

# NEWS CLIPS

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**Resource Conservation and Public Outreach**

Organized by date

# Morrison cell tower comes underfire

By Sylvie Belmont  
The Acorn 11/14/2013



Opposition could hang up plans for a new cell tower above the Morrison Ranch community in Agoura Hills.

In September, Las Virgenes Municipal Water District considered a request by AT&T to build a cellular site on the district's Morrison water tank property.

The wireless provider wants to lease a portion of the 7.7-acre parcel north of Woodglen and Ridgebrook drives for the new facility, which it says would improve cell coverage in the area.

Because the water tank is near some homes, district officials voted to postpone a decision regarding the cell facility until AT&T obtains a response, either in favor or against the project, from the Morrison Ranch Homeowners Association.

LVMWD has seven leases with cellular providers, including locations in Calabasas and Westlake Village.

Because water tanks tend to be at a high elevation, it is not uncommon for communication facilities to be built on these sites.

According to David Pedersen, general manager for LVMWD, the district generally cooperates with communications companies to place cell facilities at its water tank sites because both services benefit the community and the leases provide a modest source of revenue for the district.

The Morrison Ranch site lease would bring \$25,000 annually to the district. Not everyone is happy with the idea.

Jan Gerstel, president of the Morrison Ranch Homeowners Association, which represents 1,226 homes, said AT&T should have contacted his organization first.

“Now LVMWD is going to be the face, and they will be blamed. But ultimately it should be AT&T to take the blame,” he said.

Denise Arledge, whose home is about 300 feet away from the water tank, opposes the cell facility.

“It would be in plain sight,” she said. “What everybody is most upset about is that AT&T was supposed to come to us first before they went over to the Las Virgenes water district.”

Arledge, who is an AT&T wireless subscriber, said she is satisfied with her service and does not see a need for improved cell coverage in her neighborhood.

The cell towers should not be installed without regard to the people who live nearby, Gerstel said, adding that in addition to the tank, the area has large power lines, and some residents there don't want their views to be further obstructed by cell towers.

An AT&T representative is scheduled to attend the next homeowners association meeting at 6:30 p.m. Thurs., Nov. 21 in Willow Elementary School's multipurpose room. The representative will share details about the proposed facilities and answer questions from residents.

“We want to be transparent to people in the community and give them all the information so they can speak out,” Gerstel said. “ If one person doesn't want to have the new cell tower in their neighborhood, being on the board, I will support that position.”

LVMWD board member Barry Steinhardt said he will support the wishes of residents.

“ Las Virgenes Municipal Water District is not in the business of cell towers. We are in the business of delivering highquality water and sanitation. I represent the area in Morrison Ranch where the cell towers are proposed. If the area residents are not in favor, as their elected official I will support them and oppose the cell tower,” he said.

Jeff Reinhardt, spokesperson for LVMWD, said details for placement and height of the cell tower have not been established yet.

After the board reviews comments from the association, directors will decide whether they'll approve a conditional lease. If they do, then AT&T needs to apply for a city permit to build the cell tower.

At a meeting Sept. 24, David Lippman, director of facilities and operations for LVMWD, said the district doesn't usually consult with residents on such projects.

"We don't want to take the role of the land-use agency for this project. We believe that is up to the City of Agoura Hills' planning commission," Lippman said, adding that residents will be notified by the city and will have the opportunity to share their concerns at a public hearing.

Board president Charles Caspary echoed Lippman's remarks.

"We're not a land-use planning agency. The conditional use process is well-designed to deal with issues such as cellular antennas," Caspary said.

But Steinhardt said the district already has enough trouble with public relations. He urged the board to table the discussion until the district gets a response from Morrison Ranch.

"It would be a mistake for us. . . . You're putting the cart before the horse, and I will not approve it," he said.

About four years ago, a group of residents in Calabasas halted a similar plan to construct a cell tower on a water tank in their neighborhood. LVMWD had approved the lease, but residents fought for more than a year, appearing at planning commission and council meetings to stop the project.



# Santa Clara River safeguards sought

*Complaint seeks efficiency in use of water*

From staff reports

Ventura County Star 11/14/2013

A group of nonprofits Wednesday asked the State Water Resources Control Board to protect the Santa Clara River and its wildlife by balancing the diversion of water with what it said was the public trust and community needs.

