



## Board adopts \$29.2 million 2009/2010 budget

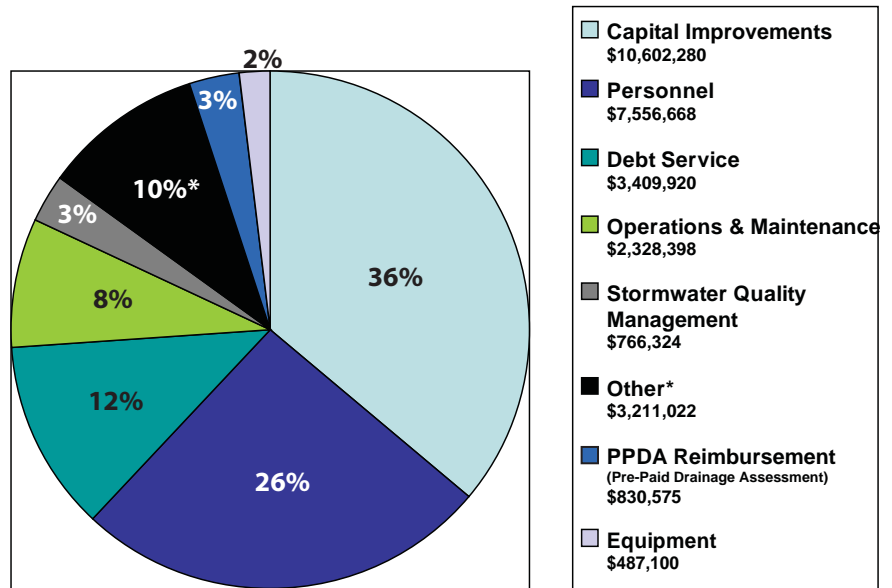
At its public meeting on June 24th the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District Board of Directors adopted the \$29.2 million operating budget for fiscal year 2009/2010. In doing its part to stimulate the local economy, the District has crafted a budget that like last year's, has a heavy focus on capital improvements. And, the current competitive construction market is allowing more facilities construction to be completed for the money. Pipelines are being installed, basins and reservoirs excavated, pump stations installed, and the telemetry system upgraded and expanded, all to provide the level of flood protection planned for each neighborhood in Fresno and Clovis.

### Where the money comes from

There are two primary sources of revenue for the Flood Control District; property taxes and developer fees. Property tax funds are used to pay for maintenance and operation of the rural flood control system and the urban storm drainage system, including landscaped/recreation basins. It also funds personnel and office costs, equipment purchases, and the Clean Stormwater Program. The District also pursues grant funds when possible.

Development fees are charged on new residential, commercial and industrial construction so that each new development pays for its share of the local drainage system. This includes construction of storm drain pipeline to serve the new construction, basin excavation to capture storm runoff generated by the development, and installing pump stations, storm drain inlets, and basin fencing.

2009-2010 Total Budgeted Expenditures



*\*Other - includes expenses such as office administration, land appraisal and acquisitions, engineering, and environmental planning.*

The pie chart above identifies all District expenditures by category.

### Urban and rural flood protection

There are 162 urban drainage areas within Fresno and Clovis. They range in size from roughly one to two square miles, and are served by pipelines leading to a ponding basin generally located near the lowest point in the drainage area.

The Fresno/Clovis area is also protected by rural flood control structures. A planned system of dams, reservoirs,

*'Budget' continued on page 3*

### Inside This Issue

Message from the General Manager	2	Clean Stormwater Grant projects in action	5
District to apply for DWR groundwater grant	2	Volunteers plant trees at Ashlan & Peach	6
Capital projects continue full steam ahead	3	Water Safety Council & City of Fresno offer free swimming lessons for kids	6
Air District grant helps buy new hybrid car	4	Water awareness promoted statewide	7
Trolley Creek Park gets makeover from student volunteers	4	Close Up: Alan Hofmann joins 30-year club	8
Summer Youth Employment Program	5		

# Message from the General Manager



*Bob Van Wyk*

The past four months have presented both challenges and successes for the District. In June, the Board of Directors considered a 29 million dollar expenditure plan for the 2009/2010 fiscal year that continues an aggressive capital improvement infrastructure program that will provide needed storm drain service to parts of our community. The

Board of Directors and staff worked together with the Cities of Fresno and Clovis, the County of Fresno, Caltrans, and the Fresno Irrigation District to ensure the budget maximizes coordination of infrastructure projects and program implementation efforts maximizing service delivery to our community.

