



A Community Newsletter from the Contra Costa Water District | Volume 17, Number 2, Spring 03

Working to Protect and Improve the Delta

The 450,000 residents of central and eastern Contra Costa County have only one source of drinking water – the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. That is why Delta water quality and supply are the Contra Costa Water District's (CCWD) dominating concerns.

The location of the District's three intakes - one near Discovery Bay, one east of Oakley, and one in Bay Point – makes the District vulnerable to saltwater intrusion from the Bay in the late summer and fall months, when freshwater flows from the Sierra into the Delta taper off. The District's water supply from the Delta can also be disrupted by power outages, droughts, levee breaks, chemical spills and other emergencies.

Besides providing drinking water for central and eastern Contra Costa, the Delta provides important habitat for many species of fish and wildlife, including several threatened and endangered fish species, winter- and spring-run Chinook salmon, steelhead trout and Delta smelt. In the latter half of the twentieth century, Delta fishery resources declined for a variety of reasons, including human activities, discharges into the Delta and its tributaries, and loss of habitat. The good news is almost all of these important fish species are on the road to recovery, thanks to new regulations and the CALFED Bay-Delta Program.



PHOTO BY STEPHEN JOSEPH

Los Vaqueros Reservoir

To help protect and improve the quality of the Delta's water and ecosystem, the District has actively participated in the CALFED Bay-Delta Program since it began in 1994. CALFED is a cooperative effort of more than 20 state and federal agencies working with local communities to restore the Delta ecosystem and improve the quality and reliability of the Delta's water supplies. The CALFED Plan is a 30-year strategy to improve the Delta's ecosystem health, water supply reliability, water quality, and levee system integrity in the Delta. It includes ecosystem restoration, water quality improvements, surface and groundwater storage facilities, levee improvements and other features that are necessary to restore the health of the Delta.

Already CALFED has produced positive results. Since 1994, the populations of fall-run salmon have tripled in the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers. For example, fall-run salmon returning to spawn in the Sacramento River tripled from 200,000 in 1994 to 600,000 in 2001, with similar increases in the San Joaquin River. Likewise, endangered winter-run salmon counted in the Sacramento River rose from 200 in 1994 to more than 7,000 in 2002. Adult striped bass have also increased to record high levels, with more than 3 million counted in the Delta last year.

CALFED is studying five surface water storage projects, including a possible
continued on back page

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

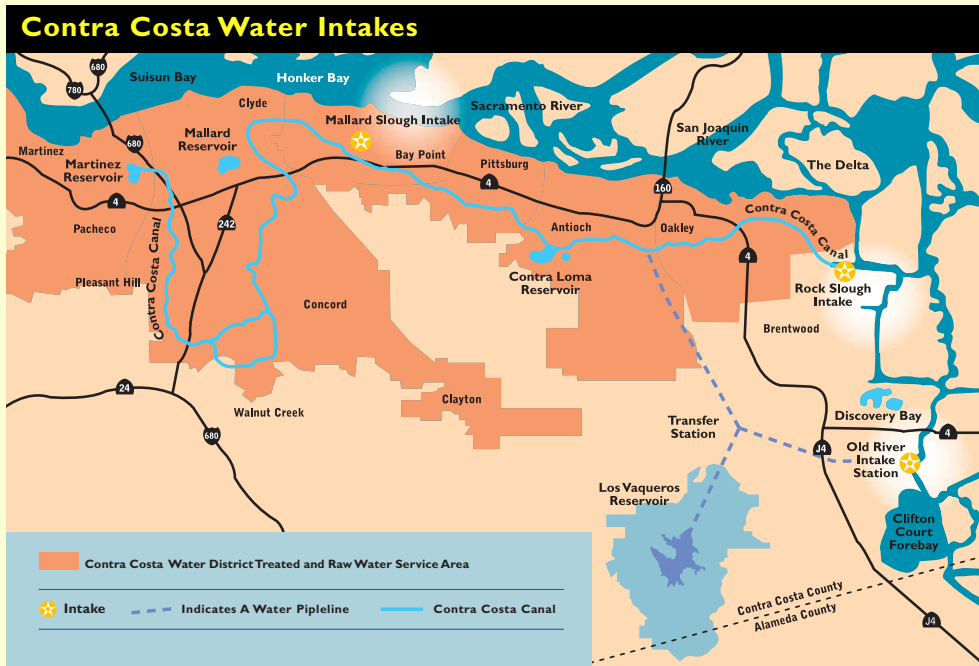


CONTRA COSTA
WATER DISTRICT

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.



