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UNITED WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
"Conserving Water since 1927"

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UWCD RELEASES 15,000 ACRE FEET OF WATER FROM SANTA FELICIA DAM IN PROACTIVE MOVE TO ENSURE THE PUBLIC'S SAFE DRINKING WATER

Santa Paula, CA June 5, 2017 -- In a proactive move on Friday, June 2, United Water Conservation District (UWCD) General Manager Mauricio E. Guardado, Jr., called for the emergency water quality release of some 15,000 acre feet (AF) from the Santa Felicia Dam's Lake Piru in an effort to combat rising nitrate levels in UWCD's wells at its El Rio facility. The announcement came during UWCD's special board meeting held at the Santa Felicia Dam, which was attended by General Managers and Board of Directors from several neighboring water districts, including Casitas Municipal Water District in Ojai, Calleguas Municipal Water District in Thousand Oaks and Camrosa Water District in Camarillo, as well as representatives from Ventura County Watershed Protection District, the Santa Clara River Watershed Committee, and legislative representatives.

"The release of 400 cfs here at Santa Felicia Dam will result in the diversion of high quality water at our Freeman Diversion facility, recharging the aquifer and, ultimately, offsetting the increasing nitrate levels in our wells at El Rio. By taking action before the situation is critical, we are confident in our ability to ensure the public's safe drinking water as we move into the dry, warm days of summer," stated Guardado in making the announcement. He was also encouraged by the participation of neighboring water districts, adding that "Through our collaborative efforts and preparation, we are able to take advantage of opportunities such as the purchase of Article 21 State Water, which helps all of us manage, protect, preserve and enhance our water resources."

The emergency water quality release coincides with the release of 10,000 AF of Article 21 State water from Castaic Lake, purchased by UWCD in April from Northern California under the California Department of Water Resources' (DWR) State Water Article 21 program. UWCD, the special district tasked with managing, protecting, conserving and enhancing the water resources of the Santa Clara River Valley and Oxnard Plain, purchased 10,000 AF of Article 21 State water for the purpose of replenishing groundwater basins throughout the District.

The additional Article 21 water was stored at Castaic Lake for eventual release, extending the benefit of additional water recharge to all of UWCD's basins. The release of this State Water was timed and executed at a flow rate determined to maximize benefits to all of the District's basins, in particular, riverbed infiltration for the upper basins (Piru, Fillmore, Santa Paula) and recharge in Saticoy and El Rio facilities benefitting the Oxnard Forebay, Mound, Oxnard Plain and Pleasant Valley basins.

The release, which will continue over the next two weeks, also affords the public a rare opportunity to enjoy weekend access to whitewater kayaking below the Santa Felicia Dam in lower Piru Creek. Individuals interested in accessing lower Piru Creek on the weekends of the release period must request access 24 hours in advance by contacting Lake Piru Senior Park Services Officer Clayton Strahan at (805) 525-4431 extension 148 or by emailing him at claytons@unitedwater.org

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Media Contact: Kris Sofley, tel: (805) 525-4431, email: kriss@unitedwater.org



UNITED WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

About DWR's State Water Project

California State Water Project (SWP or Project) is the nation's largest state-built water and power development and conveyance system. Planned, designed, constructed and now operated and maintained by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), this unique project is comprised of 34 storage facilities, reservoirs and lakes; 20 pumping plants; 4 pumping-generating plants; 5 hydroelectric power plants; and about 701 miles of open canals and pipelines, providing supplemental water to approximately 25 million Californians and about 750,000 acres of irrigated farmland. Its main purpose is to store water and distribute it to 29 urban and agricultural water suppliers in Northern California, the San Francisco Bay Area, the San Joaquin Valley, the Central Coast, and Southern California. Of the contracted water supply, 70 percent goes to urban users and 30 percent goes to agricultural users. The Project is also operated to improve water quality in the Delta, control Feather River flood waters, provide recreation, and enhance fish and wildlife.

Funds from the sale of general obligation and revenue bonds have provided about 78 percent of financing for construction of the State Water Project. Full repayment of these bond funds is being made by Project beneficiaries, rather than by the general taxpayer. Other funding sources have included tideland oil revenues, investment earnings, legislative appropriations for recreation, federal flood control payments, and water contractor advances. Currently, short-term financing is obtained by commercial paper notes which are replaced periodically by long-term revenue bonds.

Annual costs include the salaries of a diversified team of engineers, biologists, specialists in water development and power generation, hydroelectric plant technicians, and civil maintenance workers, as well as expenses (equipment, supplies etc.) required to operate and maintain SWP facilities. Annual costs also include power purchases, exchanges and sales.

The 29 water contractors repay all water supply related costs of the SWP. These represent about 94 percent of the annual costs for operation and maintenance of SWP facilities. The remaining costs are funded by the federal government for joint operation of San Luis facilities (3 percent) and State general funds for recreation and fish and wildlife enhancement (3 percent).

Contractors also repay with interest about 89 percent of SWP capital expenditures made through 1995. Repayment of the remaining 11 percent comes from the federal government for flood control (2 percent), the State general funds for recreation and fish and wildlife enhancement (5 percent), and the rest from miscellaneous sources.

All contractors pay the same rate per acre-foot for the cost of constructing and operating facilities which store and convey the SWP water supply. In addition, each contractor pays a transportation charge which covers the cost of facilities required to deliver water to its service area. Thus, the contractors more distant from the Delta pay higher transportation charges than those near the Delta. For more information on the DWR's State Water Project, visit <http://www.water.ca.gov/swp/>

About United Water Conservation District (UWCD)

Since 1927, United Water Conservation District, situated in central Ventura County, has distinguished itself as a leader among water agencies by conserving and enhancing the water resources of the Santa Clara River and Oxnard Coastal Plain, while working to protect the environment's natural attributes. The District conserves runoff from all major tributaries of the Santa Clara River within its boundaries, including Piru, Hopper, Sespe, and Santa Paula Creeks. Without these efforts, much of this valuable water would simply flow out to sea.

Committed to managing the area's water supplies through groundwater replenishment and through the construction and operation of efficient water supply and delivery systems, today the District serves as the conservator of groundwater resources that are utilized by the cities of Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Ventura, Santa Paula, and Fillmore, as well as several mutual water districts and numerous farms and individual pumpers. It also provides surface water for agricultural irrigation and provides treated drinking water to the cities of Oxnard and Port Hueneme. For more information, visit <http://www.unitedwater.org>