

## CONTACT MEMO

Date: September 19, 1996  
Contact: Gary Brown, General Manager, Western Canal Water District  
Setting: Meeting at Western Canal

Gary Brown and I discussed the issues facing Western Canal Water District that would have an impact on a conjunctive use program. The following is a summary of our discussion.

- 1) Gary and I discussed Western Canal's participation in the Kern Water Bank. Approximately 90 out of 120 wells participated in the program in 1994. As a result, a claim was made by the Valley Water Protection Association (VWPA) for third party impacts as a result of the pumping. There has been considerable debate as to the extent of damages caused by Western's participation in the Water Bank.
- 2) Gary outlined VWPA's claims regarding damages caused by the pumping and discussed Western's and DWR's opinion. Gary recommended that I contact Linda Cole with VWPA, and Bob Hennigan to elicit their opinions directly. We also discussed the two measures on the ballot in Butte County and how they may impact a conjunctive use program.
- 2) Western Canal currently has no in-district conjunctive use program. Gary believes, however, that a conjunctive use program to provide surplus water would be feasible provided that a suitable market exists and that plans are made to compensate for third party impacts.
- 3) Gary indicated that virtually all wells and surface water diversions are metered in the district, although some growers who did not participate in the Water Bank are not metered.
- 4) Groundwater costs, excluding capitalized costs, are approximately \$18 to \$20 per acre-foot. Surface water is much cheaper, going for \$3 to \$5 per acre-foot. Approximately 49,000 acres were planted in rice this year, representing over 95 percent of crops grown in Western's district.
- 5) I asked Gary what he thought would be some of the obstacles in implementing a conjunctive use program for CALFED. He cited the following issues:
  - a. Demonstrating and managing trust
  - b. Mitigation of third party impacts

- c. Ensuring the public that an objective entity will be responsible for implementing the program -- an entity that is not controlled by water districts and that will look out for the public interest. Gary suggested an entity such as the Butte Basin Water Users Association.
  
- 6) While Gary believes that conjunctive use is "the wave of the future," Gary suggested that a CALFED conjunctive use program would be an easier sell if it were a drought-based program as opposed to a one that proposes a guaranteed amount of water every year.