The Contra Costa Water District draws water from the Delta at three locations: Mallard Slough, Rock Slough and Old River.

continued from front page

expansion of the District's Los Vaqueros Reservoir, to improve drinking water quality and reliability for the Bay Area and enhance the Delta ecosystem. The California Department of Water Resources and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation are paying for the CALFED Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion Studies, with CCWD managing the studies. As parts of the studies are completed this spring, the District is making them available to the public at www.lvstudies.com or by calling (925) 688-8018. The studies are showing that expansion could improve water quality and reliability to the District and other Bay Area water agencies, and help with Delta restoration efforts by providing water to the environment.

The CCWD Board of Directors has adopted a set of principles to protect customers' interests as the studies proceed (see box below). These principles include requirements that CCWD customers would be reimbursed for their prior investment, that any project would improve

water quality for customers, and that any proposal would go to CCWD voters for their approval.

Completed in 1997, the Los Vaqueros Project gives CCWD the ability to deliver low-salt, good-tasting water to its customers year round, regardless of the conditions in the Delta. With Los Vaqueros, the District can pump from the Delta during high water flows, when the water is low in salts and other contaminants, and when there is little effect on Delta fisheries. The District stores this high-quality water in the reservoir and uses it to deliver good quality water to customers when Delta water quality is poor, typically in late summer and fall. The reservoir also serves as an important storage facility for times when water cannot be diverted from the Delta to protect sensitive fish species or when the Delta is disrupted by emergencies such as levee failures.

If the Los Vaqueros reservoir were to be expanded, it could be shared with other Bay Area water agencies and its

benefits could be extended throughout the region. The District's customers could get a financial benefit because partners would help pay the costs of the existing project. Expanding the reservoir could also protect CCWD customers' original investment in the Los Vaqueros Project by providing the stored water and operational flexibility needed to offset any water quality degradation that might occur from other CALFED projects, such as wetlands restoration efforts or in-Delta water storage projects.

In addition to the Los Vaqueros Expansion Studies, the District is working with CALFED on several other important projects aimed at improving water quality for District customers. These projects are:

CALFED Rock Slough Water Quality Improvement Project

Started in 2000, the goal of this CALFED project is to improve drinking water quality for the District's customers by reducing the agricultural drainage that enters Rock Slough, the location of the District's largest intake. CALFED and the District are analyzing the drainage at the slough to determine how it can be reduced.

CALFED Old River Drainage Management Project

This project is identifying the sources of drainage that raise the levels of salinity, organic carbon and other impurities near the District's Old River intake. The District will implement practical methods of improving water quality at the intake by reducing runoff and drainage.

Advanced Treatment Research Project

This project will investigate advanced technologies for treating Delta water, including ultraviolet, ozone, chloramines membranes and chlorine dioxide treatment. The goal is to identify cost-effective treatment technologies that provide greater public health protection by reducing contaminants in water, while improving taste and odor.

The District will not support a CALFED Los Vaqueros expansion proposal without the following assurances:

1. Improves water quality and reliability for CCWD;
2. Enhances the Delta environment;
3. Protects and enhances the fisheries and land species benefits of the existing Project;
4. Preserves and increases recreation;
5. CCWD must retain control of the watershed and operation of the reservoir;
6. Protects and reimburses the financial investment by the CCWD customers who financed the existing Project;
7. Proposal will be placed before the voters of the Contra Costa Water District.

Adopted, April 2000

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