

## CONTACT MEMO

Date: November 5, 1996  
Contact: Donn Wilson, Yuba County Water Agency  
Setting: Meeting at YCWA

Donn Wilson and I discussed various aspects of conjunctive use in the Sacramento Valley. The following is a summary of our conversation.

1. The YCWA formed in 1959. The area was subject to major floods; 1955 floods brought focus to flood protection on Yuba River.
2. The Board of Supervisors went to legislature asking for formation of Yuba County Water Agency. The Water Agency Act determines how the agency operates.
3. Groundwater overdraft is taking place in southern county; north of river groundwater was pretty stable.
4. Yuba River Development Project: \$185 million in bonds approved by the voters. The project was totally repaid by hydroelectric energy. However, there is a negative cash flow for agency because they have to cover recreation costs.
  - A. New Bullards Bar Dam.
  - B. Colgate Power Plant -- largest in PG&E system.
5. The YCWA cannot retail water; can only wholesale water.
  - A. Contracts with seven water agencies and companies
  - B. Supplied by Yuba River; some districts have their own rights.
6. Currently, Yuba County Basin is in pretty good shape -- some overdraft still in south part of county.
7. All wells are privately owned by farmers.
8. Some wells were constructed for 1991 groundwater bank (82,000 acre-feet) and 1994 (26,000 acre-feet).
9. Prior to water banks, there was considerable opposition; when price got high enough, districts decided to participate. Some districts that are likely to be willing participants:
  - A. Ramaras Water District.
  - B. Cordova Irrigation District.
  - C. Hallwood Irrigation District (good water rights).

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- D. Browns Valley Irrigation District.
  - E. Brophy Water District.
  - F. South Yuba Water District.
10. Yuba County Water Agency transferred about 500,000 acre feet during drought five years ago (1987-1992).
11. YCWA Board recognizes the need for water in California; willing to help if it makes water supply more secure. Those districts north of river are generally more interested in conjunctive use.
12. Obstacles.
- A. What will happen with water rights hearings? If decision is adverse, YCWA will have to rely on groundwater for their own needs.
  - B. Fishery needs.
  - C. Negotiating of CUWA - ag to increase flows to Delta.
  - D. There are many interests looking for water, especially critical dry-year water; how will they be coordinated?
  - E. YCWA may contribute 60,000 acre-feet of surplus surface water, based on existing conditions; beyond that they would need to go to groundwater.
13. Recommendations.
- A. Help resolve water rights issues.
  - B. Protect local supply.
  - C. Compensation for additional costs.
  - D. Donn would be willing to help coordinate a workshop or kick-off meeting.