

Monthly Briefing

A Summary of the Alliance's Recent and Upcoming Activities and Important Water News

Crisis Grips Water Users In California

Rulings, Regulations Combine With Drought To Put Fish Before Farmers

Regulations and court decisions driven by litigation intended to protect fish are putting some of the world's most productive farmlands at risk this summer in California's Central Valley.

AS A RESULT OF AN EXTREMELY dry spring, and implementation of court-ordered water delivery restrictions on Central Valley Project (CVP) operations related primarily to protect fish, pumping out of the Bay-Delta to western San Joaquin Valley irrigators has been drastically curtailed this summer.

(Continued on Page 3)

Recalling John Keys

Former USBR Chief
Dies In Plane Crash

John Keys, during his final Alliance conference appearance as Commissioner in 2005.



Former U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner John W. Keys, III, 66, died May 30, 2008 when the airplane he was flying crashed in Canyonlands National Park (UTAH).

Mr. Keys served Reclamation in the Western water arena for a career that spanned nearly four decades. He was well respected within Reclamation and was seen as a helpful, solution-oriented partner to federal water and power customers across the West.

RECLAMATION Commissioner Bob Johnson informed Reclamation employees of the tragedy on the morning of June 2.

(Continued on Page 2)

Monthly Briefing's Inside Stories For June

- **Diversion Dam Edict Awaited, Pages 4-5**
- **Second Nevada Canal Breached, Page 6**
- **Hydropower Is Committee's Focus, Page 8**
- **MacDonald, Manson Rebut Assertions, Pages 9-10**
- **No CWA Permits Needed For Transfers, Page 11**
- **Delivery System Grants Presented, Page 12**
- **New Mid-Pacific Region Leader Named, Page 12**
- **Retiring Information Officer Honored, Page 14**

John Keys

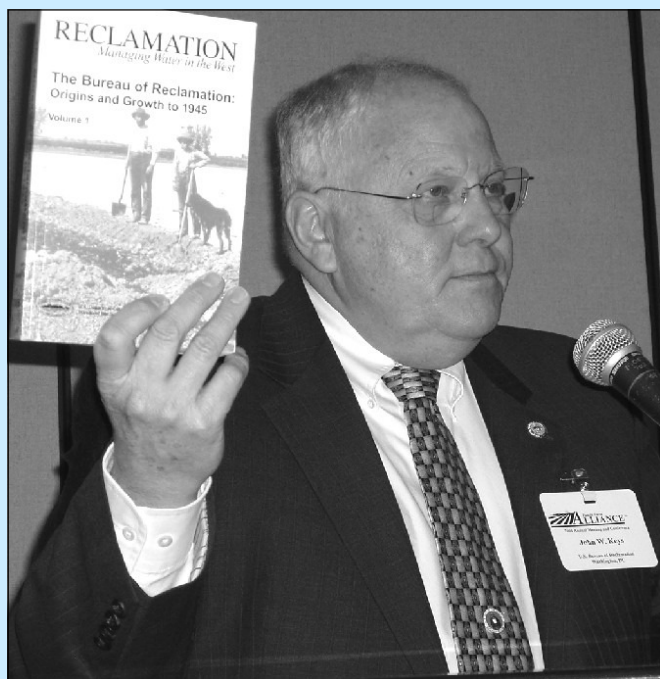
(Continued from Page 1)

“It is difficult to find the right words to convey the sense of loss that I know we all feel,” Commissioner Bob Johnson told Reclamation. “John believed in what he called ‘Reclamation people,’ and ‘Reclamation people’ believed in him,” the Commissioner said. “He remembered everybody’s name, as well as the names of spouses and children. He would even remember your grandmother’s name if you told him. In short, he cared about people and people cared about him.”

MR. KEYS BEGAN work for Reclamation in 1964, a career that eventually spanned 39 years. For 12 years, he served as Reclamation’s Pacific Northwest Regional Director.

He retired in 1998, and then returned to Reclamation when he was appointed by President Bush as Commissioner. He served from 2001-06.

“John was a long-time federal official, and a kind and thoughtful man,” said U.S. Senator Gordon Smith (OREGON), who publicly honored the memory of Mr. Keys on the floor of the Senate earlier this



A proud Commissioner Keys displays a new history volume that was part of the U.S. Bureau’s 100th anniversary in 2005.



John Keys (right), receiving a plaque of appreciation for his long U.S. Bureau of Reclamation career and work as Commissioner from Family Farm Alliance President Patrick O’Toole during the Alliance’s 2005 Annual Meeting and Conference in Las Vegas.

month. “I stand today to express my appreciation for his service to the Northwest and to our country.”

