

eWATERLINE

MARCH 2024

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Jason Phillips
Chief Executive Officer

As you know, the political and regulatory headwinds that western water users have faced over the past three decades have been fierce. From time to time, this reality has stoked regional, statewide, and federal disagreements and feuds. Having the ability to work through those disputes, find common ground, and continue to move forward requires having visionary and courageous people intimately involved. Always.

I have had the privilege of serving on the Advisory Committee of the Family Farm Alliance for several years. The Alliance is a powerful advocate for family farmers, ranchers, irrigation districts, and allied industries in seventeen Western states, and is focused primary on one mission – To ensure the availability of reliable, affordable irrigation water supplies to Western farmers and ranchers.

During my time on the Advisory Committee, I have had the honor of working alongside Pat O’Toole, who served as the Alliance President for almost 20 years. During his time in that position, without question, the interests of western water have benefited greatly. His demeanor, style, and passion were as effective and influential as any water leader in the country.

I am deeply saddened to report to you that Pat recently passed away after suffering from a stroke in February. We will miss his leadership, passion, and most of all, his friendship. Our thoughts and prayers are with the O’Toole family during this difficult time. Below is an excerpt from a recent news report on Pats passing.

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FRIANT WATER AUTHORITY 2024 ANNUAL MEETING

The Friant Water Authority Annual Meeting will take place **Thursday, May 16, 2024** from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the San Joaquin Winery in Madera, CA.

This free public event includes dinner, music, water education, and a special musical performance by Carson and Caiden Wallace. RSVP at the link below.



[CLICK HERE TO RSVP!](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

APR 15
FWA Executive Committee Meeting
Lindsay, CA
[CLICK FOR INFO](#)

APR 22
FWA Finance Committee Meeting
Lindsay, CA
[CLICK FOR INFO](#)

APR 25
FWA Board of Directors Meeting
Visalia, CA
[CLICK FOR INFO](#)

MAY 13
FWA Executive Committee Meeting
Lindsay, CA
[CLICK FOR INFO](#)

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Patrick O'Toole, the long-serving president of the Family Farm Alliance who was seen by many as the voice of Western irrigated agriculture, has died at 75.

"Pat was a proud Irish warrior with a big heart and a good head," said Alliance Vice-President Don Schwindt (COLORADO). "I already miss his phone calls and I will never forget him. He will be an integral part of my life until I join him in my final journey."

Mr. O'Toole passed away Sunday afternoon at a hospice in Grand Junction, surrounded by his family. Mr. O'Toole suffered a stroke on February 13 at his family's Ladder Ranch, in the Little Snake River Valley on the Wyoming/Colorado border. The ranch has been in his wife Sharon's family since 1881.

Pat and Sharon met while students at Colorado State University, where Pat graduated with a philosophy degree. They eventually took over management of the ranch and liked to tell people they raise "cattle, sheep, horses, dogs and children."

Mr. O'Toole leaves three children and six grandchildren.

Pat O'Toole may be best remembered for his passion for conservation and love of the land, especially in the Little Snake River Valley. The O'Toole family and Ladder Ranch were the recipients of the distinguished 2014 Wyoming Leopold Environmental Stewardship Award.

Mr. O'Toole's interest in water intersected with the Family Farm Alliance while he was serving on the Clinton administration's Western Water Policy Review Advisory Commission. Mr. O'Toole was the only commissioner representing Western irrigated agriculture and, in the end, refused to sign the report, opting instead to prepare a dissenting alternative report.

A former member of Wyoming's House of Representatives, he was a member of the Alliance's Board of Directors since 1998 and was named as the organization's fifth President in March 2005.

"Pat became Alliance president, and I was hired on at the same time – on my 40th birthday, 19 years ago," said Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen (OREGON). "Since that time, there was rarely a day when I wasn't on the phone with him. We fought some tough battles together, and we helped forge solutions together. He was one of the great mentors and great friends of my life."

In his time as President, the Alliance was asked to testify before Congressional committees 98 times. Mr. O'Toole represented the Alliance at Capitol Hill hearings over 20 times.

"Pat was an articulate speaker," said Mr. Schwindt. "His words will leave a lasting legacy."

He was known for his unique ability to work in a holistic and broad-based manner across philosophical and party lines.

"Pat was a deep thinker. He tried to absorb diverse perspectives as he settled on how to advocate for agricultural interests," said Mr. Schwindt.

Rest in Peace, Pat.



