

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Jason Phillips
Chief Executive Officer

Federal Legislation Focused on Western Water Needs

As national and regional news reminds the public daily, the Western United States is still in the depths of a severe drought, our elected officials in Washington are working diligently to propose laws and policies that might provide relief for farmers, communities, and species. In late September, Congressman David Valadao introduced the Working to Advance Tangible and Effective Reforms (WATER) for California Act. Among other things, this bill would enshrine in Federal law the 2019 Biological Opinions on the Central Valley Project's the long-term water operations; reauthorizes the water storage program established under the Water Infrastructure Investments for the Nation (WIIN) Act of 2016; and deems "complete" key portions of the 1992 Central Valley Project Improvement Act. Additionally, Senator Alex Padilla, along with several other Members, have been contemplating a land repurposing bill aimed at reducing water use under SGMA. We appreciate the interest in ensuring landowners are compensated if their land must go out of production due to drought or regulations. However, we believe that these "worst-case" opportunities should only be pursued after other efforts to provide alternative surface water supplies have been examined and exhausted, such as water transfers, water supply enhancement projects, or other demand management actions.

Newsom Administration Releases Water Strategy

On August 11, Governor Newsom held a press conference in Antioch to announce the release of the Administration's **strategy** to deal with one of the largest crises facing California: water shortages. After several drought years, the possibility that the drought may continue for another

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HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FRIANT-KERN CANAL DOCUMENTED ALONGSIDE NEW INTERACTIVE VIRTUAL TOUR MAP

Few in the San Joaquin Valley dispute the importance of the Friant-Kern Canal, the 153-mile-long water supply artery to more than a quarter-million residents and a million acres of fertile farmland. Fewer still recognize its place in history. In August, FWA released an interactive webpage at www.friantwater.org/fkc that is focused on the existing canal features, its operational and economic contribution to California, and a detailed historic retrospective of a structure that is now eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Developed by FWA in collaboration with the Bureau of Reclamation and project consultants, the webpage is a key component of the **Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) for the Friant-Kern Canal Middle Reach Capacity Correction Project**, a report prepared as a mitigation measure pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Section 106 requires a federal agency to identify and assess the effects its actions may have on historic buildings and structures and, if deemed to have an adverse effect, the agency is often required to complete mitigation measures. Preparation of a HAER is a typical mitigation measure under Section 106. For the Friant-Kern Canal, the purpose of the HAER is to record the historic and existing condition of the facility before it is altered by major construction.

Funded through a cost-reimbursement agreement with Reclamation, the new webpage and HAER provide a useful and lasting public reference guide to facilities of the federal Central Valley Project (CVP) and its Friant Division. An important function of the HAER is to conduct a formal and professional historical review to preserve the story of the people, places and decisions that occurred during the canal's construction in the 1940s. In addition to a link to the 92-page HAER, the webpage features a virtual and interactive tour map that includes 40 locations along the Friant-Kern Canal, Madera Canal, and throughout the CVP. Coupled to Google Maps, visitors can zoom to major features and review facility descriptions, high-resolution photos, technical specifications, and geolocations. Combined, this webpage represents the most detailed and precise account of the Friant-Kern Canal's history for future generations.

Virtual Tour Map

- Kings River Complex
- Kings River Siphon Outlet
- Piedra Road Bridge
- Canal Lining
- Jensen Avenue Turnout
- Sand Creek Complex
- Dodge Avenue Complex
- Kaweah River Complex
- Rocky Hill Complex
- Five-Barrel Siphon
- Fifth Avenue Complex
- Tule River Complex
- Timber Operating Bridge
- Downstream Friant-Kern Canal
- Deer Creek Complex
- Road 192 Bridge

Kaweah River Complex
35.371896325906, -119.1000598/410/3
Location: Milepost 71.44

From upstream to downstream, the Kaweah River check structure complex consists of a concrete-block recorder house, a wastewater, a check structure, siphon inlet and outlet structure, as well as a second concrete-block recorder house. The photo shows an upstream aerial view of the Kaweah River Complex.

Photo Source: Schäff Photo | Stephen Schäffer

Partial list of the Friant-Kern Canal locations and structures documented on the virtual tour map.

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year is weighing on everyone's minds. The strategy highlights some alarming information on future water supply shortages facing California and forecasts a 10% reduction in supplies statewide due to climate change. It is especially disheartening to see the strategy's predictions on the future of farming in California acknowledging that on our current trajectory, the San Joaquin Valley is likely to see another 500,000 – 1,000,000 acres fallowed in the coming decades. As our State's leaders look to begin implementing the strategy, I would urge them not to assume that massive land retirement is inevitable; it's only inevitable if we fail to secure the water supplies so critically needed to support the state's food production. High food prices and food shortages are already here and stand to worsen in the coming years if the acreage loss the strategy predicts becomes reality. Western Growers and the California Farm Water Coalition have put together some **very impactful videos** highlighting some of the real impacts occurring due to a lack of drought preparedness.

In response to the strategy, the Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley sent a **letter to the Newsom Administration** providing Valley-specific feedback and requesting follow-up engagement to ensure our region won't be left behind. The **Blueprint** is also leading the way in identifying the best options to increase water supplies in the Valley that will replenish our groundwater in wet years.