MR. KEYS HAD A BUSY life outside Reclamation.

Football officiating was an avocation for 40 years. He worked all levels, including 20 years for the Big Sky Conference. He was referee for the 1998 Division 1 AA National Championship game.

Flying became his passion after completing his training in 1993. He was a volunteer pilot for Angel Flight, Lifeline, Light Hawk, and Grand County Search and Rescue. While at Reclamation, he helped establish C.A.S.T. (Catch a Special Thrill), a popular public program that provides fishing opportunities.

MEMORIALS MAY be made through any Wells Fargo Bank in the title of John W. Keys III Benefit Memorial Fund. Distributions will then be made in his name to the Jennifer Keys Halsey Memorial Scholarship Fund, Angel Flight, C.A.S.T., Compassion International, Grand County Search and Rescue, and the Moab (UTAH) Free Clinic.

“John Keys was a highly respected and dedicated public servant, and a true friend to Western irrigators,” said Alliance President Patrick O’Toole (WYOMING). “We want to offer our sincere condolences to his family, and those he leaves behind.”

Water Crisis: California Farmers Are Crippled

(Continued from Page 1)

And farmers to the north in the the Sacramento Valley fear that an ongoing federal court case trial involving endangered fish species could end up cutting their irrigation season in half. (*Please see related story, Page 4.*)

DUE TO THREE record-setting dry months, implementation of court-ordered Delta Smelt restrictions, and other environmental regulations on CVP operations related primarily to conserving cold water in upstream storage for the benefit of the Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed winter run salmon, it is anticipated that pumping out of the Delta will be at minimum capacity during June and at 80% during July and August.

The State Water Project (SWP) is also scrambling to meet its south-of-Delta demands while dealing with the worst projected carry-over storage from Lake Oroville since 1977.

This combined regulatory / hydrologic drought essentially throttled the ability of water managers this year to move water out of the Delta during wet months and into San Luis Reservoir for use during the dry season.

NOW, WATER USERS are scrambling to enhance supplies by looking at alternative groundwater sources, putting together water transfers and exchanges, and pleading with government agencies for regulatory relief.

As prospects for implementing these alternatives diminish, local water users have developed a rationing proposal intended to avoid a catastrophic total depletion of stored water in San Luis, an off-stream reservoir with a capacity of 2 million acre-feet.

For producers in Westlands Water District, this means a scant six inches of water will be made available to quench the thirst of permanent crops like almonds over a 3-month period.

“Government regulations and court-ordered directives favoring fish over farmers will cripple San Joaquin communities this summer,” said Family Farm Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen (OREGON).

THE SITUATION facing farmers on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley is unprecedented.

“The dire challenge for us this summer will be to minimize the inevitable economic and environmental harm from these reductions, while ensuring that the health and safety of the communities that depend on these water supplies are protected,” said Dan Nelson (CALIFORNIA), general manager of the San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority.

Because farmland within Westlands accounts for 20% of the \$5 billion agricultural production of Fresno County – the nation’s No. 1 farm county – the potential economic impacts could enormously devastating. Fresno County has already reported impacts of \$73 million to its agricultural sector.

“Vast expanses of crops like tomatoes and cotton that have already been planted may be abandoned in the fields,” said Dan Erratabere (CALIFORNIA), a West Side ranch operator and Alliance board member. “At a minimum, orchard stands will be permanently damaged, if not destroyed. This will have a major im-

(Continued on Page 4)



Friant Water Authority
Shoreline is becoming quickly exposed as the surface of Central California’s San Luis Reservoir, shining in the morning sun, falls.

SACRAMENTO RIVER

Diversions Dam Edict Is Awaited

A federal judge could rule this month to open the gates of Red Bluff (CALIFORNIA) Diversion Dam (RBDD) on the Sacramento River to protect Endangered Species Act-listed fish, which would essentially cut irrigation water to more than 150,000 acres of farmland on the western side of the Sacramento Valley.

U.S. District Judge Oliver W. Wanger of Fresno (CALIFORNIA) earlier this month presided over a hearing on a lawsuit launched by environmental activists that seeks to protect fish by reducing water diversions state-wide.

IF THE JUDGE determines that immediate actions are needed to protect salmon, steelhead and green sturgeon in the river, he could order that the gates of RBDD be opened, which would impart devastating economic impacts irrigators and the City of Red Bluff.