However, we remain concerned that implementation of the State budget will result in a reduction in property tax revenue to the District. While the exact dollar amount is not known, we expect the number to be about \$800,000. Between now and December staff will make a recommendation to the Board of Directors on how to address the funding reduction.

At the same time we are addressing revenue reductions, the District has applied for funding as part of the Federal economic stimulus package. The State Water Resources Control Board, through its administration of the State Revolving Fund program, is allocating \$273 million dollars in funding provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to help communities address wastewater and stormwater issues that effect water quality. A District grant application totaling \$3.9 million dollars is moving through the State approval process with continued success. The project includes the construction of ten pipelines serving approximately 3,500 acres of land in the urban core of Fresno that will be used to move standing water from neighborhoods, industrial areas, and roadways to regional stormwater treatment basins.

The grant process has been very competitive but all indications are that our community will receive the funding necessary for project completion. We look forward to completing the grant application process in September and initiating these projects this fall.



## District to apply for DWR groundwater grant

As previously discussed in Flood Line, the District partners with the cities of Clovis and Fresno and the Fresno Irrigation District to recharge tens of thousands of acre feet of surface water back into the groundwater aquifer every year. There are nearly 90 ponding basins used for this purpose, some of which recharge faster than others. The speed at which water percolates through the soil to the groundwater aquifer is determined by the permeability of the types of soil present in the basin floor. Clay is the least permeable, and looser soils like sand are the most permeable and allow water to recharge at a faster rate.

The District is pursuing a California Department of Water Resources Local Groundwater Assistance Program grant to help improve its recharge capability. The District's grant project seeks to improve recharge rates in Fresno and Clovis by sampling soil types beneath 27 basin sites to create soil profiles to help determine potential groundwater infiltration rates. Samples will be taken at depths of 15 and at 50 feet. Sites with less permeable soils can be improved by

**Groundwater recharge** occurs year-round in District ponds like the one shown here. A \$250,000 grant for soil sampling and profiling from the Department of Water Resources would help the District improve the recharge rates at underperforming basins.



over-excavating the basins and backfilling them with more permeable soil types.

It isn't yet certain if funding will be available this year, but staff will be ready if it is and will submit an application requesting \$250,000 for soil boring and sampling. Stay tuned for details and updates.



# Capital projects continue full steam ahead

Over the next fiscal year the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District plans to complete 45 capital improvement projects throughout Fresno and Clovis, in both urban and rural areas. This represents \$10,602,280 worth of work budgeted for fiscal year 2009/2010. Projects range in cost from the \$10,200 removal of a concrete structure to the \$1.9 million budgeted to complete excavation, culvert and pipeline installation and other work planned for the Fancher Creek Reservoir at McKinley and McCall Avenues. This ambitious work schedule continues the momentum of last year's capital program improvement projects.

The most common types of work planned for this coming year are the installation of internal basin pipeline and the installation of pump stations. There is also a fair amount of coordination with the City of Fresno on their planned street improvements. The District proceeds ahead of the City's work and completes planned pipeline and storm drain inlets in order to avoid re-trenching and re-paving the street later. There is also one such project with Caltrans, and other coordinated projects with the Fresno Irrigation District involving joint improvements to certain canals.

As mentioned in this newsletter's cover story about the newly adopted budget, a reality of the current economic climate is that prices for construction and supplies are lower than normal, allowing the District to get more work done for the money budgeted. To make more efficient use of available money, more capital improvements projects are being scheduled for this fiscal year.

## Budget

*Continued from cover*

channels and streams controls storm runoff from a 175 square mile area, to the east of the urban area, which reaches an elevation of 5,000 feet in the Sierra-Nevada.