The Vern Freeman Diversion Dam, owned and operated by Santa Paula-based United Water Conservation District, "is a primary cause of the sharp decline of the Santa Clara River's ecosystem," the groups said in a news release.

The Oxnard-area dam diverts water from the river that is to replenish aquifers.

The groups filing Wednesday's complaint with the board include the Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy, Wishtoyo, Ventura Coastkeeper and the Center for Biological Diversity.

They are advocating for more water efficiency and incentives for water reclamation, which they said will better protect the environment around the river.

Jason Weiner, an attorney for Wishtoyo and the Ventura Coastkeeper program, said the current level of water diversion has unnecessarily deprived those living along the river, including residents of Oxnard, Santa Paula, Piru, Fillmore, Ventura and El Rio, of the full benefits it could offer.

The group said almost all of the water that would normally go into the Santa Clara River is instead diverted, "causing a sharp decline in the river's endangered steelhead trout" while also harming other animals and vegetation that have depended on the river.

"CAUSE believes that the youth and families in the communities of the Santa Clara River Valley have been unjustly deprived of the Santa Clara's environmental, recreational, and socioeconomic assets that are required to be held in trust by the state for their benefit," Cameron Yee, staff researcher and community organizing director at CAUSE, said in the news release.

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Dear Friends:

Please read my November E-Newsletter to learn about how I am working hard to represent you in the Capitol and at home in the 27th Senate District.

**11/14/2013**

<http://sd27.senate.ca.gov/sites/sd27.senate.ca.gov/files/outreach/sd27-201311-enewsletter.php#11>

### **Sustainability Award**



Congratulations to Charlie Caspary and Michael McReynolds, Co-Chairs of the Las Virgenes-Triunfo Joint Powers Authority, on the dedication of a new one-megawatt solar facility.

Each month I recognize a business, person or organization in my district dedicated to preserving our environment by living and working responsibly. This month I'm pleased to honor the Las Virgenes-Triunfo Joint Powers Authority for its commitment to the environment as demonstrated by the installation of a new one-megawatt solar facility adjacent to the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District Headquarters.



This is the kind of win-win project the Sustainability Award celebrates. Sen. Pavley enjoyed tearing the wrapper off the first of the solar panels.

These solar panels will provide the energy for pumping recycled water into our communities by the JPA. Estimates are that the installation will save JPA customers more than \$2 million over 20 years. The array, which will produce power sufficient for lighting 1,000 homes, has the capacity to offset more than 82 million pounds of carbon dioxide over its lifetime.

By making this investment in renewable energy for its operations, the Las Virgenes-Triunfo Joint Powers Authority has demonstrated admirable dedication to environmental sustainability. Congratulations to all involved on this successful project.



# Water talk to discuss berry

By staff reports

Ventura County Star 11/13/2013

The Museum of Ventura County's Agriculture Museum in Santa Paula will host a seminar on how water issues affect the county's most valuable crop at 3 p.m. Saturday.

"Is There Enough Water: Issues, Challenges and Solutions" for strawberry growers will be discussed at the museum, at 926 Railroad Ave. Speakers will include Tony Morgan, groundwater manager for the United Water Conservation District, and Dale Zurawski, water quality program manager for the Farm Bureau of Ventura County.

The cost of the symposium is included with the price of museum admission. Call 525-3100 to register.

The symposium and future talks are taking place in conjunction with the "Strawberry Fields Forever?" exhibit that opened this month and will run until Feb. 23. The other talks are scheduled for Jan. 25 and Feb. 8. The exhibit and programs are partly funded by a grant from the Thelma Hansen Trust and a sponsorship by the California Strawberry Commission.

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## 20 scientists urge halt to fracking

Ventura County Star 11/13/2013

Twenty of the nation's top scientists sent a letter to California's governor urging him to place a moratorium on the controversial practice of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking.

They say the practice increases pollution and runs counter to Gov. Jerry Brown's efforts to cut the state's emissions.

In the letter, the group argues that Brown can't say he wants to reduce global warming while also expanding fossil fuel development in California.

