

# Salinas Valley Water Coalition



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## **SALINAS VALLEY WATER COALITION CELEBRATES ITS 10<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY!**

This month the Salinas Valley Water Coalition celebrates 10 successful years of active participation in public forums to recommend, consider, improve and determine Water Resource Management policies in the Salinas Valley. The celebration was highlighted with special tributes and recognition of the Coalition's community involvement, at their annual membership dinner. Special recognition included a California State Assembly Certification of Appreciation presented by Assemblyman Simon Salinas' office; a Monterey County Board of Supervisor's Resolution presented by Supervisor Lou Calcagno; and a Monterey County Water Resources Board of Director's Resolution presented by General Manager Curtis Weeks.

The special awards of recognition were followed by a presentation of "This is Your Life, Salinas Valley Water Coalition". Michael Griva and Arvid Myhre shared memories of the beginning.....how the idea for the Coalition was started off the back of a pickup truck. Michael read a portion of his first speech stating the goals and purpose of the Coalition – it reaffirmed, the Coalition's position and goals and the fact that they have not changed since the day they organized!

The 'Beginning' was followed by a skit of an early Board of Supervisor's meeting, prepared by Ann Myhre and performed by her

Troupe --- 'The Way It Was – The Battles'. Rich Smith and Ralph Riva then talked about 'The Here and Now' and 'The Future'. Everyone had a great time.

Special recognition was given to Ralph Riva, who was elected as the first Chair of the Salinas Valley Water Coalition, and has remained Chair ever since. Recognition was also given to Nancy Isakson, Government Affairs Consultant to the Coalition.

The Salinas Valley Water Coalition was organized and incorporated in April 1991. It is a non-profit public benefit corporation and is not organized for the private gain of any person. The specific purpose of the Salinas Valley Water Coalition is to promote fair representation and evaluation of water issues in Monterey County.

The organizers included Arvid Myhre, John Gill, Keith Roberts, Michael Griva, Betty Binsacca. It was their vision to increase awareness and education within the community as well as the decision-makers within Monterey County as to the water issues. They wanted to create a discussion throughout the Salinas Valley Basin that would consider protecting existing water rights and water resources while the County was in the process of developing a plan to respond to salt water intrusion.

The Salinas Valley Water Coalition has, at times, agreed and disagreed with Monterey County Water Resources Agency and/or the Board of Supervisors, however, at all times they have been willing to learn about the hydrology, the geology and the water rights issues of the Salinas Valley in order to

**promote fair representation and evaluation of the water issues. The Salinas Valley Water Coalition has raised issues regarding the Valley's water resources which in turn has created a greater public awareness of the issues surrounding our water resources. The Salinas Valley Water Coalition believes that participation is the price that must be paid so that its members and the community can be fully informed regarding water issues.**

**They have supported, and continue to support, Monterey County Water Resources Agency in its pursuit of long-term basin balance of supply and demand and its effort to halt seawater intrusion. This support is based on the belief that the Agency is committed to developing a program that is cost-effective, reasonable, hydrologically sound and equitable to landowners in all areas of the Salinas Valley.**

**Salinas Valley Water Coalition's Mission Statement is: The water resources of the Salinas River Basin should be managed properly in a manner that promotes fairness and equity to all landowners within the Basin. The management of these resources should have a scientific basis, comply with all laws and regulations, and promote the accountability of the governing agencies.**

**THE WAY IT WAS.....  
By Ann Myhre & Troupe**

**For those who were not able to attend the Birthday Celebration --- here is the skit prepared by Ann.....**

NARRATOR: Now you've heard a bit about how it all began. Soon it became clear that the board of supervisors and the newly formed water board were hell bent on imposing water meters, upper pumping limits and charges for water use. We began to see how important the Coalition was going to be. Ralph Riva, Roger Moitoso, Norman Braga, Rusty Cauley, Jim Gianolini, John Romans, Kevin Pearcey, Betty

Binsacca, Bobby Martin, David Pozzi and many others attended meetings regularly. And they spoke out often.

Sometimes it seemed that we didn't have a single friend in the northern part of the county. That's about when Salinas songwriter Larry Hosford wrote a couple of newspaper columns that added a bit of levity to the situation. As Roy Autry, he named a couple of notable figures. Rack Antler. Avid. Madam Cher. Fingers steady on the typewriter, he took up our cause.

Now we'd like to recreate a few classic moments. Liberties have been taken with dialog that has been inadequately remembered from a series of hearings, and imposed upon that fateful supervisors' hearing when we were making record for the lawsuit Tom Ho'okano would file against the meter ordinances.

SUPERVISOR SPUTNIK: (Nancy Isakson) The hearing on water meter ordinances is now open. Let me remind you that the bailiff is present today. We will have no more outbursts like those at yesterday's water meeting. First, we will hear from water board chair Rack Antler. .

RACK ANTLER: (Rich Smith) Supervisor Sputnik, we gotta do something or the State will be down here. You know what that means,... The gorilla will be out of the closet. Adjudication.

SPUTNIK: Thank you Mr. Antler. Now let's hear from the dog and pony show.

RALPH: I'm Ralph Riva, speaking for Salinas Valley Water Coalition. Dang. This meter thing is just too expensive. Every time there's a water board meeting, Avid tells you it costs too much and it won't stop seawater intrusion. All of us in the Coalition back him up.