The RBDD is a key component of the federal Central Valley Project and is owned and operated by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to deliver water to Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority (TCCA) districts.

IT ALSO PROVIDES a backup means for delivery of water to several federal wildlife refuges in the Sacramento Valley.

(Continued on Page 5)

Water Crisis: Emergency

(Continued from Page 3)

pact on the San Joaquin Valley's multibillion-dollar agriculture industry and local economy.”

GOVERNOR ARNOLD Schwarzenegger on June 12 proclaimed a state of emergency in nine Central Valley counties due to severe water shortages. The county declaration built upon an earlier executive order declaring a statewide drought, which directed state agencies and departments to take immediate action to address California's serious drought conditions and water delivery reductions.

“Central Valley agriculture is a \$20 billion a year industry,” said Governor Schwarzenegger. “If we don't get them water immediately the results will be devastating. Food prices, which are already stretching many family budgets, will continue to climb and workers will lose their jobs. Everyone's livelihood will be impacted in some way.”

Governor Schwarzenegger's announcement drew attention to this crisis and may light a fire under state legislators to finally support the governor's plan to build new dams, repair Delta levees, and implement more conservation measures.

“We would not be talking about any of this if over the last 40 years California had invested in our water infrastructure. Today we are taking aggressive action to address an immediate crisis, but a comprehensive solution is the only answer to addressing our drought situation in the long term,” Governor Schwarzenegger said.

IF THE DROUGHT declaration ultimately contributes to a massive bond measure being placed on the November ballot to fund these actions, San Joaquin farmers may look back at the Governor's declaration years from now and breathe a sigh of appreciation.

First, however, San Joaquin growers have to survive this year. And next year could be even worse, since it may take record precipitation next winter for San Luis Reservoir to fill and give the CVP water users a fighting chance in 2009. Their uncertain and frightening future has raised concerns with other Western irrigators.

“This looming crisis is tragic and unfair,” said Pat O'Toole (WYOMING), president of the Family Farm Alliance.

“The San Joaquin producers are some of the most innovative people I know. They have employed savvy and determination for many years, only to have their efforts denied by administrative, judicial and statutory restrictions beyond their control. This time, it looks like they've run out of options.”

ONE OF FRESNO County's representatives in Congress – Jim Costa – grimly hopes that some good may come out of the looming disaster.

“Maybe this is the crisis that is necessary to get decisions that are needed in Sacramento and Washington (D.C.),” Mr. Costa said.

Diversion Dam

(Continued from Page 4)

The dam has a series of spillway bays separated by piers. When the dam gates are closed, an artificial lake is formed, extending approximately six miles upstream through Red Bluff.

RBDD raises the elevation of water in the river so that a portion of the flows can be diverted to the Tehama-Colusa Canal through a headworks structure. The lake is considered a major recreational feature in Red Bluff, in large part due to speed boat races that are held on holiday weekends during summer months.

A BIOLOGICAL OPINION for endangered winter run Chinook salmon issued in 1993 by the National Marine Fisheries Service requires that the dam gates be kept in a raised (non-diverting) position (“gates out”) eight months of the year. The only time that the gates can be in, to make maximum use of RBDD diversion capability, is May 15 until September 15 each year.

The rest of the time, TCCA customers must depend upon a fragile combination of temporary and experimental pumps and a temporary diversion at Stony Creek. The periods during which the gates are out at RBDD have significantly improved fish passage, but have adversely impacted the facility’s ability to serve its water users. Local water users fear



Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority

A California Department of Fish and Game staff member shows a returning salmon at Red Bluff.

Judge Wanger could issue an order that further extends the “gates out” period.

“The prospect of economic harm that decision would have for our farmers and community is potentially catastrophic,” said Jeff Sutton, general manager for the Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority. Crops grown in this area generate over \$1 billion for the region’s annual economy.

TCCA LEADERS have been working for years to address the RBDD challenges. In 2002 TCCA adopted a policy to improve fish passage at RBDD and enhance water supply reliability by reducing or eliminating reliance on the dam.

“That policy built upon a considerable body of work that we had undertaken in recent years,” said Mr. Sutton, who is a member of the Family Farm Alliance Advisory Committee.

“THE PREFERRED OPTION we selected would move away from gravity diversion and instead pump the water out of the river through state-of-the-art fish screens,” he said. Sutton and other water users hope that Judge Wanger will allow the gates to remain closed this summer while TCCA and Reclamation proceed with finding permanent solutions at Red Bluff Diversion Dam.



Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority

The Red Bluff Diversion Dam with its gates closed.

Second Nevada Canal Breach Underscores Aging Infrastructure

A second breach in six months of an aging irrigation system in northern Nevada washed out a road, damaged an access bridge and took out part of a spillway on June 11.

This latest canal crisis could further place more priority in Congress to move a bill introduced by Senator Harry Reid (NEVADA), crafted in response to the breach that occurred last January.

SENATOR REID'S BILL is intended to make aging federal-owned canals and levees safer across the West. His measure was introduced about three months after the failure of an earthen embankment on a century-old irrigation canal flooded the growing town of Fernley, 30 miles east of Reno. The January 5 breach of the Truckee Canal flooded nearly 600 homes, making Fernley a state and federal disaster area.

Engineers who investigated the Fernley flood concluded the main reason of the failure was the embankment had been riddled with rodent burrows, some up to 25 feet deep.

The bill would provide \$11 million over the next five years for required inspections of federal water infrastructure such as the Truckee Canal. It also directs the Bureau of Reclamation to perform maintenance and repairs to ensure the safety of nearby homes and businesses.

THE U.S. BUREAU of Reclamation and the Truckee Carson Irrigation District (TCID) are working to determine a cause and complete temporary repairs for the latest breach, which occurred to a section of the V-Line Canal Lewis Wasteway approximately eight miles west of Fallon (NEVADA). The V-Line Canal is a feature of Reclamation's 102-year-old Newlands Project.

No injuries resulted from the breach, and no homes or commercial buildings were damaged, although some residential access roads were affected.

THE CANAL originates at the Carson River Diversion Dam and provides water to the Fallon area for

Reclamation Looks At 'Canal/Asset' Issues

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation hosted a "Canal/Asset" management meeting on May 14 at the Federal Center in Denver (COLORADO).

The daylong meeting featured opening comments by Reclamation Commissioner Bob Johnson, a summary of the January Truckee Canal failure, a summary of assessments of canals through urbanized ar-

(Continued on Page 7)

agricultural and wetlands purposes. The canal is operated and maintained by TCID.

"There was no property damage, as all the flows went back into the river, but the repairs will probably take at least 10 days," said Jamie Mills (NEVADA), with the Newlands Water Protective Association, and a member of the Family Farm Alliance Advisory Committee. "About half the irrigators won't be able to irrigate for at least that period of time."

Throughout Reclamation's history, canals were usually located generally in rural areas, where the major impact of canal failure was the loss of project benefits. However, with increased urbanization occurring on lands below many canals, loss of life or major property/economic damage can now result.

Reclamation is trying to ensure that continuing efforts to assess and monitor the condition of these canals are effective, and that operating entities have emergency response plans in place in the unlikely event of failure. The majority of these canals are typically transferred works with operation and maintenance (O&M) responsibility transferred to operating entities. Reclamation is working to collaborate with local partners who operate these transferred facilities to determine the best approach for addressing these changing conditions.

Water Leaders See Need For More Coordination

Some Western water managers believe that more effective communication between water districts, municipalities, and state and federal agencies like the Bureau of Reclamation is needed in the future to address potential problems created by urban uses encroaching upon canals and their aging infrastructure.

They also question whether districts should bear the entire burden for costs incurred to keep canals up to standard, especially when urban sprawl creeps into canal service areas.

“MANY OF OUR IRRIGATION district managers believe that costs related to urbanization in the proximity of maintained structures may need to be shared by urban interests like cities, towns, and developers,” said Family Farm Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen (OREGON).

The Alliance has been working with congressional staff to assess the types of legislative fixes – including Senator Harry Reid’s proposal – that could be developed to assist with making repairs to aging water infrastructure in the West. Alliance members include irrigation districts and water agencies that are responsible for the operation and maintenance of some of Reclamation’s largest and most complex facilities.

“WE BELIEVE THERE clearly is a need for Congress to address the deterioration of aging Reclamation facilities, and preventing disasters like the one

Canal Workshop

(Continued from Page 6)

in Fernley should be an immediate priority,” said Mr. Keppen. “We are developing specific recommendations that we hope can provide a foundation for legislation that our members can embrace.”

Several Family Farm Alliance members were in attendance in Denver. One of those attendees, Larry Mires (MONTANA), explained that Reclamation provided a review of five different canals affected by urban encroachment, with much focus placed on the recent canal failure in Fernley (NEVADA).

