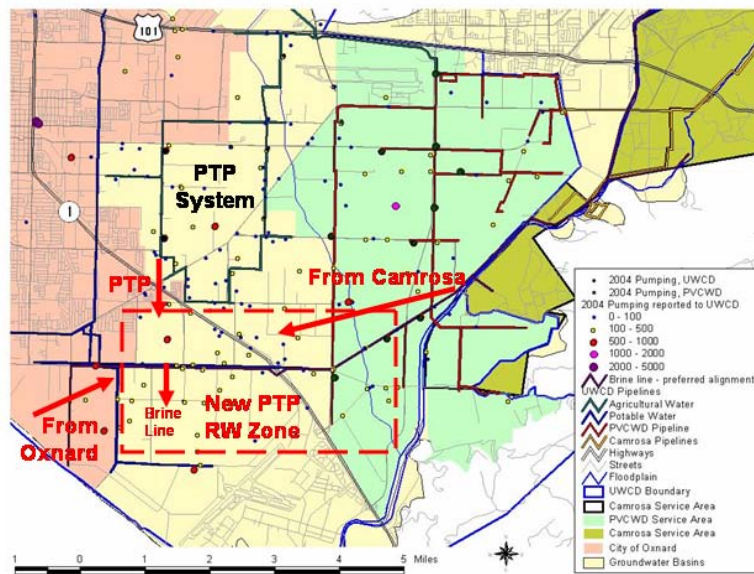


Figure 13. The PTP system will be extended to the south. Additional water deliveries would come from river diversions, Oxnard's GREAT project, Camrosa's salt balance project, or Calleguas MWD's brine line. If reclaimed water is used, a new pressure zone would be created for the new customers.

Relocating the present PTP disinfection facility is not part of this long-range plan. A decision to relocate it should be made in 2007-08 in conjunction with PTP customers, the Ag Association and the Farm Bureau. That project would be paid by the PTP fund.

4) Increase Ocean View Deliveries

For many years, deliveries to Ocean View MWD have declined as their customers stopped taking water and switched to pumping their own wells. This has been motivated largely by the high cost of the OVMWD water. As a result, Ocean View MWD has had difficulty paying its bills. Ocean View has notified Oxnard that it would like to dissolve. The City of Oxnard, which owns the Ocean View pipeline, will take over operation of the pipeline and OVMWD's former water system.

It would be beneficial to persuade former OVMWD customers to reconnect to the OV pipeline. That moves pumping from a critical area near the coast to the Oxnard Forebay. It would also reduce pumping east of the seismic fault that blocks recharge to the lower aquifer.

To encourage growers to reconnect to the OV pipeline, it is recommended that a new OV agricultural rate be set at the marginal rate of the OH System, plus a surcharge to cover Oxnard's costs. Since those customers are not paying for the OH fixed costs anyway, this should not burden the OH system with substantially higher costs. To accommodate Oxnard, any new irrigation customers would not use GMA suballocations/credits from the OH System; instead they would use GMA allocations/credits from their own wells to cover this pumping. As with the PTP system, customers would be advised how much groundwater they receive each year, and they would report that to the GMA. For this program to proceed, the OH customers must agree to it. In essence, the other OH customers would be paying a small subsidy to help the aquifers.

To allow time for this proposal to be put into effect, agreements would be prepared in 2008 and the program would begin in 2009. This program would not affect any of United's funds other than the OH fund.

Oxnard-Hueneme Water System

The Oxnard-Hueneme Water System was thoroughly upgraded in 1997, with new booster pumps, a new disinfection building, and two new clearwells. The system was converted to chloramination secondary disinfection in 2000. The growth in OH demand is expected to be flat, as GMA pumping reductions are implemented. The 2005 *Urban Water Management Plan* for the OH System discusses future demands and reliability needs of the OH System in detail. Other than routine replacements and maintenance, no major

projects are foreseen in the OH System. The following smaller projects will be completed for the OH System:

- 1) **Deep Well Disinfection Test** The OH System's three deep aquifers wells, Wells Nos. 12, 13 and 14, are high in iron and manganese. Due to high groundwater over the last decade, these wells have never been operated with the existing chloramination disinfection system. Notwithstanding the use of a sequestering agent, the presence of iron and manganese will create an additional chlorine demand. This chlorine demand, as it varies with the amount of water being blended, could cause instability in the chloramines residual. The system could become more prone to switching over to free chlorine. To test the disinfection system, a several-days test while pumping the deep wells will be conducted. This should be done in advance of a drought that could force use of the deep wells. That way, changes to our SCADA or equipment could be made in advance, if necessary.