## Taking care of business

The Flood Control District has 80 authorized positions which range from engineers to environmental analysts to field technicians to office staff. This small core of employees is responsible for all District services, including the design, construction, operation and maintenance of every urban drainage and flood control structure in the District's 399-square mile service area. Because Flood Control has a relatively small staff, part of keeping the system maintained

Another potential boost for the capital program is American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds approved by the U.S. House and Senate earlier this year. The District is pursuing \$3.9 million in grant funds for 10 pipeline construction projects and five basin surface water irrigation projects.

*"The District has moved rapidly to answer the State and Federal calls to stimulate the economy..."*

District Engineer Jerry Lakeman explains, "The District has moved rapidly to answer the State and Federal calls to stimulate the economy with public improvement projects. Last fiscal year the District expended \$12,551,774 in improvements, an 84% increase over the previous year's capital expenditures. The District's Board of Directors recognized the need to help the local economy and is doing what it can to ameliorate the slowing of work in the construction industry. Not only is the effort helping the industry through a tough economic

period, it is an opportunity to gain public infrastructure improvement at very competitive costs. Work has been completed at 30% or more below earlier costs.

"The District is continuing this effort in the new fiscal year and also pursuing stimulus funding from State and local governments. District staff and consultants have responded quickly with shovel ready projects for the State and Federal agencies to approve funding, and these projects are now awaiting allocation of stimulus funding."

As the year goes on look for updates on the capital improvement program and the District's success in applying for ARRA funding.

and growing is working with local companies. This fiscal year nearly \$14,000,000 will be put into the private sector through competitive bidding and the purchase of goods and services, \$10,602,280 of which is devoted to capital improvement projects.

Activities such as construction and basin maintenance, engineering, environmental monitoring, auditing and legal consulting are contracted to local companies. Day-to-day needs such as building cleaning and maintenance, and the purchase of office supplies also support the private sector. Bob Van Wyk, the District's General Manager, explains, "The form of business plan practiced by the District allows the program to respond to economic conditions by simply outsourcing more work during expansion periods when the economy is healthy. Conversely, when the economy slows down, outsourcing is also reduced."

## Air District grant helps buy hybrid



*This 2009 Honda Civic Hybrid is the District's first alternative fuel vehicle.*

**F**lood Control has purchased its first hybrid fleet vehicle with the assistance of a \$2,000 incentive grant from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's (SJVAPCD) "REMOVE II Program". The REMOVE program (Reduced Motor Vehicle Emissions) promotes projects that reduce motor vehicle emission. The District purchased a Partial Zero Emission Vehicle (PZEV) with an advanced hybrid engine equipped with cutting-edge emissions controls. PZEVs run on gasoline, yet produce extremely clean emissions.

After considerable research comparing fuel consumption, safety, long term maintenance cost and sticker price, Flood Control District staff recommended the purchase of a Honda Civic hybrid sedan. The Board of Directors approved the purchase on May 27, 2009. Due to the hybrid's high fuel efficiency and along with the SJVAPCD grant, the overall cost of the vehicle was equal to comparative non-hybrid vehicles and will not only lower Flood Control transportation costs but will help the San Joaquin Valley attain air quality standards.

For more information on the Air District's grant and incentive programs for residents, agriculture, commercial businesses, and agencies, visit [www.valleyair.org](http://www.valleyair.org).

## Trolley Creek Park gets a makeover from student volunteers



**B**right and early on March 19th about a dozen high school students began work to beautify the Flood Control District's Trolley Creek Park in southeast Fresno. The students came from schools around town through a volunteer youth program run by the Fresno County Economic Opportunity Commission (EOC), and funded by the Fresno County Workforce Investment Board.

Students removed graffiti, painted the restroom interiors and picnic pavilions, replaced sand under the swing sets, and planted flowers throughout the park. Their efforts were featured in the Fresno Bee on March 20th.

Leadership activities like this are chosen by EOC program staff for the purpose of enhancing leadership skills in partnership with local agencies.

"The Flood Control District is pleased to provide a 'real-world' project for these civic-minded and

dedicated students. Their desire to help beautify the community they live in is worthy of respect and of our assistance in making it happen. District field staff take this opportunity to teach the students practical skills and show them the satisfaction of a job well done," said Bob Van Wyk, Flood Control's General Manager.

