San Vicente Pipeline Construction Begins

Work has officially begun on the San Vicente Pipeline. Construction will cost nearly $199 million, making it the largest construction contract since the Water Authority’s 1944 inception. Once completed, the pipeline will be the final link between the three emergency water storage facilities in the county – Olivenhain Reservoir, Lake Hodges, and San Vicente Reservoir.

A groundbreaking ceremony was held on July 21 at the pipeline’s central access point called the Central Shaft. Various dignitaries, including city of San Diego Councilmember Brian Maienschein and city of Poway Deputy Mayor Bob Emery and Councilmember Betty Rexford, were present to mark the occasion. Water Authority General Manager Maureen Stapleton served as master of ceremonies.

“The Emergency Storage Project will meet the county’s emergency water storage needs through at least the year 2030, ensuring that water will flow to all areas of the county even if a disaster disrupts the region’s imported water supply,” said Stapleton.

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San Vicente Reservoir Closure – New Information Available

The San Vicente Reservoir will be closed to boating, fishing, and other water recreation for Emergency Storage Project construction. This is necessary due to intensive construction activity on the access road and a significantly lowered water level. The Water Authority is dedicated to providing the most accurate and timely information regarding the reservoir’s closure. Currently, it is difficult to provide a firm closure schedule since the construction projects affecting boating on San Vicente are still being designed.

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The 11-mile pipeline will be constructed almost entirely underground and will not go under any homes. The San Vicente Pipeline will be constructed over a 42-month period using several different tunneling techniques.

*Construction began in August on the Slaughterhouse Shaft, one of four access points for the San Vicente Pipeline.*

“The majority of the tunneling will use tunnel boring machines, and a small portion of the tunnel will use the drill-and-blast method. Currently, work at the shafts and portal is concentrated on site preparation, which includes delivering construction equipment, installing fencing, and grading,” said Project Manager Kathy Schuler. “The tunnel boring machines are scheduled to arrive at the work sites in early 2006,” Schuler added.

The Water Authority will provide regular project updates to community groups along the San Vicente Pipeline. A schedule of community group presentations is available on the Water Authority’s website at www.sdcwa.org; click on “Infrastructure,” then “San Vicente Pipeline.”

**Environmental Training Required**

As the contractor for the San Vicente Pipeline project readies tunnel access sites for construction, workers are required to participate in mandatory environmental training. Construction personnel are informed about the conditions and restrictions agreed to by the Water Authority according to project permit requirements and the environmental impact report.

“The training is designed to motivate and educate staff and contractors working on the pipeline project,” said John McCullough, the Water Authority’s compliance manager for the project.

The training includes information about approved work and blasting hours, road use limitations, and construction activity restrictions. The purpose of the training is to protect water, air quality, people, and sensitive biological and cultural/paleontological resources. The work sites will be monitored throughout construction to ensure the Water Authority’s commitments are kept.

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The following is the most recent closure information available. From fall 2006 through spring 2007, boating will be allowed on weekends and holidays only, due to planned construction activity and closure of the reservoir access road. Complete reservoir closure is expected to begin in mid- to late 2008 because the water level will be significantly lowered for dam raise construction. Currently, dam raise construction is scheduled through 2012 and boating can resume when the water is high enough to access the new boat launch. This schedule could change once the final height of the dam is determined.

Although the reservoir’s closure may be inconvenient to those who enjoy the fresh body of water for fishing and water skiing, those who return to the reservoir once it is reopened will enjoy many new improvements. As part of the project, the Water Authority will add shade trees and picnic areas. The work will also include expanding the boat ramp, doubling the parking area, and improving the reservoir access road.
**Emergency Preparedness – Doing Our Part**

Recent hurricane events on the Gulf Coast have been a reminder that a natural disaster can have a major impact on our economy and quality of life. Up to 95 percent of San Diego County's water is currently imported through pipelines from the Colorado River and Northern California. These pipelines cross several major fault lines on their way to the county. An earthquake along any of these faults could damage the aqueducts and prevent water from reaching us. Repairing these pipelines – or lifelines – could take up to six months.

To protect our region from a severe water shortage during such a disaster, the San Diego County Water Authority is constructing facilities to increase the region’s emergency storage capacity to meet the county’s needs through at least 2030. The Emergency Storage Project is a system of reservoirs, interconnected pipelines and pump stations that will work together to store and move water around the county in the event of an earthquake.

California’s pattern of fault lines makes earthquakes a natural occurrence here. The Water Authority takes seriously its responsibility to provide a safe, reliable water supply to residents and businesses in the county – even when disaster strikes.
Do You Use the Coast to Crest Trail at Lake Hodges?

The Lake Hodges Coast to Crest Trail can still be used on weekends, but is currently closed during weekday construction hours.

The Coast to Crest Trail, which runs along the perimeter of the Lake Hodges Pipeline projects construction site on the lake’s north shore, may occasionally be temporarily closed due to construction work and the need to protect public safety.

For more information about the San Diego County Water Authority’s Emergency Storage Project, please call toll free (877) 426-2010 or visit our website at: www.sdcwa.org.

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