- 2) **OH Tracer Study** Once the OH clearwells are fully functional again, we will conduct a tracer study to determine the effective contact time in the clearwells.

Maintenance and Upgrade Projects

The *Water Management Plan* incorporates the following important maintenance and upgrade projects, some of which are already in the present 5-year CIP plan:

Maintenance and Upgrade Project	Year
1) Replace SFD causeway rollers – seismic upgrade	2007-08
2) SFD spillway fair weather crossing	2008-09
3) SFD downstream channel improvements	2008-09
4) Replace OH well No. 3	2008-09
5) OH gas booster plant building – seismic upgrade	2008-09
6) SFD tunnel fish release pipeline	2009-10
7) SFD penstock coating replacement – Phase 1	2009-10
8) Freeman headworks bridge enlargement	2011-12
9) Freeman flushing channel floor repairs	2012-13
10) Dredge the Freeman desilting basin	2012-13
11) Remote monitoring of SFD	2014-15
12) SFD hydroplant – upgrade for low flows	2018-19

CIP projects for which funding was set aside in the FY 2006-07 budget are not listed above, even if they were not completed last year. The schedule for many of these projects is flexible. If some projects are done early, others can be moved up. Others could be delayed if circumstances arise. One reason for including these projects in the *Water Management Plan* is to consider their costs when projecting future water rates.

Smaller maintenance projects not listed above can generally be handled within present water rates. Unforeseen major repair projects will occur from time to time, and will be handled as necessary.

5-Year CIP

Based on the projects in this Water Management Plan, the 5-year Capital Improvements Projects Plan is summarized in Table 1. This CIP plan will be modified each year as part of the District's budgeting process, depending on progress made on the various projects.

Other Planned Activities

The *Water Management Plan* also recommends that several other projects and activities be pursued, including the following:

USFS Land Exchange The District will continue to pursue a land exchange with the U.S. Forest Service at the north end of Lake Piru. In exchange for the land inundated by Lake Piru, this will provide the USFS with a trailhead and parking area for the Potholes Trail, one of the most scenic hiking trails in the Los Padres National Forest. The Potholes Trail can be hiked in a loop with Aqua Blanca Creek, or toward Sespe Creek along Aqua Blanca. United would also receive Blue Point Campground, which the Forest Service is no longer able to operate for public use. We have no plans for future use of Blue Point Campground, and would consider a conservation easement to The Nature Conservancy for that land.

Arundo Removal The District should continue to participate in the 'Arundo Task Force' in Ventura County. Should an arundo removal project be implemented that would benefit water resources, by reducing evapotranspiration in groundwater recharge zones, United may participate. Under the right conditions, arundo removal can be a cost-effective water resource strategy.

Fish Studies The District's fish-related study program will be increased. This process has already begun. The goal is to consider biologic resources when operating District facilities, to provide a balance between people and the environment. This task also includes hiring a summer intern to collect historical information on steelhead and trout.

Shop Building in Saticoy Once the new Forebay Recharge Project comes on line, new building and work space will be needed in Saticoy. A new shop building will be built.

Entrance Gate at El Rio To increase security at United's El Rio facility, visitor parking will be added outside the existing break/meeting room. Visitors would park outside the complex and enter the complex through a walk-in gate.

Torrey Repeater Site An appraisal of the repeater site for the District's radio system will be prepared. Depending on the results, an offer to purchase the site may be made.

El Rio Sewer Connection United's El Rio yard will be connected to the future sewer system in El Rio.

Annual Notice of Water Availability

The hydrologic analyses done to support this water management plan confirmed that in some drought years, United will not be able to supply all of its customers' needs. In particular, in very dry years, the PTP system will not be able to supply irrigation demands in the critical month of October, when strawberries are planted. In some years, there will be no surface water for PVCWD in the summer and fall.

By April of each year, United staff can predict how much water is expected to be available in the summer and fall. By then it will be known whether a fall release from SFD will be feasible. (In rare drought years, no release can be made.)

A new policy recommended by this plan is that on April 15 of each year, United will publish a notice of how much water it expects to have available for its customers through December 1 of that year. That way, irrigation customers can check and repair their own wells, and decide whether to risk planting a crop.

