DISTRICT PROFILE

DISTRICT FORMATION

The District has broad powers for the conservation and management of water (flood, surface, drainage and ground water). The primary focus of the District is the management of water quantity and quality throughout San Benito County including, where appropriate, the development of local water supplies and the development and importation of water supplies from outside the County.

The District is a California Special District formed in 1953 by the San Benito County Water Conservation and Flood Control Act. At that time, the District merged with the Hollister Irrigation District, becoming the successor to the water rights, water facilities and land interests of the Hollister Irrigation District. The name was changed from San Benito County Water Conservation and Flood Control District to San Benito County Water District in 1988.

DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

A five-member Board of Directors (Board) governs the District. Board members are elected for four-year terms from divisions that are coterminous with the supervisory districts of San Benito County. Directors must be a resident of, and a registered voter in the division they represent. Members begin service in December of even numbered years.

To facilitate matters, most matters coming before the Board are first considered by one of its committees. Each committee then reports to the full Board, which makes the necessary decisions. There are nine standing committees:

- Audit/Budget
- Investments
- Insurance
- Rates, Charges and Fees
- Expansion
- Groundwater
- Flood Control/Drainage
- Personnel
- Water Treatment

Several ad-hoc committees exist for special purposes and meet on an as-needed basis.

In addition, Board members serve as the District representatives to the following Boards of Directors:

- San Luis & Delta Mendota Water Authority (2 positions)
- Association of California Water Agencies-Joint Powers Insurance Authority
- Pajaro River Watershed Flood Prevention Authority
- Water Resources Association of San Benito County
- Hollister Urban Area Water and Wastewater Master Plan Governance Committee (2 positions)

An organizational chart of the District appears on page viii of the introductory section.

WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The principal water available to water users is local water and imported Central Valley Project (CVP) water. Local surface supplies are primarily percolated into the groundwater basin for later recovery through pumping by individual users and domestic water suppliers. The imported water supply from the San Felipe Project is available for use within the defined zone of benefit. The system provides for direct delivery to agricultural and other rural properties and for centralized delivery to the Hollister area and San Juan Bautista for urban use. Under District rules and regulations, available imported surface water is supplemental to groundwater and is allocated to users within the zone of benefit on an annual basis subject to a maximum entitlement to contract.

Groundwater use, within the Hollister, San Juan, Tres Pinos and Paicines groundwater sub-basins has exceeded the natural supply for decades and a state of overdraft (use exceeds basin's natural ability to replenish itself) exists. The current land uses and the economy of San Benito County depend upon the water placed in groundwater storage and the water imported by the District. These conditions require careful management, data collection and analysis. The District maintains a groundwater and surface water quality database to support these efforts.

As a matter of practice, the Board of Directors has requested a groundwater report each year. The objective of this report is to conduct an audit of critical water resources and the actions taken to manage these resources, as well as making recommendations for management actions for forthcoming years. Public notice of this process is provided to encourage the participation of landowners and groundwater users.

In the 1950s, the San Benito River System was undertaken for storage and percolation of locally occurring surface water. The system was established to mitigate the overdraft in part of the San Benito portion of the Hollister-Gilroy Groundwater Basin. The Hernandez Dam was constructed and placed in operation in the early 1960s for the storage of locally occurring water. The District continues to operate this facility, as well as the Paicines Canal and Reservoir which was built in 1913 and rehabilitated in the early 1960s. The District holds water rights licenses from the State of California for Hernandez Dam and Reservoir, Paicines Dam and Reservoir, and Dos Picachos Creek. These water rights permit the diversion and storage of surface water for percolation into the ground for later recovery and use. Water is released for percolation through the streambed at the San Benito River, Tres Pinos creek, and a natural drainage adjacent to Dos Picachos Creek.

In the late 1970s, the San Felipe Project was initiated to correct the remaining overdraft in the San Benito County portion of the Hollister-Gilroy Groundwater Basin, to provide a water supply of appropriate quality, and to provide through conjunctive use an expanded water supply. The San Felipe Project's zone of benefit contains approximately 47,500 acres, of which 36,500 acres is agricultural land and 11,000 acres is land within incorporated cities and adjacent urban areas. The District has contracted with the United States on behalf of landowners for water service from the San Felipe Division of the federal Central Valley Project. The District and the landowners and water users within this zone of benefit are the beneficiaries of State of California water rights held by the United States. These water rights are subject to the continuing jurisdiction of the State of California. Water use is subject to federal laws and regulations and the terms and condition of the contracts between the United States and the District.

