

**DIRECTOR AB 1234 REPORT**

Director Name:                     Maria Gutzeit                    

Meeting Attended: United Water Conservation District Tour

Date of Meeting: 03/29/23

Board Meeting to Be Presented At: 04/04/23

Points of Interest:

I attended the tour offered by United Water Conservation District. There were many attendees including reps from Congresswoman Julia Brownley's office and Ventura County Supervisor Kathy Long's office, SCVWA staff and board members, and other water representatives.

Staff presented some initial info including the fact that they get more runoff from the Sespe watershed (60%) than the Santa Clara watershed (40%.) They gave an overview of their operations including recharge ponds, the history of the Freeman Diversion, and the Piru Dam. They are working on improvements to the Piru Dam and have been approved for federal Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) funding. They wrote the WIFIA application themselves. Improvements are based on new seismic standards and larger flood inflows and will increase the spillway capacity and improve fish access as well as reduce silt buildup.

They run the lake recreational operations themselves now, at a deficit of 0.6 million a year, but have been in the process of making improvements to the operations, which were formerly contracted out. We observed the lake cleanup operations removing a lot of trees and debris after recent rains, and their staff were very happy the dam was spilling for the first time in about 10 years. They were removing about ten 40 cubic yard bins a day of debris using a specially designed barge setup.

Directors on our buses explained the spreading grounds and that only a certain area of the basin was good for recharge due to geology (lack of clay.) Other staff members provided more detail about their fish mandates and the challenges they have. In the future any fish making it to Piru Dam will be hand carried to the upper Piru creek (past Lake Piru) and will be caught using photo detection on the fish ladder at the dam.

The tour was behind schedule and I needed to leave after lunch, so I missed the Freeman Diversion part of the tour. They said that facility is open for touring twice a week and encouraged me (and any others) to come back to see it.

Director AB 1234 Report  
March 30, 2023

Director name: Dirk Marks

Meeting attended: Tour of United Water Conservation District Facilities

Date of Meeting: March 29, 2023

Location: United Water Conservation District Headquarters and multiple District Facilities

SCV Water Board Meeting to be presented at: April 4, 2023

On March 29, 2023, I attended a facilities tour sponsored by United Water Conservation Water District (UWCD). The group toured the San Falcia Dam/Lake Piru complex, the Freeman Diversion and spreading facilities, and the El Rio Iron and Manganese Water Treatment Plant.

This season's storms have resulted in Lake Piru filling along with significant quantities of floating debris. UWCD estimates the cost will be around \$4 million to remove the debris. Most of this will be covered by FEMA grants. Their desire is to complete most this work by the Easter weekend when traditional community Easter-egg hunt and other community activities are scheduled. On the longer-term, in order to comply with updated criteria for passing maximum credible storm, UWCD will have to construct a new spill way and raise the dam. Further, updated seismic criteria will require UWCD to construct new outlet facilities. These capital improvements are currently estimated to cost at least \$155 million. UWCD anticipates completion of these facilities by 2029.

The group also visited the Freeman Diversion and associated recharge basins. Although there was significant flow in the river, the facility was offline while UWCD staff cleaned the fish screens and removed sediment from the outlet works. Facilities were scheduled to return to service the next day. UWCD emphasized the challenge of dealing with sediment, stating that the Santa Clara River was one of the most sediment laden rivers in the western United States. Once water enters the diversion works a portion it is feed into fish screens and the remainder is conveyed to a series of sedimentation basins before being conveyed to spreading facilities. The spreading basins are quite efficient with the best having the capacity to absorb 10-14 feet of water per day.

USFWS is requiring UWCD to redesign the outlet works to accommodate an improved fish latter. Other proposed work will improve sediment management practices.

UWCD's El Rio Iron and Manganese Treatment Plant is under construction. Water originating from the lower portions of the aquifer require this treatment. Shallower aquifer wells are used for blending but often have issues with nitrites. The nitrate concentrations typically peak during the late summer. Stata Clara River water captured by San Falcia Dam is released in late summer and delivered to the adjoining spreading grounds to dilute groundwater nitrate concentrations.