Wire services

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## Coastal panel delays action on Huntington Beach desalination plant

*Poseidon Resources offers to withdraw its application for further study after a long day of testimony and criticism from speakers and Coastal Commission members.*



Protesters pack a meeting of the Coastal Commission, which delayed action on a proposed desalination plant in Huntington Beach. (Scott Smeltzer, Huntington Beach Independent / November 13, 2013)

By Bettina Boxall

LA Times November 13, 2013

State coastal commissioners Wednesday postponed a vote on a proposed seawater desalination plant after concluding that they lacked the information to decide whether a key part of the proposal should be redesigned.

The postponement capped a long day of testimony at a packed Coastal Commission hearing in Newport Beach, where nearly 300 people signed up to speak for and against the long-planned project.

Poseidon Resources — a small, privately held company that is building the nation's largest seawater desalination facility in Carlsbad in San Diego County — wants to construct a similar plant next to the AES Huntington Beach Generating Station on Pacific Coast Highway.

The panel was most concerned about Poseidon's plans to use the power station's offshore intake to supply the desalter with about 127 million gallons of coastal water a day.

The commission staff said that open intakes would kill masses of plankton, fish eggs and larvae, and recommended that the company instead be required to construct subsurface intakes just below the seabed.

Poseidon countered that that technique would be prohibitively expensive, would not work on a large scale and would destroy 64 acres of seabed.

Some commissioners were clearly prepared to make Poseidon change the open ocean intakes to subsurface, saying that the company had failed to provide information documenting that the technique would not work at Huntington Beach.

"I don't believe this project is right," said Commissioner Dayna Bochco, adding that the open intakes would kill "a lot of sea life."

Others on the panel noted that the company had provided staff with only a few of the requested studies about offshore conditions.

A motion was made to continue the matter. Poseidon, sensing that things were not going its way, offered to withdraw its application to allow more time to perform the technical studies requested.

"We're not just going to go away," Poseidon Vice President Scott Maloni said after the panel voted to continue the matter.

He was not certain how long it would take to develop the information wanted, but predicted that it would be at least six months before the Huntington Beach proposal was back before the commission.

During hours of public testimony, labor officials and a number of elected officials cited jobs and a need for developing regional water supplies as they urged the commission to approve the proposal.

Environmentalists argued that Poseidon wanted to use 1950s intake technology that would harm the ocean environment and undermine a new state policy that is phasing out the use of seawater cooling by most coastal power plants, including the AES station.



## Desalination isn't the answer to California's water problem



The AES power plant in Huntington Beach; the Coastal Commission will vote on a proposal to build a large seawater desalination plant on part of the site. (Los Angeles Times / November 6, 2013)

LA Times November 13, 2013,

On Wednesday, the California Coastal Commission may green-light a massive desalination plant in Huntington Beach. If approved, it would be the second operation in the area. The nation's largest seawater-to-drinking-water facility is under construction in Carlsbad and is expected to begin delivering a potable product in 2016.

Coastal Commission staff have recommended major changes to the proposed Huntington Beach plant to prevent marine life from being sucked up with the seawater. Staff estimate the ocean intake pipe could pull in some 80 million fish larvae, eggs and tiny sea creatures from about 100 miles of the coastline. They want the applicant, Poseidon Resources, to build an intake system under the sea floor that would gently pull water through a layer of sand, filtering out the marine life. Poseidon has said that would be too expensive and would effectively kill the project.

Here's my recommendation. Shelve the proposal.

Ocean water desalination doesn't pencil out. It's far too expensive to produce potable water from seawater — about \$2,000 an acre foot, compared to about \$1,000 an acre foot for imported water. It requires a tremendous amount of energy to purify saltwater. And there are potentially serious environmental impacts from sucking in millions of gallons of ocean water and pumping the leftover brine back into the ocean.

That's why Long Beach shelved plans for a desalination project with the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. It's a lot cheaper to conserve water or recycle it.

In fact, Orange County has a model water recycling operation down the road in Fountain Valley, where sewage water is purified in a treatment plant and then pumped to large ponds to percolate into the groundwater supply. This costs about \$900 an acre foot and uses one-third the amount of electricity of a desalination plant, according to the Orange County Water District. And it reuses wastewater rather than sticking a straw in the ocean.