“Water users in Denver voiced concerns about potential liabilities, and the need for re-developing policies, especially relative to canal easements and encroachment into easements,” said Mr. Mires.

A summary of the May 14 canal safety/asset management meeting, along with meeting presentations, is now available at <http://www.usbr.gov/canalsafety/>

in Fernley should be an immediate priority,” said Mr. Keppen. “We are developing specific recommendations that we hope can provide a foundation for legislation that our members can embrace.”

To Contact The Alliance

TELEPHONE:
(541) 850-9007

REGULAR MAIL:
P.O. Box 216,
Klamath Falls, OR 97601

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DAN KEPPEN'S E-MAIL:
DanKeppen@clearwire.net

Visit Us On Line!
www.familyfarmalliance.org

As Rising Energy Costs Hit Rural America, Oversight Hearing Highlights Hydropower

At a time when fuel and energy prices are skyrocketing, particularly in the rural West, the Water and Power Subcommittee of the House Natural Resources Committee earlier this month examined the growth potential of hydropower resources.

The June 12 hearing included both critics and supporters of hydro-producing dams.

ANDREW FAHLUND of the conservation group American Rivers testified that hydropower dams will continue to play a role serving our nation's energy needs, but they aren't a silver bullet solution to the problem of global warming.

"It is folly to believe that building new hydropower dams will solve our energy problems," said Mr. Fahlund. "All of the best hydropower sites were developed decades ago. Many of the sites that remain were rejected because development was simply too expensive or because the costs to local communities or the environment was too high."

HYDROPOWER SUPPORTERS questioned why this resource doesn't rise to the top of the list of preferred alternatives when policy makers investigate clean energy sources.

"Amazingly, advocates that push so hard to increase our nation's supply of 'renewable energy' don't even include hydropower in their definition of what 'renewable' is," said Rep. "Doc" Hastings (WASHINGTON) at the hearing. "This defies common sense."

Reps. Hastings and Cathy McMorris-Rodgers (WASHINGTON) both expressed concerns about energy implications associated with proposals by some environmental groups to breach dams to improve salmon passage in the Columbia River system.

"We should not have a policy that rewards coal-burning regions with billions in credits while tearing out clean hydropower and ignoring nuclear plants," Rep. Hastings testified.

THE HEARING OCCURRED at time when ru-

ral Westerners are feeling the hurt inflicted by a faltering economy. Higher energy prices disproportionately impact the poor, especially in rural areas, where travel distances are greater.

A survey by the Oil Price Information Service earlier this year found that the fuel crisis is hitting people hardest – as a percentage of income – in rural areas of the South, New Mexico, Montana, Wyoming and the Dakotas. In Colorado, a recent study found that

'We should not have a policy that rewards coal-burning regions with billions in credits while tearing out clean hydropower and ignoring nuclear plants'

– REP. "DOC" HASTINGS

homeless families with children cited high energy bills as one of the two main reasons they became homeless.

Rising food costs are also directly linked to the price of energy. "Fertilizer and fuel costs are already going through the roof, and livestock operations are also seeing higher costs for feed such as alfalfa and corn," Family Farm Alliance President Patrick O'Toole (WYOMING) recently noted. "Those increased costs likely will mean higher prices at the cash register of grocery stores."

ACCORDING TO the Energy Information Administration, hydropower comprises the vast majority – 75 percent – of all renewable sources of electricity produced in the United States, three times the energy generated from biomass, geothermal, wind and solar combined. A recent report by the Electric Power Research Institute found 90,000 megawatts of untapped generation potential from hydropower and new water-power technologies across the United States.

"This could produce enough energy to serve the needs of 22 cities the size of Washington (D.C.)," stated Tim Culbertson, General Manager of Public Utility District No. 2 of Grant County (WASHINGTON), in testimony before the Subcommittee.



Julie MacDonald

Government Witness Suggests Interior Officials Used ESA 'Political Influence'

MacDonald And Manson Fire Back With Rebuttal Letters

One year ago, Julie MacDonald, former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks at the Interior Department, resigned following the release of an Inspector General report that suggested she had manipulated scientific decisions under the federal endangered species program.

Since that time, House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Nick J. Rahall (WEST VIRGINIA) has pressed for the Interior Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to “correct course and prevent continued political meddling” with scientific decision-making under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

AT A MAY 21 Committee oversight hearing entitled “The Danger of Deception: Do Endangered Species Have a Chance?” the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released new findings of its ongoing investigation, requested by Mr. Rahall and Reps. Peter DeFazio (OREGON) and Jay

Inslee (WASHINGTON), into the agency's self-review of its endangered species program.

