



A Community Newsletter from the Contra Costa Water District | Volume 17, Number 3, Summer 03

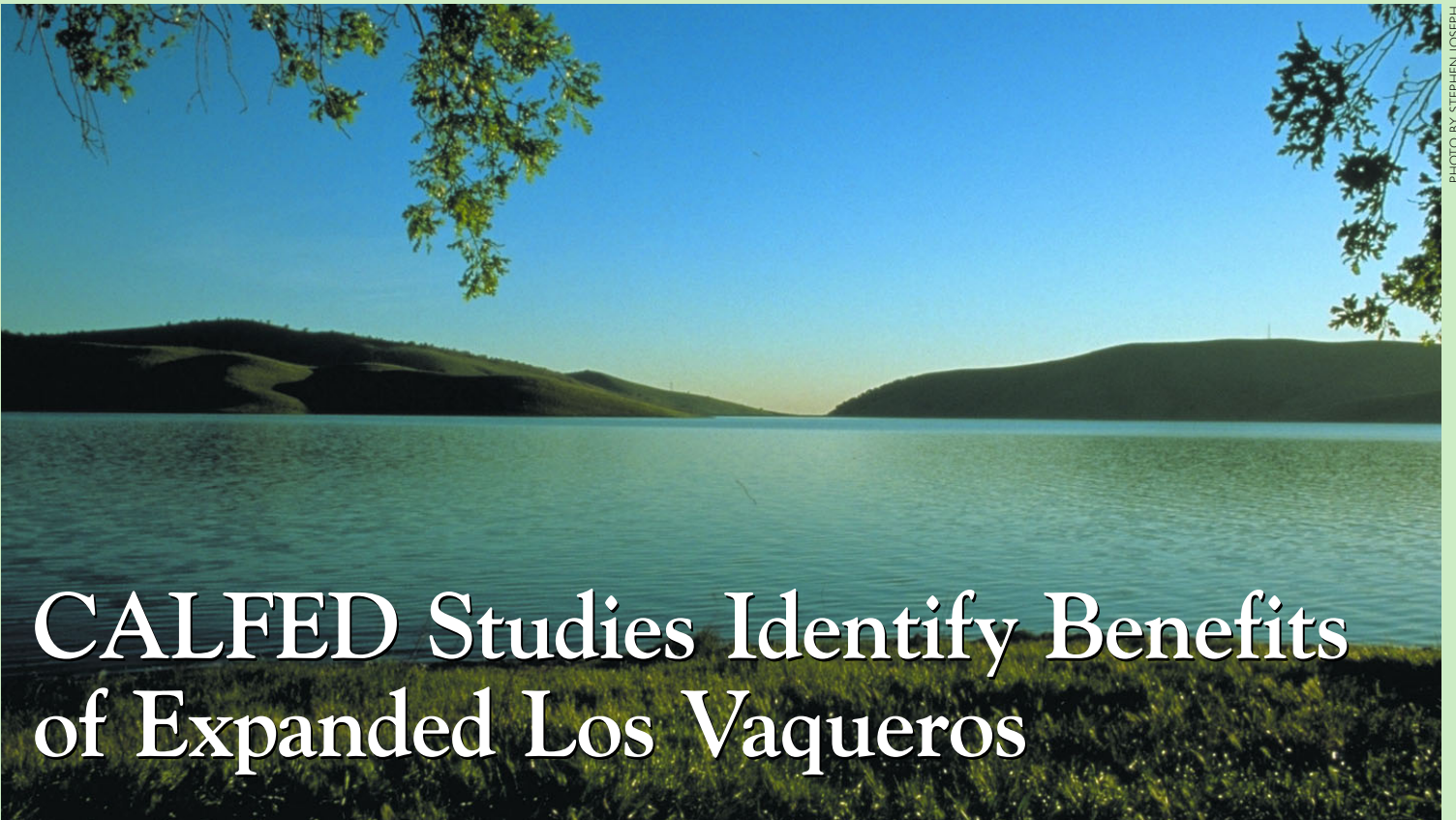


PHOTO BY STEPHEN JOSEPH

CALFED Studies Identify Benefits of Expanded Los Vaqueros

Los Vaqueros Reservoir

The Los Vaqueros Reservoir lies in the rolling hills between Brentwood and Livermore. Completed six years ago, the reservoir stores 100,000 acre-feet of high-quality water for Contra Costa Water District customers.

Before the Los Vaqueros Project was built, CCWD had to rely on daily pumping of water from the Delta, when salt water from the San Francisco Bay flowed into the Delta each summer and fall. As a result, CCWD's 450,000 customers in central and eastern Contra Costa County received salty drinking water for several months every year.

Los Vaqueros Reservoir changed that. Customers now receive excellent-quality drinking water throughout the year. That's because CCWD pumps high-quality water, with low salt levels, from the Delta into

the reservoir in the late winter and early spring, when snowmelt from the Sierra flows into the Delta and pushes salty water out. In the late summer and fall, when the snowmelt diminishes and salty water moves back into the Delta, water stored in Los Vaqueros is delivered to customers. This ensures that CCWD customers receive high-quality water year-round, regardless of the conditions in the Delta.

In the summer of 2000, CALFED, the consortium of state and federal agencies responsible for the Delta, recommended that the Los Vaqueros Reservoir be

studied for possible expansion to provide high-quality drinking water and improved drought reliability to Bay Area water agencies. CALFED, which is working to restore the Delta's ecosystem and help provide reliable, high-quality water for California's future, is providing funding for CCWD to study the possibility of expanding the Los Vaqueros Reservoir up to 500,000 acre-feet.