The original San Felipe Project was to provide a high quality supplement to the local supplies to correct the groundwater overdraft, provide alternative supplies in certain areas with poor quality water (high Boron levels) and a firm long-term water supply. Since that original planning, the supply available to the District from the Central Valley Project has been significantly reduced as the Central Valley Project addresses water quality, endangered species, and the addition of fisheries as a principal purpose of the Central Valley Project. The District has undertaken a number of initiatives to identify projects and programs to ensure its supplies and restore reliability.

SERVICE AREA

The District encompasses all of San Benito County, with an area of approximately 1,400 square miles and a population of over 55,000 people. Residential communities served include: City of San Juan Bautista, City of Hollister, unincorporated urban areas surrounding Hollister, and Tres Pinos.

The District provides water service and water related services through zones of benefit. Current zones of benefit are:

- District Administration (Zone 1)
- San Benito River System (Zone 3)
- San Felipe Project (Zone 6)
- Rural Water Systems:
  - Harmony Hills Water System (Zone 103)
  - Fairview Road Water System (Zone 104)

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

24 positions

WATER SUPPLY

Federal Contract
(In acre-feet per year)
Total Contract Entitlement:
43,800
Consisting of:
Irrigation: 35,550
Municipal and Industrial: 8,250

Local Water Supply
Water rights consisting of:

Hernandez Dam and Reservoir
Use: Spreading and later recovery by pumping from wells.

Paicines Dam and Reservoir
Use: Spreading and later recovery by pumping from wells.

Dos Picachos Creek
Use: Diversion from Dos Picachos Creek from December through May for spreading and later recovery by pumping from wells.

WATER USAGE

(In Acre-Feet)
San Felipe Project:
(July 2005 through June 2006)
Total Usage: 21,938
Agricultural: 18,915
Municipal and Industrial: 3,024
District Usage (percolation and other): 617

Groundwater**:**
(*March 2005 through February 2006)*
Zone 6: 19,538

CUSTOMERS

San Felipe Project

Total Groundwater Wells: 1,475
Agricultural Groundwater Wells
409 Active
224 Inactive
Domestic Groundwater Wells
639 Active
203 Inactive

Total San Felipe Delivery Services: 969
Agricultural
466 Services
Small Parcel
468 Services
Municipal and Industrial Services
35 services, including:
Ridgemark Golf and Country Club
San Juan Oaks Golf and Country Club
Pacific Scientific
Stonegate Subdivision Hollister-
Sunnyslope Water
Treatment Agency (Lessalt)

San Benito River System

Groundwater users and landowners on approximately 22,000 acres

Rural Water Systems

30 services

FACILITIES

United States Bureau of Reclamation Facilities

The District is responsible for operation and maintenance of the following United States Bureau of Reclamation project facilities:

District operated and maintained:

San Justo Reservoir:

- 10,300 acre-feet capacity (operational capacity of 7,445 acre-feet with USBR restriction)
- Outlet - 60 inch pipe, 0.84 miles, capacity of 85 cfs

Hollister Conduit:
54 and 60 inch pipe, 17.03 miles, capacity of 93 cfs;

San Juan Lateral:
42 inch pipe, 2.11 miles, capacity of 45 cfs

Facilities operated and maintained in conjunction with Santa Clara Valley Water District:

San Felipe Reach 1:

- Pacheco Pumping Plant- approximately 300 ft lift, 12 pumps, total capacity of 600 cfs with a total installed horsepower of 24,000
- Pacheco Tunnel-114 inch pipe, 5.23 miles, capacity of 480 cfs.
- Pacheco Conduit-120 inch pipe, 7.93 miles, capacity of 480 cfs.

San Benito County Water District Facilities:

San Felipe Distribution System:

- 4 Pumping Stations (consist of 20 pumps with a total capacity of 132 cfs, and total installed horsepower of 2,800)
- 9 Subsystem Valve and Control Structures, total capacity of 196 cfs.
- 3 Percolation Valve and Control Structures, total capacity of 29 cfs.
- San Felipe Subsystem Pipelines (diameters range from 6 to 36 inches; approximately 150 miles)

San Benito River System:

- Hernandez Reservoir
  Capacity:
  Total: 30,000 ac. ft.
  Flood Control: 12,500 ac. ft.
  Conservation: 16,952 ac. ft.
  Inactive: 1,548 ac. ft.
- Paicines Reservoir (3,335 ac. ft. capacity)
- Paicines Canal (137 cfs) approx. 8 miles
- Paicines Canal Diversion Facilities (Milton Diversion Dam, Hill Gate, and Sand Gate-137 cfs)
- Dos Picachos Diversion (capacity of 4.75 cfs)