MEET THE FRIANT FAMILY

KENT H. STEPHENS

Director

Kern-Tulare Water District

Kent first became a director for the Friant Water Users Authority, the predecessor of the Friant Water Authority in 1998 representing Kern-Tulare Water District as its President. He also serves as chair of the Board's Executive Committee. He became a director of the Kern-Tulare Water District board in 1987. As a young boy, he first irrigated on the family farm in the Modesto Irrigation District. Following graduation from Brigham Young University in 1973 with a B.S. in Accounting Kent joined the accounting firm Arthur Andersen & Co., San Jose, California Office Tax Division servicing various agricultural clients in the state and nation including the Salinas and San Joaquin Valleys. He obtained his CPA certificate in 1976 and the following year joined with Marko Zaninovich, Inc., a fourth-generation farming family and affiliated entities farm in several Friant and state water districts. Kent currently serves as Director, Corporate Secretary and Chief Financial Officer at Marko Zaninovich, Inc.



KENT H. STEPHENS

SKYE GRASS

General Manager

Kern-Tulare Water District

Skye Grass has served as General Manager of Kern-Tulare Water District (KTWD) since 2023. Skye's adventure in water began in 2009, after relocating from the Bay Area to Bakersfield to serve as Office Manager of KTWD. Holding a B.A. degree in Accounting from Cal State Hayward, Skye quickly began to learn the value of water through this new role. In 2019, Skye received an MBA from Cal State Bakersfield. Under the tutelage of her predecessor, Steve Dalke, Skye continued to learn the way water moves in the San Joaquin Valley and the needs of the District's growers. Skye enjoys the complexities of California water and the new challenges and opportunities that each year brings. No two years are the same and she has continues to learn new ways to deliver water to KTWD, expanding upon the prior year's accomplishments. In addition to working for KTWD, Skye has served on the Kern River Watershed Coalition Board since 2013 and the Cross Valley Advisory Board since 2019.



SKYE GRASS

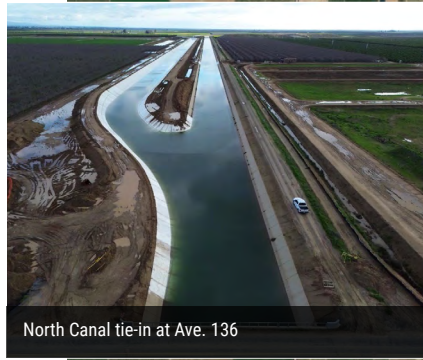
Skye lives in Bakersfield with her husband and two kids, ages 15 and 12. She spends a lot of time watching her son play hockey and her daughter ride horses. When not traveling for work or sporting events she enjoys spending time at home with family and reading.