Estimated Project Costs

Each of the projects in the Water Management Plan will have a cost associated with it. A summary of the estimated project costs is provided in the following table:

Table 2
Estimated Project Costs

Project/Component	Estimated Cost
Forebay Recharge Project - Phase 1	
Purchase Ferro Pit	\$7,100,000
Construct Phase 1A	\$7,500,000
Construct Phase 1B	<u>\$6,400,000</u>
TOTAL COST OF PHASE 1	\$21,000,000
Forebay Recharge Project - Phase 2	
Total construction cost	\$28,700,000
Reface the Freeman RCC dam	
Total Construction Cost	\$2,400,000
Import State Water	
Annual purchase cost	\$1,300,000
Piru Diversion Upgrade - Phase 1	\$1,130,000

Piru Diversion Upgrade - Phase 2	NA
Moss Screen Automation	\$250,000
Santa Paula Basin feasibility study	\$80,000
SFD New Outlet Tower	\$2,000,000 to \$20,000,000
Habitat Conservation Plan	\$500,000
El Rio Bypass Pipeline Project	\$930,000
Pilot ASR Wells	
Well No. 1	\$1,100,000
Well No. 2	\$1,100,000
TOTAL PILOT WELLS	<u>\$2,200,000</u>
Seawater Intrusion Barrier	
Construction of 10 ASR wells	\$15,000,000
Pipeline costs	\$8,200,000
Monitoring wells	\$800,000
TOTAL SW BARRIER COSTS	<u>\$24,000,000</u>
PTP Extension Project	
Pipeline extensions	\$5,200,000
Reservoir and booster pumps	\$4,600,000
TOTAL PTP Extension	<u>\$9,800,000</u>

The above estimates are based on 2007 dollars and the southern California construction cost index. The amounts include engineering design, construction administration and a contingency.

New Eastern Zone

There are now two zones in the Oxnard Plain with different pump charges: Zone C represents the City of Ventura, and Zone B is the rest of the Oxnard Plain, from the Santa Clara River to Pleasant Valley and Mugu.

The eastern Oxnard Plain and Pleasant Valley areas are in the worst shape of any aquifer within the District. Despite a generally wet period since the Freeman diversion was built in 1991, groundwater levels there are well below sea level, in some areas by as much as 100 feet. An underground seismic fault partially blocks the flow of groundwater to the lower aquifer in that area, making it harder to recharge from the Forebay. In some ways, the eastern Oxnard Plain acts like a separate basin.

The eastern Oxnard Plain benefits in several ways from United's current operations: The Freeman diversion diverts and delivers large quantities of surface water to PVCWD and

direct irrigators. The PTP System delivers more surface water to the area. Water recharged into the Forebay is able to flow east in the upper aquifer. Deliveries to Ocean View MWD have reduced pumping east of the fault. The Saticoy wellfield will deliver additional water from the Forebay to the east. Since the Freeman diversion was built, United has made it a high priority to deliver river water to the east. If not for United's operations, the eastern Oxnard Plain would have lower groundwater levels and poorer water quality than exist today.

Similarly, the recommended projects to increase Forebay recharge will also benefit the eastern area. The higher the groundwater levels in the Oxnard Forebay, the less frequently surface water deliveries to irrigation would be halted, as mandated by the State Board.

The eastern Oxnard Plain would benefit from new facilities to move more water to the east. To fund those facilities, United will offer to create a new zone in the east. That zone would have a different pump charge, consisting of the Freeman charge (to be replaced by the Overdraft Charge in 2011) plus a surcharge. The surcharge would fund only new facilities and operations that benefit the eastern Oxnard plain. The new zone, if supported by United's constituents and adopted by United's Board, would not go into effect before 2010. That allows plenty of time for pumpers to comment on the plan before any new charges go into effect. In essence, the new zone would pay for facilities to move water from west to east in the Oxnard plain.

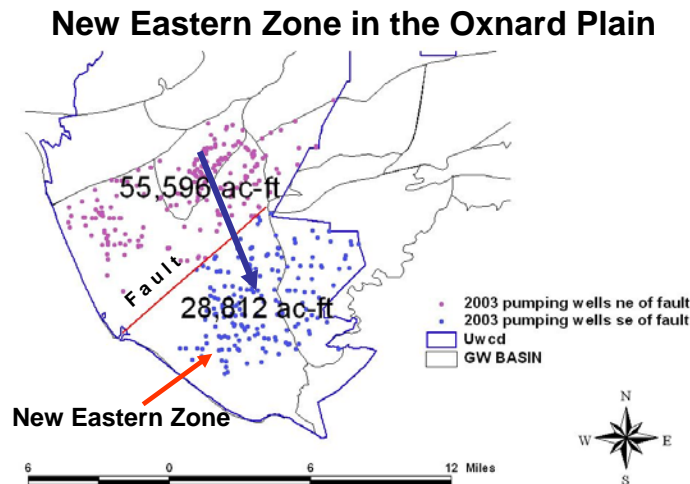


Figure 14. After 2010, United could create a new zone in the eastern Oxnard plain to fund new facilities to deliver more water there. Support from United's pumpers in that area will be essential.