Testimony presented by the GAO investigator suggested that four additional highly placed officials at the Interior Department could have inappropriately influenced endangered species decision-making.

ROBIN NAZZARO, the head of the GAO natural resources and environment division, told the Committee that questions remain about whether top Interior officials – including former Interior Assistant Secretary Craig Manson – may have inappropriately influenced ESA decisions and whether broader ESA policies should be revisited.

Ms. Nazzaro did not directly accuse Interior officials of wrongdoing, but said records studied by GAO suggested they were involved in decisions later found to have been slanted by political pressure from Ms. MacDonald.

“**THE SCOPE** of the study the agency engaged in was a rather narrow scope, just looking at Ms. MacDonald – if they had broadened it, they may have come up with others,” Ms. Nazzaro told the Committee. Critics of Interior Department environmental policy seized on Ms. Nazzaro’s statement as proof that science takes the back seat to politics in the current administration.

“A disconcerting picture has emerged of officials working at the highest levels of the Interior Department continuing to tamper with the endangered species program, trumping science with politics. The practice is pervasive and I am convinced that the only remedy is a house-cleaning, post-November,” said Chairman Rahall.

BUSH ADMINISTRATION officials downplayed the accusations. Chris Paolino, deputy press secretary at Interior, said in a state-

(Continued on Page 10)

MacDonald, Manson

(Continued from Page 9)

ment that it should come as “no surprise that political appointees are involved in significant decisions; in many cases it is required by law and regulation.”

OFFICIALS TARGETED by Ms. Nazzaro’s testimony were not so diplomatic. Both Ms. MacDonald and Mr. Manson after the hearing sent scathing rebuttal letters to GAO.

“I was alive, and available for

‘I found it remarkable that your staff did not contact me before making the inaccurate and ill-informed statements contained in that report’

—CRAIG MANSON

consultation during the time that your staff was putting together the report,” wrote Mr. Manson in a May 29 letter to GAO.

“I found it remarkable that your staff did not contact me before making the inaccurate and ill-informed statements contained in that report. My present whereabouts are publicly available in many sources.”

Mr. Manson stressed in his letter that he did not find a single example of “political interference” with decision-making under the ESA in the report.

Instead, he said the report illustrates that “some people plainly

were unaccustomed to the required rigor that my office brought to the decision-making process.”

MS. MACDONALD echoed Manson’s concerns about GAO’s failure to provide her perspective.

“Sadly, most of the errors could have been avoided had the author reviewed the source documents and interviewed the primary subjects of the report,” she wrote.

She also blasted the quality of the GAO document.

“With an almost unbelievable lack of thoroughness, the authors clearly failed to even read the text of the Endangered Species Act,” MacDonald wrote. “This is a particularly egregious omission, since its provisions form the basis of the entire decision-making process which is the subject of the report.”

“I FIND IT REGRETTABLE that your staff was so easily misled by the uninformed views of largely anonymous sources,” Mr. Manson concluded. “This creates an impression of sloppy and partisan work in contravention of the high regard usually accorded your office.”

Immediately following the Committee hearing, Chairman Rahall said in a statement that the Committee will not pursue the matter further.

“At this point, the best hope for endangered species may simply be to cling to life until after January when this President and his cronies, at long last, hit the unemployment line,” Chairman Rahall said.

What Makes The Alliance So Effective

The Family Farm Alliance was founded 20 years ago with one overriding ethic: Agriculture doesn't need another association, but it does need an effective, low cost grass roots group that can get the job done.

That belief was our foundation and it still drives every decision we make.

To keep costs low, we hire no full time staff. All staff work is done under contract so we maintain flexibility and very low overhead.

In addition, we believe that the only effective way to impact elected officials is to have them hear first-hand from farmers and ranchers.

While we have outstanding legislative advisors under contract, we deliver the key messages through our members.

Why not join us!

For membership information, please visit our website

www.familyfarmalliance.com

Telephone: (541) 850-9007

EPA Says Clean Water Permits Not Needed for Water Transfers

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) earlier this month announced a rule to clarify that permits are not required for transfers of water from one body of water to another.

Such transfers include routing water through tunnels, channels, or natural stream courses for public water supplies, irrigation, power generation, flood control, and environmental restoration.

EPA'S WATER TRANSFER RULE gives communities greater certainty and makes clear they have the flexibility to protect water quality and promote the public good without going through a new federal permitting process," said EPA Assistant Administrator Benjamin H. Grumbles. "Clean water permits should focus on water pollution, not water movement."