This is the third beautification project through which the District has partnered with EOC youth volunteers, and the second at Trolley Creek Park.

Trolley Creek Park is a three-acre park with a Fresno history theme, next to a nine-acre landscaped ponding basin north of Kings Canyon Road and east of Willow Avenue. It is one of 27 recreational sites developed by the Flood Control District throughout Fresno and Clovis.

## Summer Youth Employment Program



**Learning in the field** - Robert Amparano (l) and District Field Tech David O'Masters work together at Oso de Oro Lake Park.

**Learning in the office** - Student Vanessa Delatorre-Gonzalez (r)



When the Fresno County EOC (Economic Opportunities Commission) called to see if the Flood Control District would be willing to hire a few students for the summer, the answer was 'Yes!'. Four students came to work alongside District staff for six weeks (or 240 hours). They learned general office practices, information technology, and recreation maintenance skills while earning \$8 per hour. The four students, including Vanessa Delatorre-Gonzalez, and Robert Amparano (shown above), range in age from 14 to 16.

These students and others around Fresno County were placed through the Summer Youth Employment Program. The purpose is to 'provide meaningful, paid work experience for...youth between the ages of 14 and 24.' The Fresno County Workforce Investment Board's goal is placement of 3,000 youth in businesses throughout Fresno County. EOC is assisting with 1,000 of those, and placements will be made through the end of September.

Vanessa Delatorre-Gonzalez, an 11th grader from Fresno, said the whole experience was a good one. "Working here taught me how the real work environment is, and it gave me a chance to do things I'd never done before. I also got a chance to work with the Engineering department, and I was

really thankful for that because I want to pursue a career in engineering. They showed me how they build basins and what they need to know to do that, and even let me label inlets and junctions on AutoCAD."

The program gives youth a chance to work in a variety of professional settings such as office, commercial, retail, industrial, agricultural, construction and educational. They get the chance to learn how they will be expected to dress, behave and perform on the job. The real-world experience gained can help get them ready to join the workforce with competitive skills. Plus, they'll have a great professional reference for future employment and/or college applications.

Employers who hire youth through this program provide productive, meaningful work; provide training and a well supervised, well structured work environment; communicate regularly with program supervisors to give feedback on mentoring, students' performance, hours worked, etc. This program is funded by the federal stimulus package and run locally by the Fresno County Workforce Investment Board and the Fresno County EOC.

To learn more, visit [www.workforce-connection.com](http://www.workforce-connection.com).

## Clean Stormwater Grants in action

In March the District's Board of Directors awarded 13 Clean Stormwater mini-grants to help fund environmental education and improvement projects. The grants were awarded to a mix of schools, community and non-profit groups, and agencies. Grants are up to \$2,000 each, and a total of \$22,124 was awarded.

One project already completed is "Generation Green: Youth Serve Earth Day" which took place on April 25, 2009 along the San Joaquin River near the River Ranch House at the Eaton Trail and the McKenzie Preserve. More than 200 volunteers replanted native plant and tree species, removed non-native species, and hauled out trash and debris.

This was a collaboration between HandsOn Central California, the San Joaquin River Parkway & Conservation Trust, Tree Fresno, the Sierra Foothill Conservancy, CSUF as well as the EOC Local Conservation Corps and AmeriCorps programs. Nicole Smaira of HandsOn Central California explained, "The idea behind the project was to create an environmental project that engages youth and young adult volunteers allowing us the opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of volunteerism, the importance of sustaining a healthy environment and the need for continuing education about friendly environmental practices."

Newly offered this year are grants exclusively for fifth grade class trips to the Scout Island Outdoor Education Center. So far 14 have been awarded on a first come-first served basis, each for different schools throughout Fresno and Clovis, fully funding field trips for 1,270 students.