Climate change will affect the reliability of California's water supply. Utilities throughout the state should be thinking about how to use less water imported from Northern California and the Colorado River, and developing "homegrown" water through recycling and conservation. Desalination should be a last resort.

# Los Angeles Times

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2013



AL 8219 Los Angeles Times

## AN END TO THE MULE MARCH

Wrangler Lee Roesser heads up a procession of 100 mules as they make their way along Western Avenue from Brand Park in Glendale to the Los Angeles Equestrian Center in Burbank as part of the 100th anniversary celebration of the L.A. Aqueduct. The journey began in Lone Pine on Oct. 18.



# California firm Electro-Forming ordered to remove hazardous waste

*A judge orders Electro-Forming of Richmond, Calif., to remove large amounts of hazardous waste, including cyanide, after it is deemed a neighborhood health threat.*

By Jessica Garrison

LA Times November 12, 2013

A judge has ordered a metal plating company in Richmond, Calif., to remove large quantities of hazardous waste, including potentially deadly cyanide, after state officials argued that it poses a health threat to nearby residents.

Contra Costa County Superior Court Judge Judith Craddick gave Electro-Forming 14 days to dispose of some waste and 30 days for others.

"This company has failed to comply with the rules that protect public health of the neighborhood," said Reed Sato, the chief counsel for state Department of Toxic Substances Control, which sought the order. "The state had to stop this reckless behavior."

The state's action occurred after The Times asked the department and a state legislator last month about long-standing problems with the company's operation.

Department spokeswoman Tamma Adamek said regulators had acted swiftly and appropriately. Representatives from Electro-Forming could not be reached for comment.

In 2012, a former employee at the company told regulators that he had been dumping 55-gallon drums of hazardous waste from the plant down the laundry room sink at the home of the company's owner, according to court papers — an act that would be illegal.

In March of this year, investigators from the toxics department served a search warrant on the company and found a host of problems, including cyanide being stored near highly acidic solutions, which, if accidentally mixed, could form a deadly gas, according to court papers.

In August, state officials filed a civil complaint against Electro-Forming seeking fines and an order prohibiting the company's owner, Marion Patigler, from handling hazardous waste without court approval, among other things. That case has not yet been heard.

Officials sought the restraining order forcing the immediate removal of the dangerous cyanide and other substances this month only after state Assemblywoman Nancy

Skinner (D-Berkeley) began asking questions in response to inquiries from The Times in October.

"I'm concerned it took so long," said Skinner, who represents the neighborhood around the plant. "This company is a disaster waiting to happen."

Adamek, the agency spokeswoman, said regulators acted on their own initiative. With the rainy season approaching, officials were concerned that a 6,900-gallon tank containing cyanide solution at the facility might overflow during a storm "and then you've got cyanide running in the streets," she said.

State inspectors, accompanied by officials from Contra Costa County and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, visited the site Oct. 30 and "what we saw made us realize we had to act very quickly," Adamek said.

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# Fracking interests give water an extra spin

## *Industry handles drought by recycling*

By Ramit Plushnick-Masti Associated Press  
Ventura County Star 11/12/2013



ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTOS

A jar holding wastewater from hydraulic fracturing is held up to the light at a recycling site in Midland, Texas. Drillers have found a way to get by with much less water.

MIDLAND, Texas — W hen the rain stopped falling in Texas, the prairie grass yellowed, the soil cracked, and oil drillers were confronted with a crisis. After years of easy access to cheap, plentiful water, the land they prized for its vast petroleum wealth was starting to dry up.

At first the drought that took hold a few years ago seemed to threaten the economic boom that arose from hydraulic fracturing, a drilling method that uses high-pressure, chemical-laced water to free oil and natural gas trapped deep in underground rocks. But drillers have found a way to get by with much less water: They recycle it using systems that a short while ago they might have eyed with suspicion.

“This was a dramatic change to the practices that the industry used for many, many years,” said Paul Schlosberg, co-founder and chief financial officer of Water Rescue Services, the company that runs recycling services for Fasken Oil and Ranch in West Texas, which is 90 percent toward its goal of not using any fresh water for fracturing, or “fracking,” as it is commonly known.