Impact on Water Rates

The impact of the recommended projects on United’s water rates has been estimated, based on several assumptions. These numbers are approximate, and will be updated as more information becomes available on the costs of these projects. The Board will approve each project, when it is ready to proceed, before major expenditures on it are made. The District’s budget is approved by the Board each year, and rates would be set to implement the projects that are proven to be feasible and cost-effective. If actual project costs are higher than expected, selected projects could be delayed to maintain a steady rate structure. Bonds will be raised when necessary to fund large capital projects.

As discussed previously, the Freeman pump charge will be maintained at or below the value, in today's dollars, that it had in 1992. That pump charge will be replaced by an Overdraft Pump Charge in 2012, maintained at or below the same level. That is sufficient to pay for all of the recommended Freeman projects, with reserve funds to spare. As delays in some projects occur (for example, with water rights for the Phase 2 Forebay Recharge Project), funds would become available for other overdraft-related projects, like the seawater intrusion barrier.

To estimate future water rates in other funds, several key assumptions were made, as follows:

- 1) To purchase State water, United would pay the variable rate and turn-back pool amounts, and Ventura/Casitas would continue to pay fixed costs, which are around 25% of the State water costs. This program would be paid from the general fund, except for customers of Calleguas MWD and Zone C in Ventura. It is also assumed that the Hyatt-Thermalito lawsuit will not substantially increase costs for southern California State water contractors.
- 2) The cost of the pilot ASR well project would be shared between United and Oxnard, and some grant funding will be obtained for the project. (Oxnard has aggressively pursued grant funding for this project, with success.) The purchase cost of OH water injected during the pilot program may be paid by the new eastern zone.
- 3) The Habitat Conservation Plan costs would be paid from the general fund.
- 4) Fish studies would be paid from the general fund.

a) General Fund The approximate effects on the general fund rates would be as follows:

**Table 3
Projected General Fund Pump Charges**

Fiscal Year	Rate in \$/AF (ag/M&I)	Purpose
2006-07	\$11.65/\$34.95	Current programs and operation
2007-08	\$11.65/\$34.95	Some project startup costs
2008-09	\$16/\$48	Projects startup costs
2010-11	\$20/\$60	Import 5,000 AF/Yr of State water

The budget for FY 2007-08 includes a limited amount of funding to begin some of the new projects in the water plan, as listed below:

Begin Habitat Conservation Plan	\$100,000
Santa Paula Recharge Study	\$50,000
Begin State Water environmental studies	\$60,000
Design the Piru diversion fish screen	\$42,000

The above amounts are for external services and do not include District salaries. In addition, United has bond money for various projects, some of which are included in this *Water Management Plan*. That money includes \$3.6 million for purchasing the Ferro Pit, which will likely be delayed. In the next fiscal year, 2008-09, the pump charge may need to increase by \$4.00/\$12.00 to pay for ongoing work for the various projects. Once United is ready to begin receiving State water, around 2010-11, then the rates would need to increase by another \$4.00/\$12.00, depending on how much State water is imported.

b) Eastern Zone If pumpers in the eastern Oxnard Plain agree that United should build and operate facilities to solve local groundwater problems there, then the additional charges in the new eastern zone would be approximately as follows:

**Table 4
Projected Eastern Zone Surcharge Rates**

Fiscal Year	Rate in \$/AF (ag/M&I)	Purpose
Current rates	None	
2010-11	\$12.00/\$36.00	Injection of OH water in the east
2013-14	\$17.00/\$51.00	PTP extension

Note: These charges would be in addition to the general fund and Freeman pump charges.

The new eastern zone surcharge would not go into effect until FY 2010-11 or later. That allows time for dialogue with the eastern pumpers. Actual rates could vary from those listed above. To some extent, projects could be phased to maintain a steady rate structure.

The eastern zone pumpers would pay three charges: general fund, Freeman (Overdraft) fund, and the eastern zone surcharge. At the maximum rates projected in this plan, eastern zone agricultural pumpers would pay the following costs for extracted water:

Freeman (Overdraft) fund	\$21.00
General fund	\$20.00
Eastern zone surcharge	<u>\$17.00</u>
TOTAL	\$58.00

From a southern California perspective, this is not a high cost to pay for a more reliable water supply.

All estimated costs and rates in this plan are presented in 2007 dollars.