## Volunteers plant trees at Ashlan & Peach



*Many hands - even tiny ones - make light work. Preston Clarke (l) nails a tree tie in place.*

One hundred volunteers showed up bright and early June 13th at the District's 20-acre basin at Ashlan and Peach to plant 79 trees. And they did it in record time - one hour and fifteen minutes! Many were Pelco employees, some were basin neighbors, District and City of Clovis officials, employees and their families, as well as

Tree Fresno board members, staff and volunteers.

The trees and the turf (coming soon) will be irrigated using water from the basin, occasionally from the adjacent Gould Canal, and in a pinch using potable water from the City of Clovis system.

The costs of the irrigation system, the trees and the turf were funded in large part by an Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program State grant the District secured back in 2006. This is a 20-year old grant program that offers \$10,000,000 per year statewide to help fund projects that 'mitigate the environmental impacts caused by new or modified public transportation facilities.'

Tree varieties planted are Valley Oak, Southern Live Oak, Coastal Redwood, Chinese Pistache, White Ash and Chinese Elm. This will provide an interesting mix of trees for visual appeal.

This community beautification project enjoys lots of local support. Opening remarks for the assembled volunteers were made by Debbie Poochigian, District 5 representative of the Fresno County Board of Supervisors; Clovis Mayor Harry Armstrong and Tree Fresno President Jeff Roberts who joined District Director Roy Spina and General Manager Bob Van Wyk.

## Water Safety Council and City of Fresno offer free swimming lessons for kids

And they swam and they swam all over Fresno! A \$4,000 donation by the Water Safety Council of Fresno County has provided swimming lessons scholarships for 282 kids this summer season. The City of Fresno Parks, After School, Recreation and Community Services (PARCS) discounted their already low swimming lessons from \$30 to \$15, and the WSC donation picked up the other half. For the fifth summer in a row kids who may not otherwise be able to have professional swim instruction have gotten it.

Lessons were taught by Red Cross-certified instructors at City pools, and consisted of 10, 35-minute lessons given over the course of two weeks. Anyone three years or older can take swimming lessons. The sites where the scholarships were offered were chosen by City staff and this year were: the Mary Ella Brown, Mosqueda and Frank H. Ball community

centers and several 'learner pools' around Fresno. Each year scholarships are offered on a first come-first served basis, and to date have given approximately 1,000 kids the knowledge they need to help keep themselves safe around water. Taken into consideration were sites where lots of kids come for recreational swimming, but few take lessons. City staff also consider the income level of the surrounding neighborhood.

Drowning and near-drowning are the leading causes of childhood death and injury in the U.S. That is why teaching every child to swim is so important. Paired with close adult supervision, knowing how to swim is essential in keeping kids safe around all bodies of water. If you want to help fund the scholarship program for next year, call Brandy Swisher at the Flood Control District at 456-3292. You can teach a child to swim for \$15.

# Water awareness promoted statewide



*Cristel Tufenkjian of the Kings River Conservation District, and a member of CVWAC, talks to students at Liddell Elementary about water.*

It's easy to forget how necessary water is to everyday life, though it is easier to remember when the temperature outside is 105 degrees. Every living thing needs water, and water is once again in the spotlight as a hot issue. Many water-related agencies, companies and groups seek to educate California's citizens about the importance of water to help enable the state to meet long-term water needs.

Common themes in water awareness education efforts, no matter who is spearheading them, are water conservation and water pollution prevention. In 2008 the U.S. Census Bureau's estimate of California's population was 36.7 million people. That is a lot of water users, most of whom have some control over the amount of water they use in a day. When people understand where their water supply comes from and that it needs to be kept clean, they have the power to change the course of their community's water future.

One statewide group seeking to educate is called the California Water Awareness Campaign. It was started during one of the worst droughts in California history (1987-1992) and has more than 200 members, including the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District. This area's local affiliate is the Central Valley Water Awareness Committee (CVWAC), which is comprised of more than a dozen local water-related companies and agencies.

Each May the Campaign and CVWAC focus on the observance of 'Water Awareness Month'. This year's efforts in the Fresno/Clovis area included the proclamation of May as 'Water Awareness Month' by the Clovis and Fresno City Councils and the Fresno County Board of Supervisors, as well as cosponsorship of the 'Water-Wise Plant Exchange' event held at the Fresno State Horticulture Greenhouses.

