

Splash

Metro Water
Newsletter
Spring 2011

Metro Buys CAP Recharge Project on "Credits" Instead of Cash

Metro Water District now owns the Avra Valley Recharge Project. After nearly a six year effort, Metro Water acquired the Avra Valley Recharge Project from the Central Arizona Project by transferring 12,815 acre-feet of recharge credits rather than paying \$1,730,000 in cash.

Metro's ownership gives Metro Water a reliable long-term way to recharge up to 11,000 acre-feet per year of its CAP supply to meet mandated state requirements to replenish groundwater rather than solely relying on storage agreements with local farmers to use CAP water. Metro Water intends to recharge most of its CAP allocation of 13,460 acre-feet at the Avra Valley Recharge Project and then eventual recovery of the stored water and move it via a pipeline to be blended with groundwater pumped in its Northwest service area.

For the Central Arizona Project, the transaction lets CAP acquire needed water credits to help offset its groundwater replenishment obligations for new subdivisions built in the greater Tucson metro area.

"Owning Avra Valley Recharge Project gives Metro water greater control over its future," said Mark Stratton, Metro's General Manager. "We now have a certain and secure place each year to store our renewable supply."

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Road Improvements Costly for Metro Water

Metro Water's Board of Directors approved the issuance of \$6.6 million in revenue bonds to secure financing for additional waterline relocations that are required due to the numerous County road projects funded by the RTA planned within the next three years. The District has already completed the first project, La Cañada Drive from Calle Concordia to Ina with funding from the waterline relocation fee established by the Board in June 2009. The Board decided to issue the revenue bonds as the best way to finance the necessary waterline relocations for the remaining projects and meet the County's aggressive road construction schedule.

When these roadway projects were first identified, they were spread out over a somewhat reasonable time frame that the District thought it could more easily absorb the waterline relocation costs. However, Pima County has accelerated its schedule and has identified up to five projects within the District service area in 2011 to 2013.

Each of these road projects requires the District to relocate its waterlines that are within the right-of-way. The estimated cost to the District is \$6.6 million; however, the exact amount will not be known until the County finalizes the road designs so the District knows exactly which waterlines must be moved. In January, the Board awarded the construction contract for the Magee Road, La Canada to Shannon waterline relocation at the cost of \$2.0 million.

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Road Improvements Costly

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“We issued \$6.6 million in revenue bonds because paying \$6.6 million in less than three years directly from our budget is not financially sound or even feasible,” explained Bryan Foulk, Chairman of Metro’s Board.

The aggressive schedule means much of the District’s staff resources are focused on these waterline relocation projects. Engineering staff are working on the construction design plans and coordinating with the County’s road plans. Utility staff is doing preparatory work in the roads by exercising valves and other work to minimize possible water outages during construction.

“All of us in the Northwest look forward to improved roads but the County’s requirement for utilities to relocate their own utility lines without help from the RTA is placing a tough financial burden on Metro Water,” added Foulk.

The five County road projects (in addition to the La Canada project already completed) requiring Metro to relocate its waterlines are 1) Magee Road from La Cañada to Shannon; 2) La Cañada Road from Ina to River Road; 3) La Cholla Blvd from Magee to Overton; 4) Magee Road from Shannon to Thornydale; and 5) Magee Road from La Cañada to Oracle. ■

Landscape Watering Advice

In February, you received with your water bill a brochure entitled *Landscape Watering Advice – A Guide to a Green, Water Wise Yard*. We hope you took the time to review it to find out how efficient outdoor watering can save you time and money. You can also find it on our website: www.metrowater.com.

One of the tips for an efficient low water landscape is to use low-water using plants. This is the time of year that many of us like to get out in our yard and create. Perhaps we want to plant something new or replace a plant that did not make it through the harsh cold winter. The main points to remember are:

- ~ Many beautiful, colorful plants use little water, provide year round color and can reduce the need for maintenance.
- ~ Select plants that once established will not need irrigation.
- ~ Appropriate placement of plants helps reduce energy bills.
- ~ Grouping plants of common water usage makes for easier care.

When you are at the nursery, look at the label or ask for assistance to be certain the plant does need little water and can handle the sun. If you want great ideas for low water and low maintenance plants, come visit Metro’s demonstration garden or visit Tohono Chul Park. ■



The Great Freeze



HOUSE VALVE / SHUT-OFF VALVE

The great freeze of February 2011 reminded us all of the importance of being prepared even when you think Arctic temperatures would never happen in Tucson. We know many of our customers went through some rough times with frozen pipes or worse - broken pipes. We would like to offer a couple of reminders so we all can be better prepared:

Where is my Meter? The meter to your house is located near the street curb in front of your house or in the alley behind the house. It is a rectangular box in the ground with a metal cover. The meter tells Metro Water District how much water flows through it, which means how much water you use. The meter is owned by Metro Water District. You are responsible for the pipes and water from the meter to your house and throughout your property.

If you need to turn off water to your house, please turn it off at the water shut-off valve at the house, NOT at the water meter. If you need the water turned off to your whole property, please call Metro Water District at 575-8100 and we will turn off the water at the meter.

Where is my Water shut-off valve? Most shut-off valves for water will be located on the front or rear of the house. It is usually attached to a pipe that rises from the ground and enters the house through an exterior wall. If you know where the water meter is for your house, either on the front of the street or in the back in an alley, then usually the main water valve will be on the same side of the house but near the house structure. It is important to know where your water shut-off valve is in case you need to quickly turn off the water to the whole house. ■

Metro Buys CAP Recharge Project on “Credits” *(Continued from page 1)*

Metro Water has been allowing farmers to use its CAP water at groundwater savings facilities in the Marana and Red Rock areas, and in return Metro has gained recharge credits to offset groundwater pumpage in its Northwest service area. This has been a positive relationship; however, there is no guarantee that the farmers will be able to continue to take Metro's water. This became evident a few years ago when storage capacity at Red-Rock Groundwater Savings Facility was threatened by a proposed switching yard for Union Pacific Railroad.

“Since 1998, we have been putting our CAP water to use and gaining credits,” said Stratton, “Metro was able to purchase the Avra Valley Recharge Project without impacting our budget.”

Metro Water along with the Towns of Oro Valley and Marana and Flowing Wells Irrigation District has been working together on how to best put to use their respective allocations of Central Arizona Project water. Metro decided that recharge would be an efficient and cost effective initial treatment process compared to the expense of building a water treatment plant. By recharging CAP water at Avra Valley Recharge Project, the water could be recovered from nearby wells and the water then moved through pipes to be blended with the groundwater in Metro's Main service area. Metro Water is hoping to still collaborate with Oro Valley and Marana on the construction of the future pipeline.

Metro has a long history with Avra Valley Recharge Project. CAP, Metro Water, and BKW Farms worked cooperatively to have the Avra Valley Recharge Project constructed in 1996. It was the first spreading basin recharge project in Southern Arizona and provided much information to move forward with the other recharge projects in the region. ■



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Office Hours:
 Monday - Thursday
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Board of Directors:

Bryan Foulk, Chair
 Dan M. Offret, Vice Chair
 Jim Doyle, Member
 Helen Ireland, Member
 Judy Scrivener, Member

Spring Public Board Meetings (6:00 pm):

March 14, 2011
 April 11, 2011
 May 9, 2011

New Website!

Metro Water District is launching a new website to give you better access to information about your water. Please watch for it to appear shortly after March 15, 2011

www.metrowater.com

CURRENT DROUGHT RESPONSE:

STAGE 1 ALERT

STAGE 2 WARNING

STAGE 3 EMERGENCY

STAGE 4 CRISIS

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