FRIANT-KERN CANAL MIDDLE REACH CAPACITY CORRECTION CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS UPDATE

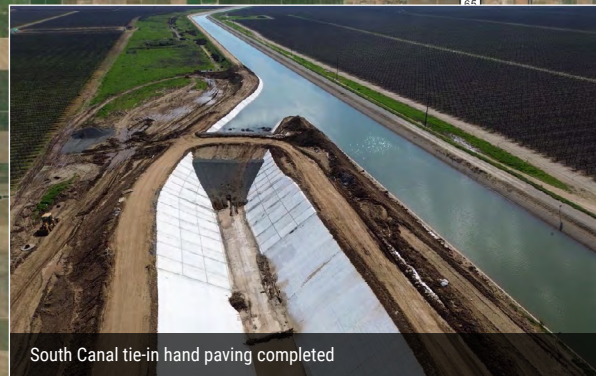
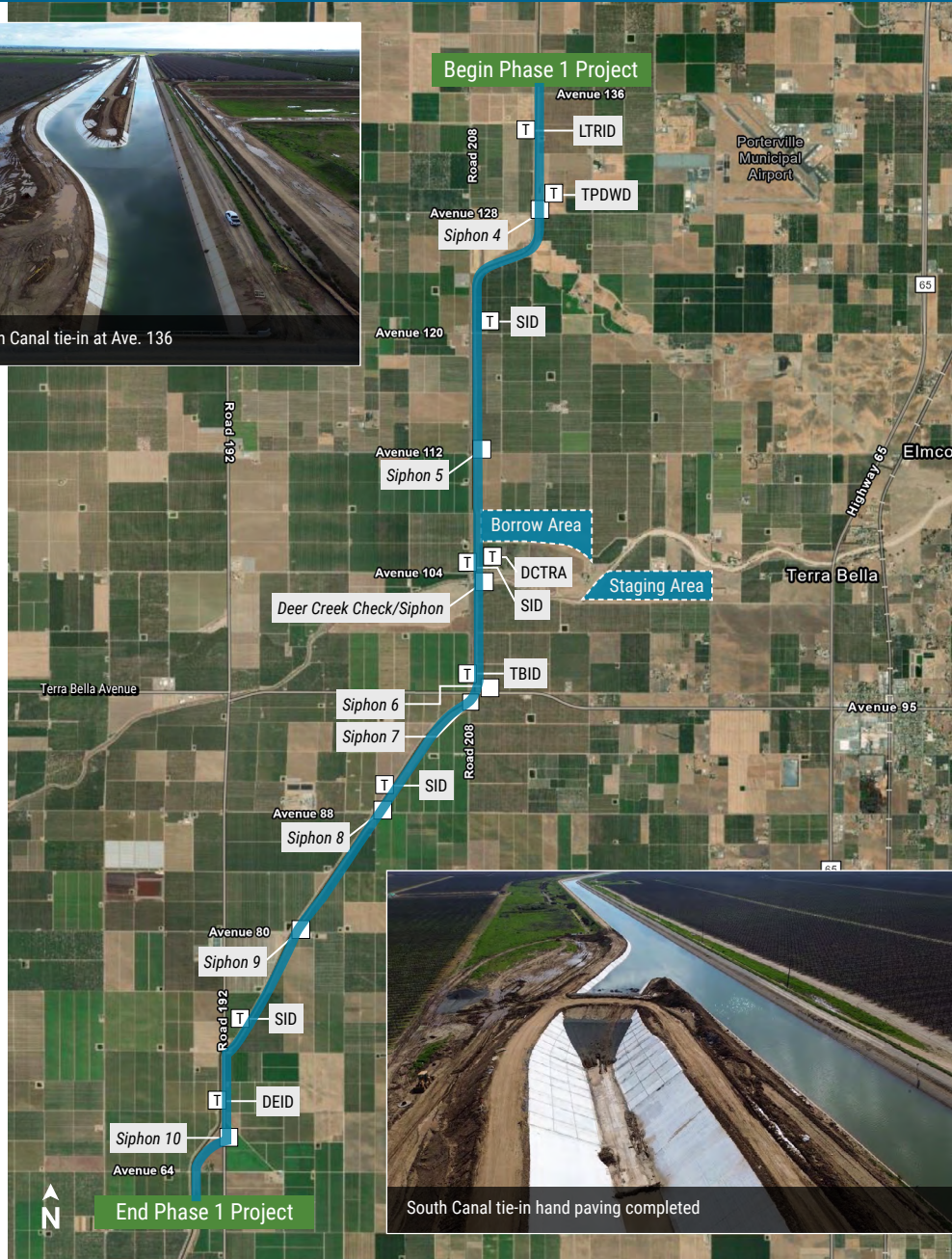
The weather was mostly cloudy with eight significant rain days and seven days with light showers that impacted the canal trimming and paving activities, canal sealing, roadwork and earthwork. All segments of the embankment are at approximately 99 % complete. Earthen embankment freeboard was placed in the northern segment of the alignment. Machine trimming and paving operations continued with periodic pauses due to rain and saturated subgrade conditions. Hand paving lining was placed at various locations along the alignment and joint sealing was conducted on completed segments.

Ave. 80 & Ave 88: Canal trimming and lining completed on canal left between Ave 80. and Ave. 88; work conducted on Ave 80 irrigation pipelines. **Deer Creek Check Structure:** Grouted gate seals and stop-log guides for gates and weir; geotextile fabric, riprap bedding and riprap installed; grading finished; site cleanup. **Ave 95:** Siphon leak testing completed. **All turnouts:** Work continued including installation of ladders, gratings, trash racks, flow meters; grouting stop-log guides; installing falsework/formwork for top wall/deck; pipe pressure testing. **Terra Bella Weir:** Completed gate and outfall pipe installation; stop-log guides installed; work conducted on TBID pipeline. **TBID, Casa Blanca, DCTRA turnouts:** Electrical and instrumentation work conducted including completion of insulation resistance and grouting tests; and start-up and dry checks conducted at Casa Blanca turnout.

Biological construction monitoring continued. To-date, no evidence has been found to indicate the presence of kit fox or burrowing owls within the work area.



North Canal tie-in at Ave. 136



South Canal tie-in hand paving completed



Canal trimming equipment north of Ave. 80



Canal machine paving near Ave. 74 bridge

"FKC Middle Reach Capacity Correction Construction Progress Update" Continued



Existing and new Deer Creek Check Structures looking northwards



Deer Creek Wasteway and Check Structure and DCTRA and SID-S2 turnouts



Earthen freeboard placement and compaction



Siphon leak test in progress at Ave. 95

IN THE NEWS

"Friant Water Authority and Arvin-Edison Water Storage District file suit against Eastern Tule GSA," Valley Voice, March 8, 2024.

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"Infrastructure the main topic at Kern's annual water summit," SJV Water, March 7, 2024.

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"If Trump gets convicted, there is only one way for Republican lawmakers to react" The Fresno Bee, March 8, 2024.

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"Lake Oroville Community Update," Department of Water Resources, March 1, 2024.

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