Before the drought, “Water was prevalent, it was cheap, and it was taken for granted,” he added.

Just a few years ago, many drillers suspected that water recyclers were trying to sell an unproven idea designed to drain money from multimillion-dollar businesses. Now the



system is helping drillers use less fresh water and dispose of less wastewater. Recycling is rapidly becoming a popular and economic solution for a burgeoning industry.



Water gushes out of a drilling pipe as it is pulled up to be replaced with a fresh pipe at a hydraulic fracturing site in Midland. The drilling method known as fracking uses huge amounts of high-pressure, chemical-laced water to free oil and natural gas trapped deep in underground rocks. With fresh water not as plentiful, companies have been looking for ways to recycle their waste.

The change is happening so fast that regulators are racing to keep up and in some cases taking steps to make recycling easier for drillers.

Fracking operations require millions of gallons of relatively clean water. Each time a well is drilled, about 20 percent of the water eventually reemerges, but it is packed with contaminants from drilling chemicals and heavy metals picked up when the water hits oil. Until recently, that water was dumped as waste, often into injectionwells deep underground.

Many companies, each using slightly different technology and methods, offer ways of reusing that water. Some, like Schlosberg's Water Rescue Services, statically charge the water to allow particles of waste to separate and fall to the bottom. Those solids are taken to a landfill, leaving more than 95 percent of the water clean enough to be reused for fracking.

Other operators, such as Walton, Ky.-based Pure Stream, offer two technologies — one that cleans water so it can be reused in the oil patch and a more expensive system that

renders it clean enough to be dumped into rivers and lakes or used in agriculture.

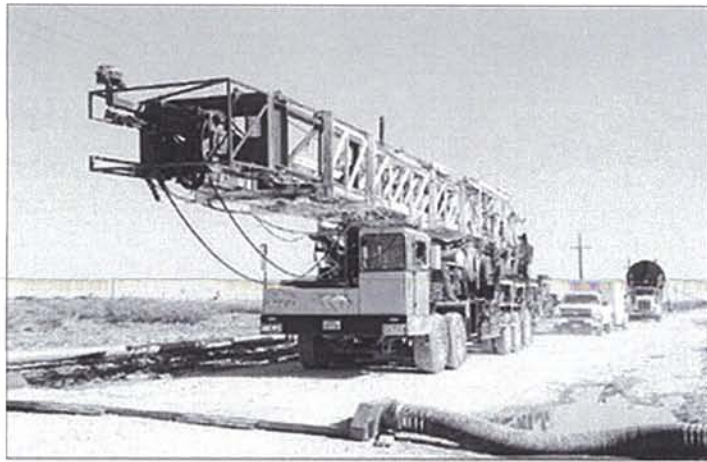
Todd Ennenga, Pure Stream's vice president of business development, said interest in the technology has doubled in the past year.

Some others advertise methods that leave behind no solid waste, eliminating the need to take anything to a landfill. A few companies insist they can frack without any water.

"It's really taken off," Ennenga said of recycling. Two years ago, he said, most operators were still vetting the different systems. These days, they have a plan and are saying, "We need to do this right now."

States are scrambling to draft regulations for the new recycling systems.

In Texas, requests for recycling permits rose from fewer than two a year in 2011 to 30 approved applications in fiscal year 2012. The Texas Railroad Commission, the agency that oversees oil and gas operations, revamped the rules in March, eliminating the need for drillers to get a permit if they recycle on their own lease or on a third party's property.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

A drilling rig used for hydraulic fracturing is trucked across a water hose at a drill site in Midland, Texas. Fracking operations require millions of gallons of relatively clean water. A few companies insist that they can frack without any water.

## Proposed desalination plant could harm ocean environment, report says

*Seawater desalination plant in Huntington Beach could significantly harm coastal waters unless major changes are made, panel says.*



The AES Huntington Beach Generating Station looms behind Magnolia Marsh. A proposed seawater desalination plant in the city could significantly harm parts of the Southern California ocean environment unless substantial changes are made in its design and operation, according to the staff of the state Coastal Commission. A commission vote on the project is expected this week. (Mark Boster, Los Angeles Times / November 6, 2013)

By Bettina Boxall

LA Times November 10, 2013

A proposed seawater desalination plant in Huntington Beach could significantly harm parts of the Southern California ocean environment unless substantial changes are made in its design and operation, according to the staff of the state Coastal Commission.

