

## II. INTRODUCTION

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Water is a fundamental ingredient and determinant of our quality of life in Solano County. The natural features of the Delta, agricultural production, and the County’s urban communities are all shaped in part by the availability of water. We are fortunate, and it is by no means an accident, that Solano County has one of the more reliable water supplies in the State. Today we collectively benefit from the foresight and fortitude of those who championed construction of the Solano Project, the North Bay Aqueduct, the Ulatis Flood Control Project, and defended our water rights – projects that require substantial long-term planning and coordination.

The Solano County Water Agency provides the necessary forum and resources to accomplish long-term goals and protect the County’s water resources for the benefit of the residents, businesses, industries and agricultural communities in Solano County. The management of water resources, as a discipline, continues to expand in scope and evolve in concert with changing societal values. These changes have and will continue to be reflected by the scope of the Solano County Water Agency’s activities and the composition of its staff. This strategic plan defines a clear vision for the Solano County Water Agency through 2025.

### **Solano County Water Agency**

SCWA is an independent special district created by the California State Legislature for the “conservation, development, control, and use of water for the public good and for the protection of life and property therein<sup>1</sup>.” The Agency boundary “consists of all territory within the County of Solano lying within the exterior boundaries thereof, the area of the Davis Campus of the University of California, and that portion of the territory of any participating agency lying outside the exterior boundaries of the County of Solano<sup>2</sup>.”

SCWA’s Participating Agencies are:

- Solano County
- Seven cities in Solano County:
  - City of Benicia
  - City of Dixon
  - City of Fairfield
  - City of Rio Vista

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<sup>1</sup> California Water Code Appendix Section 64-20

<sup>2</sup> California Water Code Appendix Section 64-30

- City of Suisun City
- City of Vacaville
- City of Vallejo
- Three agricultural irrigation districts:
  - Solano Irrigation District
  - Reclamation District 2068
  - Maine-Prairie Water District

The primary charge of SCWA falls into two main categories: water supply and flood management. The water supply function consists of providing wholesale, untreated water supply to cities, districts and state agencies. Additionally, SCWA leads efforts to protect rights to existing sources of water and participates in efforts to secure new sources of water for water supply reliability and future growth in the County.

The Agency holds as executors, long-term master water supply contracts with U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) for the federal Solano Project and CA Department of Water Resources for the State Water Project on behalf of those participating agencies with subsidiary water supply service agreements with SCWA. SCWA provides wholesale water service to the participating agencies only, it does not operate any water treatment plants nor have any direct retail customers.

SCWA currently provides municipal and industrial water supplies to the cities of Benicia, Fairfield, Suisun City, Vacaville, and Vallejo; and agriculture water to Maine Prairie Water District and Solano Irrigation District. The cities of Dixon and Rio Vista have future water supply contract options. SCWA also has water supply contracts with the University of California at Davis and California State Prisons. Reclamation District 2068 does not receive water directly from SCWA.

SCWA is responsible for operations and maintenance of two enterprise flood management systems: the Ulatis Flood Control Project and the Green Valley Flood Control Project. SCWA is also involved in numerous regional flood management activities within the County of Solano including levees bordering the Yolo Bypass in and adjacent to the County of Solano. Other flood management matters within the boundaries of SCWA, beyond the influence of SCWA managed facilities, are directed to SCWA for investigation and development of potential solutions. Additionally, SCWA also performs habitat conservation and watershed management activities.