Thousands of water transfers currently in place across the country are vital to the nation's water supply and infrastructure systems.

Whether a permit is needed under the Clean Water Act's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) has been an issue in numerous court cases in recent years.

THE FINAL RULE DEFINES water transfers as an activity that conveys or connects waters of the United States without subjecting the transferred water to intervening industrial, municipal, or commercial use. Pollutants introduced by the water transfer activity itself to the water being transferred would still require an NPDES permit under this month's rule. Furthermore, this rule does not prevent states or tribes from using their own authorities to address water transfers, including the use of non-NPDES permits.

In 2004, the question of whether NPDES permits were necessary for water transfers went before the U.S. Supreme Court in *South Florida Water Management District v. Miccosukee Tribe of Indians*. The court did not rule directly on the issue, which left unresolved the uncertainty many felt about the need for an NPDES permit. EPA issued an interpretive statement in 2005 explaining that Congress intended water resource-management agencies and other state authorities to oversee water transfers, not the NPDES permitting program. This rulemaking codifies that position.

'This decision ...is a total victory for both the rule of law and common sense'

—NORM SEMANKO, *Idaho Water Users Association*

THE EPA decision garnered strong praise from the leader of one of the West's most influential water user groups.

"This decision by the EPA to exempt water transfers from

the pollution permitting process is a total victory for both the rule of law and common sense. Water transfers do not add pollutants to water; they simply move water from one place to another," said Norm Semanko, Executive Director of the Idaho Water Users Association.

Even more importantly, says Mr. Semanko, the rule demonstrates that the federal government is working cooperatively with the states rather than trying to use the permitting process to regulate local decisions regarding how water is used and allocated.

"Radical activists have long used the water pollution angle in costly and wasteful law suits designed to impose their will via federal law on local decision makers regarding the use of water," said Mr. Semanko. "This rule helps close off that line of attack."

For more information on the rule go to: <http://www.epa.gov/npdes/agriculture>

WESTERN WATER

Districts Receive Grants To Improve Delivery Systems

Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne has announced \$1.8 million in grants to water districts for 10 projects to improve delivery systems in California, New Mexico, Oregon and Utah.

Including matching contributions of non-federal partners, the selected projects represent a combined investment of more than \$3.77 million.

GRANTED UNDER the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Water 2025 program, the "System Optimization Review Grants" will assist water districts and other water management entities by providing a broad look at their water delivery system operations.

The grants will also enable water districts to develop a plan of action focused on improving efficiency and operations on a regional and/or basin perspective.

Several of the grant recipients are members of the Family Farm Alliance:

- **Pixley Irrigation District** (CALIFORNIA) will examine opportunities to improve management of water resources through conjunctive use opportunities. The total project cost is \$640,000, including a Water 2025 contribution of \$300,000.
- **Elephant Butte Irrigation District** (NEW MEXICO) will research the consumptive use of crops to complete a hydrologic budget as necessary to produce a complete and effective System Optimization Review. The

total project cost is \$545,000, including a Water 2025 contribution of \$265,000.

- **West Extension Irrigation District** (OREGON) will identify water management problems and potential for water savings through enclosing open laterals, prioritizing projects and prepare a planning report to incorporate into the District's Water Management and Conservation Plan. Total project cost is \$53,564, including a Water 2025 contribution of \$22,000.
- **Weber Basin Water Conservancy District** (UTAH) will analyze conservation and water marketing opportunities including canal lining, installa-

tion of meters on irrigation water distribution systems, system automation, installation of new pressured piping, new ground water recharge possibilities and other system efficiency improvements. Total project cost is \$567,884, including a Water 2025 contribution of \$272,000.

In the future, all Water 2025 grant opportunities will be part of Interior's Water for America, an initiative focused on addressing 21st century water challenges and security water resources for future generations.

For more information on Water 2025, please visit www.usbr.gov/water2025 and for more information on Water for America visit <http://www.doi.gov/initiatives/water.html>.

New Mid-Pacific Regional Director Named

Donald R. Glaser has been named the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Mid-Pacific Regional Director in Sacramento (CALIFORNIA).

Mr. Glaser's experiences are varied and include 20 years with Reclamation in several positions throughout the West and in Washington, including Assistant Commissioner for Resources Management and Deputy Commissioner. Glaser has spent the past seven years managing several non-profit organizations engaged in water education, open space preservation, and fish and wildlife conservation and restoration. Prior to that, he was a water resource consultant, Executive Director for the Presidential Commission on Western Water Policy and State Director for the Bureau of Land Management in Colorado.