A staff report prepared for this week's commission vote on the project highlights the potential downside of large-scale efforts to turn the salty water of the Pacific Ocean into drinking supplies for coastal California.

"There are ways to do desal in a fairly environmentally benign way," said Tom Luster, an environmental scientist with the commission. "This one will have some fairly significant adverse effects."

Poseidon Resources, a small, privately held company based in Stamford, Conn., first proposed the Huntington Beach desalter, and a similar one now under construction in Carlsbad in San Diego County, in 1998. Both would be the largest seawater-to-drinking-water operations in the country, each producing enough purified water every year to supply roughly 100,000 households.



Poseidon intended to avoid the expense and environmental problems of building and operating ocean intake and discharge systems by locating its facilities next to power stations and tapping into the huge volumes of seawater used to cool the generating equipment.

But that strategy ran into hurdles in 2010 when the State Water Resources Control Board directed most coastal generating stations to phase out seawater cooling, which every year kills massive amounts of plankton at the bottom of the marine food web along with billions of fish eggs and larvae.

When the AES Huntington Beach Generating Station on Pacific Coast Highway switches to a different cooling system within the next five years, Poseidon's proposed plant would continue using the power operation's offshore outfall and open ocean intake pipe, pulling in about 127 million gallons of coastal water every day.

The commission staff estimates that would annually suck in more than 80 million fish larvae, eggs and invertebrates along 100 miles of the Southern California coast, including a number of Marine Protected Areas.

Poseidon could largely avoid such harm, the staff says, by constructing intakes, called infiltration galleries, just below the ocean floor that imperceptibly draw seawater through a few feet of sand into perforated pipes, keeping out the tiny organisms that form the foundation of marine life.

Company officials argue that infiltration galleries have been used only by much smaller desalination plants around the world and are unproven and prohibitively expensive for operations the size of Huntington Beach.

If the commission adopts the staff recommendations, it would kill the Huntington Beach project and set "a terrible precedent that would have a chilling effect on seawater desalination in California," said Poseidon Vice President Scott Maloni.

Far from being environmentally benign, he said subsurface intakes would require the excavation of more than 60 acres of seabed as well as the installation of beach pumping equipment, and would use more energy than an open ocean intake.

The commission staff also says Poseidon needs to cut salinity levels of the brine that is left over from the desalting process and dumped back into the ocean. Poseidon intends to dilute the hyper-saline brine with a portion of the intake water. But the staff contends the diluted discharge would still be salty enough to hurt marine life.

To offset the environmental effects of the Huntington Beach operation, Poseidon proposes to restore about 12 acres of coastal wetlands, an amount the commission staff insists is insufficient.

The company is restoring 55 acres of marine wetlands to compensate for the Carlsbad plant, which will use more seawater than Huntington Beach and will continue to draw directly from the Pacific after the neighboring power station converts to a new cooling system.

The commission didn't require subsurface intakes in Carlsbad, Luster said, because they would destroy important rocky reef and hard-bottom habitat not found along the Huntington Beach shore.

The outcome of Poseidon's showdown with the influential Coastal Commission staff is likely to set the bar for future desalination projects, a number of which are being considered up and down California.

"This is how the commission communicates how a proposal for a desalination plant will get approved," said Susan Jordan, director of the California Coastal Protection Network, one of nine conservation groups that have urged the commission to reject the Huntington Beach proposal as it now stands.

Three years ago, the Huntington Beach City Council approved the land-based portion of the project. But most members of a new council elected in 2012 oppose the proposal. "The majority of the council would like to see this project stopped for a whole host of reasons," said Mayor Connie Boardman.

She cited the environmental effects and also questioned the need for the project, which would produce some of the most expensive drinking supplies in the state. "Why would anyone buy their water?" Boardman asked.

Although the Orange County Water District supports the desalter, Poseidon has yet to sign up any firm customers for the Huntington Beach project.