At the Plant Exchange gardeners donated water-wise

plants. Additional plants were provided by the Central Valley Water Awareness Committee (CVWAC) and Fresno State students. Visitors picked up plants, cuttings, bulbs and seeds during the event. Master Gardeners and other plant experts gave free advice on native and water-wise plants with the goal of creating beautiful yards and gardens that thrive on very little water.



*Photos courtesy of Nora Laikam, City of Fresno Water Conservation and CVWAC member.*

## What can you do?

Lots. As explained in statewide and local public service announcements and other types of advertising, there are many ways to conserve water and to keep it clean, including:

### Conservation

Turn off water when brushing your teeth; fix toilet leaks (usually caused by the flapper or the overflow); switch to low flow toilets to save water; water landscaping in the



early morning or late evening to reduce water waste through evaporation, and maintain your sprinkler system (over half of home water use is for outdoor landscaping!); use a broom instead of a hose to clean driveways and sidewalks, and use an automatic shut-off nozzle on your hose (as shown above).

### Pollution prevention

Recycle used motor oil; inspect your vehicle for leaks and repair them; follow label directions on pesticides and herbicides to avoid over-use; use a broom instead of a hose; and use less toxic/natural means to control insects and weeds.

### More on the Web:

- To learn more about Central Valley Water Awareness Committee and its members visit [www.centralvalleywater.org](http://www.centralvalleywater.org).
- To learn more about the statewide campaign visit [www.wateraware.org](http://www.wateraware.org).
- For a recap of the Water-Wise Plant Exchange and tons of photos, visit City of Fresno Water Division's web site: [www.fresnowater.org](http://www.fresnowater.org).



## Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District

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www.fresnofloodcontrol.org

### Board of Directors

- Kendall Groom, Chairman • Roy Spina, Vice-Chairman
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### Oso de Oro Park Pavilions - Reservations

Planning a birthday party or other outdoor special occasion? Reserve, at no charge, a spot at the beautiful Sloan Johnson Oso de Oro Lake Park, located on Forkner south of Bullard Ave. Reservations can be made up to six months in advance. Call 456-3292 for details

### Need a speaker?

If your agency, organization or community group is in the Fresno/Clovis area and you'd like a presentation on the flood control and urban storm drain system, water resource management or pollution prevention - contact Brandy Swisher at brandys@fresnofloodcontrol.org or (559) 456-3292.

## Close Up: Alan Hofmann joins 30-year club



Above - Assistant District Engineer/Design Engineer Alan Hofmann (c) joined by his wife, Brenda, and youngest son, Brent at his 30th anniversary all-staff lunch. Right - Alan and District Board Chairman Ken Groom hold the Board's Resolution of Appreciation for Alan's 30 years of exemplary work.



and lasting impact he has had not only on the state of the District flood control programs, but on the people here. He was praised as a gentleman, a true professional, a great friend, a sharp dresser, and the kind of man the District has been fortunate to have on staff for 30 years.

Alan began his career here as an engineering intern in 1977, and was hired on as a full-time engineer upon his graduation in 1979 as one of the first fifteen employees. Since then he has helped to guide and impact the evolution of the District's operations and maintenance, groundwater recharge, development review, capital improvements, and master planning programs.

General Manager Bob Van Wyk explained, "Alan is one of the District's great success stories. He came to work as a student intern, took on many challenges, including being Operations Engineer, the Trolley Creek Park and Oso de Oro Lake Park projects, and headed up the Development Review department during a time in our community when it experienced its greatest expansion. Alan is an exemplary employee who has dedicated his career to the District's program. This is a better program because of him."

District Engineer Jerry Lakeman said, "On behalf of the many staff who have worked under his supervision and training and myself, I'd like to thank Alan for his 30 years of diligent contribution to the District."

**T**hirty years of continuously building skills, improving your workplace and your community. That's a fine view of anyone's career, and that's the view for Alan Hofmann as he and the District celebrate his 30th anniversary with the Flood Control District.

At Alan's all-staff lunch in June his coworkers took turns telling funny 'Alan stories' and explaining what a positive