"RECLAMATION IS FORTUNATE to be able to bring Don Glaser back home to the Bureau of Reclamation," said Reclamation Commissioner Bob Johnson, "Don's experience with the Bureau along with everything he has accomplished since he left Reclamation make him the ideal person to fill this important position."

Alliance Asked To Help Plan Salinity Meet

The Family Farm Alliance has been invited to join representatives of academia, water districts, and desalination experts to plan a Water Supply, Agriculture and Salinity Management workshop to be held in Coachella Valley (CALIFORNIA) in late October 2008.

The Multi-State Salinity Coalition and Coachella Valley Water District are organizing the workshop.

IT WILL feature speakers addressing desalination of agricultural drainage water, reuse of drainage water, brine wetlands, and agricultural salinity control.

A field trip will also be factored into the program.

Other organizations represented on the workshop planning committee include Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, University of California-Riverside, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and U.S. Department of Agriculture.

A Great Big *Thank You* To Our New And Renewing Members!

DONOR SUPPORT

JUNE 2008

CHAMPION (Over \$5,000)

Friant Water Authority (California)

ADVOCATE (\$1,000 - \$5,000)

Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority (California)
Washington State Water Resources Association (Washington)
Washington State Potato Commission (Washington)
Meyers Farms Family Trust (California)

DEFENDER (\$500 - \$1,000)

Orange Cove Irrigation District (California)
Pine River Irrigation District (Colorado)
Pioneer Irrigation District (Idaho)

PARTNER (\$250 - \$500)

Diepenbrock Harrison (California), Dunavant Enterprises (California),
Princeton-Cordora-Glenn Irrigation District (California)

SUPPORTER (\$100 - \$250)

Paul R. Orme P.C. (Arizona), Schroeder Law Offices (Oregon)

The Family Farm Alliance is grateful for the generous support that continues to be provided by members and donors.

To learn how you can become a member, please visit our newly-redesigned website, www.familyfarmalliance.org or call Executive Director Dan Keppen at (541) 850-9007.



We Couldn't Do It Without You!

Please visit our website

www.familyfarmalliance.org

McCracken Departs Mid-Pacific, Receives A Prestigious Award

A long-time U.S. Bureau of Reclamation public affairs officer with strong ties to Pacific Coast agricultural water users retired on May 30, 2008, one month after receiving the second highest honorary award given by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Jeff McCracken, Public Affairs Officer for Reclamation's Mid-Pacific Region in Sacramento (CALIFORNIA) stepped down from his high-visibility position at a May 30 luncheon attended by a large gathering of his Reclamation peers, media representatives, and water and power officials.

FAMILY FARM ALLIANCE Executive Director Dan Keppen spoke at the luncheon, where he recounted Mr. McCracken's effective track record as the public face and voice of the Mid-Pacific region.

"Jeff had the gift of taking very complicated issues and explaining them in concise, insightful sound bites," said Mr. Keppen. "Even in the most stressful and high-profile situations, he kept his cool. He really was a pro."

RECLAMATION Commissioner Bob Johnson on April 30 presented the Meritorious Service Award to Mr. McCracken at a ceremony in Washington (D.C.) in recognition of his outstanding and far-reaching contributions to Reclamation and the Department of the Interior since 1989.

"It is an honor and a privilege to present the Meritorious Service



U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Reclamation Commissioner Bob Johnson (left) stands with Jeff McCracken, Mid-Pacific Region Public Affairs Officer, after presenting him with the Department of the Interior's Meritorious Service Award.

Award to Jeff McCracken," said Commissioner Johnson.

"Jeff has demonstrated exceptional leadership and media acumen throughout his Reclamation career. His positive relationships and responsiveness to the media and the public, as well as his ability to clarify complex issues, have fostered a sense of trust while increasing the transparency of our operations."

THE AWARD NOTED Mr. McCracken's accomplishments associated with Klamath Basin water supply challenges and environmental recovery efforts, and his ability to develop and maintain ef-

fective relationships with the public and the media.

The award also praised McCracken's successful public information and public outreach efforts associated with the Folsom Dam Joint Federal Project.

HIS SUCCESS in the areas of public communication and involvement contributed to the launch of a \$1.2-billion construction effort to improve Folsom Dam's safety and flood control capabilities.

Mr. McCracken, a San Joaquin Valley native, retired after serving almost 20 years with Reclamation.