Cost is a leading reason why most experts don't expect seawater desalination to play more than a relatively small role in California's future water supply. The reverse osmosis process commonly employed to purify ocean water requires a great deal of energy, driving up the cost, and expensive distribution systems must be constructed to carry supplies inland.

It was easier for Poseidon to line up customers for the Carlsbad operation because San Diego County is at the end of the line for Northern California water and it lacks the groundwater supplies that Orange County enjoys.



COMMENTARY

## SAVING AHMANSON RANCH

### A very rewarding bus trip



The writer poses with actor Martin Sheen.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF JANNA ORKNEY

JANNA ORKNEY GUEST COLUMNIST  
Ventura County Star 11/10/2013

Lobbying developer Washington Mutual on its home turf made sense to me. I very much wanted the bank to sell Ahmanson Ranch to the state for parkland instead of developing it into 3,050 homes with 400,000 square feet of commercial buildings.

Although I was working with others locally to pressure WaMu, I knew that the bank's all-important bottom line probably mattered more to it than our local concern.

That's why I said yes to an invitation to ride the Rally for the Ranch bus up to Seattle in spring 2002. The goal of our trip was to ask WaMu shareholders to support turning the rolling hills of Ahmanson Ranch into a park.

While I said I would hop on the bus, it was with some trepidation. I didn't know anyone else going, but finally decided that I trusted that Rob Reiner's Rally for the Ranch organization would do the trip right and they did.

Our traveling group met in front of a WaMu branch early one morning. After throwing my bags on the bus, I had my picture taken with Martin Sheen. What a thrill!

We then started our bus trek to Seattle, stopping along the way to demonstrate in front of WaMu banks in Thousand Oaks, Santa Barbara and Portland, Ore. The morning of the shareholders meeting in Seattle, I was with a group that stayed by our bus, parked near the theater where the meeting would be held. Groups of policemen, with billy clubs, were taking quite an interest in us.

However, everything went smoothly. We handed out fliers to shareholders, mostly older couples, and Rob Reiner spoke to them from a podium near the theater entrance. Many



did a double-take when they saw him!

We got excellent press coverage and I believe this contributed to the saving of Ahmanson Ranch.

The trip certainly contributed to my learning. I had a crash course in how to work constructively for change.

I watched celebrities using their fame for public good and learned from other activists on the bus like Mayor Janice Lee of Calabasas and Joe Behar of the West Valley, along with Rally for the Ranch folks Chad Griffin and Hunter Allen.

The trip also eventually inspired me to run for a board seat on my local sanitation district, where I still serve. Besides, it was a busload of fun!

Janna Orkney, of Oak Park, is Triunfo Sanitation District board member.

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## PUBLIC CELEBRATION PLANNED

To mark the 10-year anniversary of the state of California purchasing Ahmanson Ranch, those behind the years-long effort are hosting a public celebration next Sunday at 1 p.m. The event will be at 25345 Mureau Road in Calabasas. Saving Ahmanson Ranch, slated for 3,5050 homes, 400,000 square feet of commercial space and two golf courses, from development was a true grass-roots effort. Six people— who where instrumental in protecting the area now known as the Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Preserve — recount their journey today on these pages.

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## It really does take a village to save a ranch

It takes a village to save a ranch. Specifically, it took an amazing team of environmental activists, homeowners' groups, a committed Hollywood celebrity with media savvy, and local, state and federal elected officials, park supporters and state agencies.

In 2000, I won a surprising grass-roots campaign to become the Assembly member representing the west San Fernando Valley, Las Virgenes and nearly all of the Malibu Creek watershed. I was also appointed to chair the budget subcommittee on resources.

As an Agoura Hills resident, acquisition of Ahmanson Ranch was always on my mind. Now I was in a position to help make it happen.

To focus the interest of state agencies in this property, my office held a hearing in Woodland Hills in 2002 to highlight the need for acquiring the property — endangered species, massive traffic implications, downstream water quality impacts, wildlife corridors, etc.

Joining me were state Sen. Sheila Kuehl, Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Rep. Brad Sherman, Los Angeles City Councilman Dennis Zine and others.