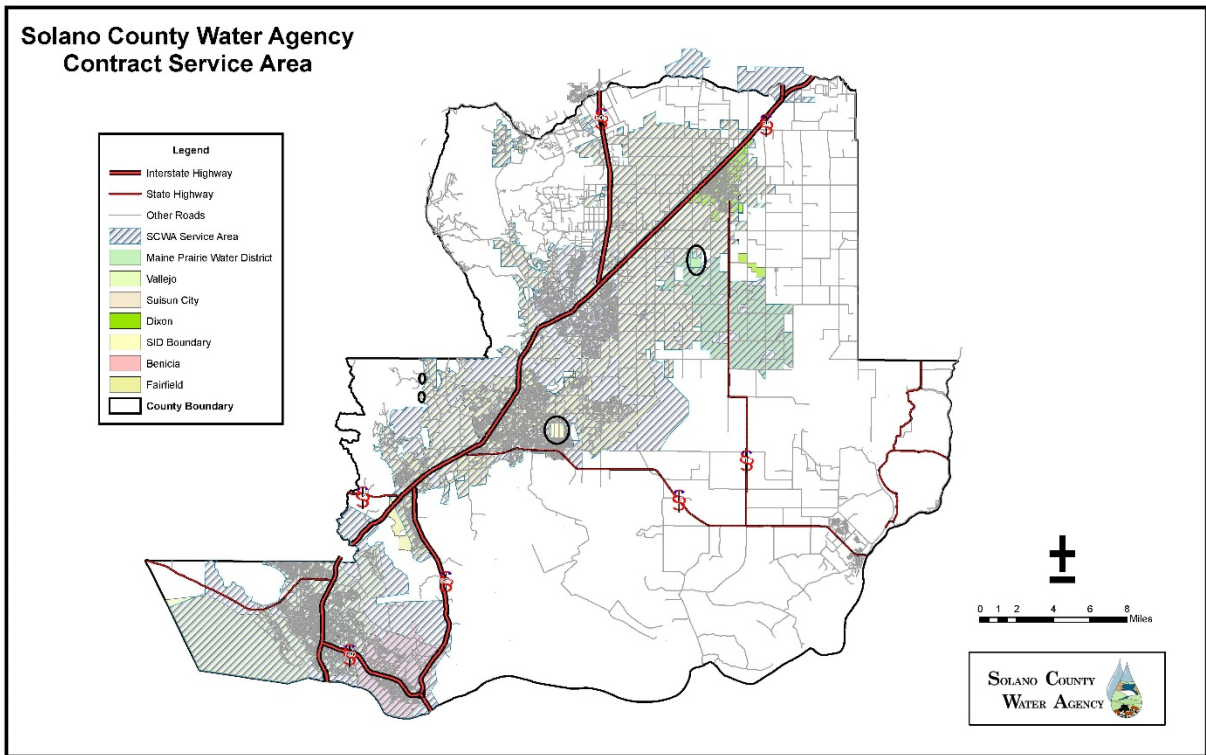
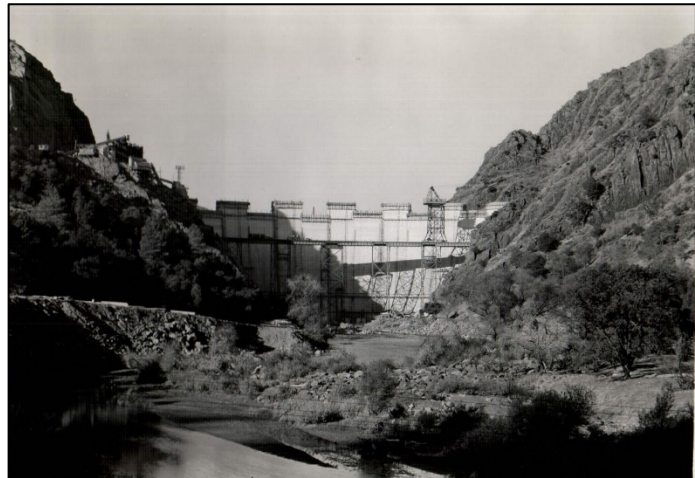


Figure 1: Solano County Water Agency Contract Service Area

## History

The Solano County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (SCFC&WCD) was formed in 1951 by an Act of the State Legislature. The full text of the legislative act, as amended, is in the California Water Code Appendix Chapter 64 entitled “Solano County Water Agency Act.” As originally established, the Board of Supervisors of Solano County was the governing board (ex-officio) of the SCFC&WCD. The County Transportation Department and other County departments provided staff and administrative services. The first major action of the SCFC&WCD was to contract with the USBR for water supply from the Solano Project.