PHYLLIS MEURER: (Vicki Rosenberg) Phyllis Meurer. I've been on the Salinas City Council and now I'm on the water board, so I know you must conserve down south. It's all one big bathtub. You've been pumping our water ever since the dams went in, so you owe it to us to help pay for projects that bring more water up north. We're all in this together. And we're already doing our part. We provide all the wastewater for the new CSIP project.

ROY MORRIS: (Kirt Andrus) Hear ye, hear ye. Roy Morris here, and I say, flush twice for Phyllis.

PHYLLIS: We need to know how much water is being used. How are we going to measure

consumption if we don't have meters. Everybody is going to have meters.

RUSTY: (Tim Handley) You think you're going to solve saltwater intrusion with meters. I'm Rusty Cauley, and I say when pigs fly! You make me feel like the red headed stepsister. This is un-bleeping-believable!

JOHN ROMANS: (Arvid Myhre) You want us to have meters. What about meters? Meters can be a good thing. Some farmers like to measure their water. We don't need to measure our water. Maybe you need to measure your water. That's a good thing. We think it's a bad thing, but maybe you're right. Sometimes you have to do the right thing. But we don't want to pay for your problem.

JIM GIANOLINI: (Dan Andersen) Jim Gianolini. Greenfield. I'm not sure what Romans is talking about, but my operation won't cover a big expense like meters. Besides, all you folks really want to do is impose pumping limits and charge us for the water we already have a right to use.

BETTY BINSACCA: I'm in the same boat as Jim. We've got a small farm and we simply cannot afford a meter.

SUPERVISOR SPUTNIK: This is nothing but a dog and pony show. We've spent enough time listening to the public. Hearing closed.

JOHN GILL: (Bob Martin) I'm John Gill. I farm at various places in south county. We've been sitting here all day waiting to testify. Now you want to go home, so you are going to close the hearing. Bull dung.

HO'OKANO: (Tom Glau) I object. You are not allowing my clients enough time to state their case.

SPUTNIK: Mr. Ho'okano you are out of order. If you don't sit down, I will have the bailiff remove you from the room.

HO'OKANO: (Pound on table) We'll see you in court.

**.....AND IS THE WAY IT WAS!**

**WE HAVE COME A LONG WAY!**

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## **CSIP/SVRP ASSESSMENTS TO INCREASE**

Monterey County Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing on May 1<sup>st</sup> to consider the adoption of increased assessments for Zones Y & Z (CSIP/SVRP) for fiscal year 2001-2002. It is proposed that these assessments increase 5.5% as follows: Irrigated Ag North \$10.23 per acre; Irrigated Ag South \$4.53 per acre ; Zone 2B \$261.36 per acre; Residential, \$10.23; Commercial/Industrial \$89.05 per acre; Dry Farming \$1.10 per acre. The water delivery charge for Zone 2B users will also increase by 5.5% to \$16.03 per acre-foot.

The Salinas Valley Water Coalition supports these increases because the Agency and Board of Supervisors adopted a clarifying resolution last year that established, among other things, guidelines for the CSIP/SVRP assessments for:

- ◆ Debt reduction
- ◆ Establishment of a net revenue to debt service ratio
- ◆ CPI increases applied solely to debt service
- ◆ Clarified the use of domestic water supply wells for Marina and Fort Ord properties
- ◆ Established milestones to review financing issues related to CSIP/SVRP

The Coalition worked with other groups and the Agency to develop these guidelines with an emphasis placed on retiring the debt and support was only given for the increases because all of the increased assessments will be applied to debt service. We believe that the sooner the debt is paid the better!

There are a couple of remaining issues surrounding the CSIP/SVRP assessments that need to be resolved: 1) the

development of a sunset clause in the ordinances --- in otherwords, once the debt is paid in full the Zone 2 Y& Z assessments would go away – the project should be able to stand on its own, with the Zone 2B landowners funding the operation and maintenance costs of the project (this is predicated on the basis that the Project’s O&M costs are kept in-line and are reasonable); 2) the agreement with the Pollution Control Agency needs to be revised to ensure the availability of recycled water for the service area forever.....right now the agreement does not provide for availability of water once the debt is paid.

The Coalition will continue to work with the Agency and others in an effort to resolve the remaining issues as discussed above.

**SWRCB ISSUES WATER RIGHT PERMIT TO MCWRA**

State Water Resources Control Board issued a permit to the MCWRA for increased storage of 27,900 acre feet in Nacimiento Reservoir. The permit was approved by the SWRCB **subject to prior rights** and other limitations and conditions discussed in the permit.

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This permit was the subject of SWRCB hearing last summer --- the SVWC and others participated and monitored the hearings because of the water right issues that were raised by several Salinas Valley Protestants. In issuing the permit, the SWRCB concluded that the 27,900 acre-foot increment of water to be diverted to storage [in the Nacimiento Reservoir] was available for appropriation, and that the storage of that increment neither injures senior water rights nor harms public trust resources. The SWRCB also found that approval of the application was statutorily exempt and categorically exempt from CEQA.

As you will recall, the Agency found an error had been made in the actual capacity of the reservoir and therefore they needed to obtain a permit from the SWRCB so they could utilize the additional capacity that had been identified.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF THE SALINAS VALLEY WATER COALITION!**

**Published by Salinas Valley Water Coalition, Nancy Isakson, Government Affairs Consultant**