Meanwhile, I had the opportunity to work with Joe Caves, a Sacramento consultant who was putting together Propositions 40 and 50, two state resource bond measures for the November 2002 ballot. Joe knew of the strong interest we all had in acquiring Ahmanson Ranch, assuming that we had the money and a willing seller.

We made sure that in the language of Proposition 50 was \$300 million specifically designated toward watersheds and wetlands in Los Angeles or Ventura counties. Thanks to the voters, it passed and we now had a funding source.

I then attended a dinner that included media executive Chris Albrecht and actor/producer Rob Reiner. Both were immediately on board to convince developer Washington Mutual to become a willing seller.

They founded "Rally to Save the Ranch" to help raise the profile of the campaign, bolstered by the ground efforts of Tsilah Berman and local groups like Mary Wiesbrock's Save Open Space, and organized a bus ride to take the cause directly to Washington Mutual headquarters in Seattle.



I did not go on the bus ride to Seattle, but did picket Washington Mutual's local bank.

The rest is history. Washington Mutual finally became a willing seller. Proposition 50 provided the \$150 million to make the purchase. And here we are, 10 years later, about to celebrate an amazing journey. Timing, the voters and, again, a committed group of citizens made the difference.

State Sen. Fran Pavley, of Agoura Hills, represents the 27th Senate District.

**SEN. FRAN PAVLEY**  
**GUEST COLUMNIST**

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## Real Estate & Home Improvement

### Cash Incentives Offered for Water Efficiency in Dry Season

The California Department of Water Resources has issued a statement that if there is a third consecutive dry winter season, water supplies throughout the state could be significantly impacted.

The early rains of the 2012-13 winter season brought much promise to the state's water supply picture, but that optimism was dashed with unusually dry weather from January onward. As a result, reservoirs did not fill to normal levels and the lack of snow in the Sierra watershed did not fully replenish supplies used in 2012. As a result, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) reduced its allocation to contract agencies for the current "water year" to 35%. The warm weather of 2013 has placed an additional strain on supplies, leaving most of the state's major reservoirs well below normal levels at this time of year.

Las Virgenes Municipal Water District is entirely dependent upon drinking water supplies purchased from the Metropolitan Water District; a portion of that supply is imported from Northern California. "What happens in the Sierra watershed has a direct effect on Southern California," said David W. Pedersen, LVMWD's General Manager. "We'll be monitoring this winter's precipitation very closely."

Pedersen emphasized that LVMWD is not declaring a shortage at this time, largely due to the significant investment Metropolitan has made in local storage over the last ten years. "But we need customers to review their water-use practices, especially their outdoor water use, which tends to be the largest component of most single family residences."

LVMWD currently offers cash incentives for customers to install newer High Efficiency Toilets, water-efficient clothes washers, weather-based irrigation controllers, and water-efficient irrigation sprinkler heads. The District is considering additional incentives to help customers achieve higher water-use efficiency. Customers can check on available rebate programs and qualification criteria at the District's website, [www.LVMWD.com](http://www.LVMWD.com).

The dry conditions have also forced LVMWD to add recycled water to Malibu Creek in order to provide habitat for downstream threatened species, notably the steelhead trout. Pedersen said the District has had to augment the creek flow for several months, being careful to provide sufficient water for the habitat pools but not so much that it reaches Malibu Lagoon. "It's a delicate balance,"

he said. "We would prefer to be sending that recycled water back to the community to be used for irrigation, but protecting threatened species is important, and a requirement that's written into our operating permit." The District also reminds customers of the following water conservation measures that are already in effect:

- Irrigation is prohibited between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.

- Irrigation may not run off the property into streets, gutters or onto adjacent properties.

- The washing down of sidewalks, parking areas and driveways is not permitted, unless an approved water broom is used.

- A trigger nozzle is required on hoses used for home car washing.

- Irrigation may not occur during periods of rain or in the 24 hours following rainfall of an inch or more.

- Hotels and motels must give multi-night guests the option to retain towels and linens during their stay.

Repeated violations of the policies can result in fines up to \$250 or even result in the termination of service.

Mr. Pedersen added, "The most recent drought saw our customers reduce District-wide water use by better than 20 percent. We ask that customers rediscover their water-saving mindset."