Monticello Dam under Construction Nov. 27, 1956

Photo credit: E.S. Ensor

In 1989, the name of SCFC&WCD was changed to the Solano County Water Agency by legislative amendment through Assembly Bill No. 2069, Chapter 573, Section 5 entitled: “Solano County Water Agency Act.” The governing board was expanded to include the mayors from all seven cities in the County as well as a board member from each of the three agricultural irrigation districts. In October of 1989, SCWA hired its first employee, the General Manager. Additional employees were added starting in 1990.

## **Governance**

SCWA represents its participating agencies in local and regional water supply and flood management interests. SCWA also provides collaborative support to other local agencies as requested or directed. The fifteen member SCWA Board of Directors is comprised of representatives from the eleven Participating Agencies and includes:

- The five members of the Solano County Board of Supervisors
- Mayor of the City of Benicia
- Mayor of the City of Dixon
- Mayor of the City of Fairfield
- Mayor of the City of Rio Vista
- Mayor of City of Suisun City
- Mayor of the City of Vacaville
- Mayor of the City of Vallejo
- A Director from The Solano Irrigation District
- A Trustee from Reclamation District No. 2068
- A Director from Maine-Prairie Water District

The 1989 formation act also established an “Advisory Commission” to advise the Board of Directors. The Commission consists of one representative appointed by each of the Cities of Benicia, Dixon, Fairfield, Rio Vista, Suisun City, Vacaville, and Vallejo. Solano County, Solano Irrigation District, Maine Prairie Water District, and Reclamation District No. 2068 also each appoint one representative. Representation consists of the chief administrative officers or chief technical staffs that meet monthly to deliberate on current and emerging water and flood issues of interest to Solano County and develops collaborative recommendations to the Board of Directors for consideration.

## **2005 Strategic Plan**

The [2005 Strategic Plan](#) was a subset of the Solano County Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plan. The Strategic Plan was created by a Stakeholder Group who established strategic issues and strategy statements that were applicable for both the region and SCWA. The 2005 Strategic Plan included only actions where SCWA has a major role,

whereas the IRWM Plan includes all actions that the Solano agencies could implement. The Strategic Plan also included conclusions to aid in SCWA policy development.

The 2005 Strategic Plan recognized that while many potential actions fall under SCWA’s mission, it only had the resources to undertake a fraction of those actions at any given time. The purpose of the 2005 Strategic Plan was to create a roadmap for SCWA that identified the immediate and high priority actions for commitment of agency resources.



**“Glory Hole” Spillway at Lake Berryessa (2008) – 28 ft. diameter**  
*Photo credit: Thomas Pate*

The 10-year plan prioritized forty-two potential actions as being in Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3. Tier 1 actions were identified as the highest priority and anticipated to be accomplished using existing resources. There was general agreement that while the 2005 Strategic Plan was a useful tool with most of the recommended actions implemented, it was out-of-date and was no longer useful in assisting the Board to prioritize SCWA resources.

## **2016 Strategic Plan**

The 2016 Strategic Plan comes at a critical time of change in the County, both in the way water is - and will be - managed in California, and in ushering in new leadership at SCWA. A decision was made that this Strategic Plan will focus on opportunities, current issues and potential future stressors relevant to SCWA itself, independent of IRWM planning.

The purpose of the 2016 Strategic Plan is to provide guidance to the Board and SCWA staff in directing SCWA policy and resources to address current and future issues within SCWA’s purview. Topics addressed include:

- Water Supply Management
- Groundwater Management
- Watershed Management
- Flood Management
- Delta Management
- Policy Management
- Resource Management

This plan is based on the principle of *Integrated Water Management*. The [California Water Plan 2013 Update](#) describes integrated water management as:

*A comprehensive and collaborative approach for managing water to concurrently achieve social, environmental, and economic objectives. This integrated approach delivers higher value for investments by considering all interests, providing multiple benefits, and working across jurisdictional boundaries at the appropriate geographic scale.*

SCWA water management integration includes regional water supply reliability and water quality, local and regional flood management, and stewardship of regional natural resources such watershed and habitat ecosystems.



*Photos courtesy of the City of Vacaville and Solano Irrigation District*