2023 Water Year Outlook

September 30 marked the end of the 2022 water year and of the third consecutive drought year in California and much of the West. Despite the hardships most of the water community has experienced in 2022, supply conditions are by some measures better than they were when the water year began last October 1. For example, as of late August, Central Valley Project reservoirs north of the Delta are storing about 380,000 acre-feet more water than they did last year at this time. San Luis Reservoir is currently holding about 70,000 acre-feet of water for the CVP next year, whereas this time last year CVP supplies in San Luis Reservoir were negative. However, overall water storage conditions are below normal, and as the past few years have demonstrated over and over again, another dry start to the water year could upend any positive outlook.

FRIANT-KERN CANAL MIDDLE REACH CAPACITY CORRECTION CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS UPDATE

Throughout September and October, the construction team on the Friant-Kern Canal Middle Reach Capacity Correction Project made steady progress, including through a blistering heatwave. Crews placing concrete for the new siphons at Deer Creek, Avenue 8, and Avenue 11 adapted to the high daytime temperatures by replacing some of the concrete batch water with ice and pouring concrete at night when temperatures were slightly cooler. Construction of the new canal embankment in Segment 1 between Avenue 136 and Avenue 128 is more than 92% complete. FWA Chief Operating Officer Johnny Amaral also facilitated several tours of the construction site in the past several months, including for U.S. Rep. Jim Costa and his staff, staff from U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein's office, and a delegation of representatives from the boards of directors for the Association of California Water Agencies' regions 6 and 7.



FWA STAFF EXPERTISE HIGHLIGHTED IN SACTOWN TALKS PODCAST

The California politics and policy podcast "SacTown Talks" recently featured Alex Biering, FWA Government Affairs and Communications Manager, as a guest on an episode dedicated to the drought and the state of water in California. Alex and the podcast host, Jarhett Blonien, discuss investing in infrastructure, coping with climate change, the realities of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, and why there's no single "silver bullet" solution for the state. The episode is available on [SacTown Talks](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), [YouTube](#), and [Spotify](#).

IT'S THE "CONNIE AND JOHNNY SHOW!"

The latest episode of the Friant Watering Hole, featuring Congresswoman Connie Conway (CA-22), is available now. Host Johnny Amaral and Rep. Conway discuss politics, water, and energy. As usual, Johnny does his best/worst Norm MacDonald jokes. **#RIPNorm**



The Watering Hole is available wherever you listen, including on [YouTube](#), [Podbean](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), [Google Podcasts](#), and [Spotify](#).

IN THE NEWS

"The Long Haul to Restore San Joaquin Spring-Run Chinook," San Francisco Estuary Magazine, Oct. 2022

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"The Climate Crisis Could Make Your Grocery Bill Even Higher," EcoWatch, Oct. 13

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"A California city's water supply is expected to run out in two months," Washington Post, Oct. 10

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"Will Madera Co.'s SGMA rebellion offer blueprint – or warning – for reckoning with farm water restrictions, costs?" , The SJV Sun, Sept. 25

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"Blog: Abandoning established water law does nothing to produce or save one drop of water and puts our food supply at risk," California Farm Water Coalition, Aug. 31

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"Opinion: Questions About Water for Governor Newsom," California Globe, Aug. 31

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"Construction crews race to build replacement canal as Central Valley sinks," CBS News Bay Area, Aug. 25

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Opinion: California water board's actions and words show its utter disdain for Valley agriculture," Fresno Bee, Aug. 18

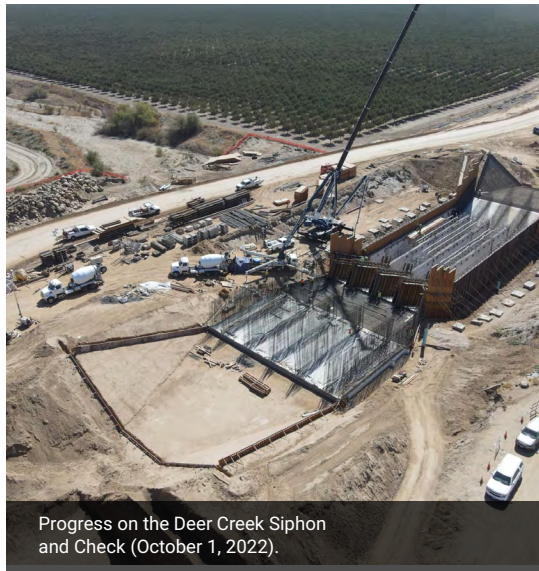
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New canal embankment construction in Segment 7 between Avenue 88 and Avenue 80 (October 4, 2022).



Progress on the Deer Creek Siphon and Check (October 1, 2022).



FWA Director Steve Kising, Congressman Costa, and FWA CEO Jason Phillips touring the Deer Creek construction site.



Avenue 88 siphon construction (October 4, 2022)



Congressman Costa joined by representatives from FWA, Reclamation, and Senator Feinstein's office on the Friant-Kern Canal embankment during their construction site tour.