Priorities for FY 2007-08

The *Water Management Plan* sets the following major priorities for the District in the current fiscal year, 2007-08:

**Table 5
Recommended Priorities for FY 2007-08**

Project/Program	Work to be undertaken
Forebay Recharge Project – Phase 1	Complete the EIR and negotiate the Ferro pit acquisition
Import Additional State Water	Execute agreements and begin the EIR process
Habitat Conservation Plan	Agreements with agencies and hire a consulting firm to start the studies
Pilot ASR Well	Agreement with Oxnard, acquire right-of-way, permitting, technical studies.
Piru Diversion – Phase 1	Agreement with Fish and Game, complete final design.
Interim Water Supply Project	Hire consultant to begin design work (to be reimbursed by Riverpark JPA).
Fish study program	Enhanced studies of endangered steelhead trout in the watershed, to guide future regulatory and planning processes.

Where necessary, the proposed FY 2007-08 budget includes some funding for work on these priorities. Available bond funds, if otherwise uncommitted, may provide a backup source of funds in case additional work is able to be done on these priorities.

5 Year Water Management Plan Update

Normal water industry practice is to update water master plans every five years or so. The projects and programs in the *Water Management Plan* will generate new information over the next five years to allow an update to the plan in five years. This new information will include the following:

- 1) The final status and feasibility of the Forebay Recharge Project – Phase 1: whether the Ferro and Riverpark pits are acquired; what are the impacts of endangered species on the project.

- 2) The feasibility of importing State Water without adversely affecting endangered arroyo toads; Ventura and Casitas MWD's willingness to enter into long-term contracts with United for use of their water, and under what terms.
- 3) The success and actual costs of the pilot ASR well(s); regulatory feasibility of reclaimed water injection.
- 4) The feasibility and economics of a PTP extension, based on the planning report to be completed.
- 5) The feasibility and need for a new recharge facility in the Santa Paula Basin.
- 6) The future cost impact of a new outlet tower for SFD.
- 7) The results of the Habitat Conservation Plan.

Of particular importance is that we should learn during the next few years how much local water will be lost to conserve endangered fish. This could increase the need for new projects and affect water rates.

A major decision that may be made in the next decade will be whether to pursue a full-scale seawater intrusion barrier. The pilot program will provide useful information to support such a decision. The cost impacts of such a project must be considered. A conservative view is that a seawater intrusion barrier program should be advanced slowly and cautiously. It should be configured to benefit all pumpers on the Oxnard plain who rely on that water.

Public Outreach

For the *Water Management Plan* to be a success, it must be supported by the full range of United's constituents, both cities and agriculture. District staff will undertake an extensive outreach program to communicate with all of our constituents. Since a great deal of planning and initial work must be done before costly construction and water importation can begin, our constituents will have adequate time to provide input to the overall plan, its priorities, and funding mechanisms.

Adoption by United's Board

It is planned that the Board will adopt this *Water Management Plan* in 2008. The plan will provide guidance and priorities for future District efforts, but does not irrevocably commit the District to any of the projects or programs. Each fiscal year the District adopts its formal budget. To the extent that future projects are included in future budgets, adoption of those budget represents a financial commitment toward each project included in the budget. Furthermore, even after the budget is adopted, the board must separately authorize any budgeted expense over \$20,000. Such authorizations will represent the final commitment by the Board towards implementing any project or program in the *Water Management Plan*.

The No Action Alternative

One option United's Board could consider would be not to undertake new projects and programs, and continue doing what United is now doing. The risk with that approach is that southern California is subject to intermittent and severe droughts. That is when local infrastructure will be stretched to the limit. If seawater intrusion worsens during a future drought, and water levels and quality in upstream basins deteriorate, it could require pumping cutbacks that could put some growers out of business for a while. As a minimum, land may have to lay fallow during a severe drought. Perhaps that is a risk our constituents are willing to take. But that also provides an argument for a modest set of new projects and programs at a reasonable cost, as recommended in this plan.

Conclusion

The *Water Management Plan* is relatively modest. To solve all problems in the District at once would be costly. It is recommended to take the necessary steps towards solving those problems, but to spread them out over time to soften their economic impacts. The plan is flexible to adapt to changing conditions and new information.

CEQA Review

Adopting this *Water Management Plan* is not considered to be subject to CEQA review. Most of the recommended projects will require CEQA review. In essence, adopting this plan in early 2008 will constitute a decision to start a series of EIR's. This plan would be referenced in those subsequent EIR's. A decision to begin preparing EIR's is not an action subject to CEQA review.

Comments

We invite your comments on United's long-term water management plan. Please send comments by email to

Jim Kentosh at jimk@unitedwater.org

or by regular mail to

Jim Kentosh, Manager of Resource Planning
United Water Conservation District
106 N. 8th Street
Santa Paula, CA 93060

or call Jim Kentosh at (805) 525-4431.

Please reference the date on the draft report you are reviewing.