The CCWD Board of Directors adopted seven principles to ensure that any CALFED plan to expand the Los Vaqueros

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CCWD Board of Directors

Joseph L. Campbell
President

Elizabeth R. Anello
Vice President

Bette Boatman
James Pretti
Karl L. Wandry

Writer/Editor
Gina Oltman
goltman@ccwater.com

General Manager
Walter J. Bishop



CONTRA COSTA
WATER DISTRICT

1331 Concord Ave.
P.O. Box H20
Concord, CA 94524
(925) 688-8000
<http://www.ccwater.com>

The Contra Costa Water District provides water to 450,000 Contra Costa County residents. Approximately 230,000 residents in Clayton, Clyde, Concord, Martinez, Pacheco, Pleasant Hill, Port Costa, and Walnut Creek receive water that has been treated by a District water treatment plant.

The other 220,000 are served by local water agencies that receive raw water from CCWD, then treat, distribute and bill for it themselves. These agencies are City of Antioch, City of Martinez, City of Pittsburg and the California Cities Water Company (Bay Point). Oakley residents are served by a jointly owned CCWD/Diablo Water District treatment plant.

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Reservoir protects the interests of CCWD's customers. Key among these principles is a requirement that any proposal to expand the reservoir would be placed before CCWD's voters. Among the other principles is a commitment to protect the benefits of the existing Los Vaqueros Project and reimburse the financial investment made by CCWD customers, who are paying for the existing project.

This spring, the planning report for the CALFED studies was completed. It shows that if the reservoir were expanded, and other Bay Area water agencies and CALFED agencies invested as partners, the following benefits would come to CCWD customers:

Water Quality

- High-quality water could be delivered to CCWD customers throughout a six-year drought, double the water quality protection of the existing project.
- An additional intake at Middle River, which is farther from the Bay than any of CCWD's existing intakes, would further improve water quality by increasing the water district's access to low-salt water.

Reliability

- Water supplies would be more reliable. As much as 120,000 acre-feet of water could be available to CCWD customers during an extended drought to make up for shortages in supplies. The existing reservoir provides no drought supply.

Environment

- The Delta ecosystem, including fisheries, would benefit from the flexibility created by providing new intakes with state-of-the-art fish screens and additional water storage that allows pumping cutbacks to protect fish.

Reimbursement

- CCWD customers would benefit from the investments made by partners. CCWD would receive a net reimburse-

CALFED Objectives for Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion

1. Improvement of Bay Area Water Quality
2. Improvement of Bay Area water supply reliability
3. Contribution to the enhancement of Bay-Delta environment

CCWD Board of Directors' Principles

Contra Costa Water District will not support a proposal involving the existing Los Vaqueros Project or use of the Los Vaqueros or Kellogg reservoir sites without the following assurances.

1. The project improves water quality and reliability for CCWD;
2. The project enhances the Delta environment;
3. The project protects and enhances the fisheries and terrestrial species benefits provided by the existing Project;
4. The project preserves and increases the recreational opportunities of the Los Vaqueros Project.
5. CCWD must retain control of the watershed and operation of the reservoir;
6. The project protects and reimburses the financial investment by the CCWD customers who financed the existing \$450 million Los Vaqueros Project;
7. The proposal would be placed before the voters of the Contra Costa Water District.

Adopted by the CCWD Board of Directors on April 19, 2000.

ment for the investment made in the existing project in an amount between \$100 million and \$200 million from partners investing in the expansion project. This money could be applied to reduce CCWD's rates, buy additional water quality or reliability benefits in the expanded project, or do a combination of these. The expansion would not cause CCWD water rates to increase.

Control

- CCWD would maintain ownership of the watershed and control of reservoir operations.

CCWD Advisory Vote

If the CCWD Board of Directors determines that an expansion project could

meet the CCWD principles listed above, the Board could decide this summer to put the issue on the ballot in November 2003. The ballot measure would be a vote of the CCWD customers to advise the CCWD Board on whether or not to proceed with the final studies that would allow the project funding agencies to authorize the expansion. The vote would not authorize construction of a reservoir expansion project. A negative vote by CCWD rate-payers would stop the project. Authorization for construction would have to come from the CALFED Agencies and Bay Area water agencies that would pay for the project.

For more information about the expansion proposal and associated studies, go to www.lfstudies.com or call Project Manager Marguerite Naillon at (925) 688-8018.

Water Wisely This Summer

Water is one of our most precious resources. So we should conserve whenever we can. Here are some tips for conserving water in your landscape.

- Water in the mornings before 9 a.m. You'll lose less water to evaporation.
- Water less often when the weather is cool and turn off your sprinklers when it rains.
- Don't water your landscape every day. Try cutting back to every other day.
- Use drought-tolerant plants whenever possible.
- Make repairs to sprinkler systems promptly. Broken sprinkler heads waste water.

For more details, check out our website at www.ccwater.com.



Contra Costa Water District Feedback Survey

Please take a moment to tell us about your impressions of the Contra Costa Water District.

Have you had recent contact with CCWD personnel? (circle one) Yes No
Reason for contact? _____

How would you characterize the contact? (circle one) Excellent Good Fair Poor

What would make the contact a better experience? _____

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	NO OPINION
Quality of Water	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall quality of service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Courtesy and helpfulness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cost of water service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial responsibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accuracy of information received	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ease in accessing information or other services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Usefulness of newsletters and other publications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Additional comments: _____
(Optional)

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

e-mail address _____

Please mail completed survey to: Gina Oltman, Contra Costa Water District, P.O. Box H20, Concord, CA 94524