

NEWS

From the County of San Bernardino
www.sbcounty.gov



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 9, 2009

For more information, contact
Roni M. Edis, Staff Analyst II/PIO
(909) 387-7866
redis@dpw.sbcounty.gov

County marks completion of major flood control project

RANCHO CUCAMONGA – More than 50 years in the making, the \$150-million Etiwanda/San Sevaine Flood Control Project was formally dedicated today by Second District Supervisor Paul Biane and a host of other officials during a ceremony in Rancho Cucamonga.

The project, construction on which began in 1996, will protect more than 100,000 property owners in western San Bernardino County from floods the type of which occur on average once in 100 years. The channel starts in the foothills north of Rancho Cucamonga and run through Fontana and unincorporated areas of the county before reaching the Riverside County line.

"The geography of our county presents us with many challenges as we work to make it a safe and comfortable place for people to call home," Supervisor Biane said. "The Etiwanda/San Sevaine Flood Control Project is a key achievement toward that goal, and the credit goes to countless dedicated people at all levels of government."

Prior to this project the unimproved sections of the channel have led to flooding that in turn caused damage to the public roads and private property. With the project improvements having been completed, the storm flows will be contained to help prevent property damage and improve public safety on the road ways.

The completion of the Etiwanda/San Sevaine Flood Control Project also opens the way for development on land in Rancho Cucamonga, Fontana, and Ontario. Development of the San Sevaine Villas - an affordable housing project –has been delayed until the completion of the channel.

"The San Sevaine Creek Water Project is a major achievement for the County of San Bernardino," said Congressman David Dreier of the 26th Congressional District. "I applaud the County for this accomplishment, especially because water resource management is so important for Southern California due to the ongoing challenges in the Delta. I look forward to working with the County of San Bernardino to continue the federal-state-local partnership for critical infrastructure projects."

-MORE-

Project Dedication

April 9, 2009

Page 2

Western San Bernardino County, because it sits at the foot of the San Gabriel Mountains, has been plagued by flooding since development began more than 150 years ago. The region is exposed to both destructive floodwaters and tremendous debris movements from the mountains rising 10,000 feet above the valley floor.

Following the catastrophic floods of 1938, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors petitioned the state for the establishment of the San Bernardino County Flood Control District, which began finding solutions to the area's flooding problems.

In the 1950's, the Flood Control District worked with the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture and the United States Army Corps of Engineers on development of a remedy to the threat from floods. In the 1980's, the District began working with the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation to assist in the funding for a regional project to capture and control the flood waters of the Upper Etiwanda and San Sevaine Creeks.

The San Sevaine Creek Water Project was officially initiated by Board Resolution on December 3, 1984, authorizing the Notice of Intent for the proposed loan and grant from the United State Bureau of Reclamation.

The project has undergone several revisions and refinements to address comments received on the original proposal. Environmental and recreational enhancements were added as significant components of the reformulated design. The locations of the debris basins at the mouths of Etiwanda and San Sevaine Canyons were modified to preserve sensitive plant and wildlife habitats, preserves and conservation areas were established along the length of the project and adjacent creek beds, six miles of area for use as recreational parkways were provided to complement regional plans.

On December 17, 1996, the board approved an Agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation, for the then estimated \$81 million construction of the project. The agreement was for an estimated \$20 million loan and \$27 million Grant for project funding under the Bureau's Small Reclamation Project Act (PL 84-984). This was the largest project of its kind ever approved by the Bureau. Funding for the completion of the project would need to come from other resources.

The additional funding from the District's Zone 1, County of San Bernardino RDA, City of Rancho Cucamonga, City of Rancho Cucamonga RDA, City of Fontana and City of Ontario made the project a reality. Without this additional funding, this project, with final construction costs topping \$150 million, would not have been possible. Project delays caused by additional environmental review, project modifications, railway and utility coordination, and storm damages were the primary contributors to the increased costs.

The San Sevaine Creek Water Project provides environmental enhancements, water conservation, flood control facilities and recreational facilities to a large portion of the San Bernardino Valley.

Over 360 acres are being set aside as preserve and Conservation Easements to protect a sensitive plant community, wet lands and wildlife enhancement. In addition, several water conservation basins will percolate an estimated 25,000 acre-feet of storm water runoff per year into the Chino Groundwater Basin benefiting residential, agricultural, municipal and industrial water used in the valley. This increased water conservation will occur as the result of an additional 5400 acre-feet of water storage, which will help reduce the need to purchase imported water.