

WATERMASTER

Santa Margarita River Watershed

(Fallbrook, CA)





THE HISTORY

On January 25, 1951, the United States of America filed Complaint No. 1247 in the United States District Court for the Southern District of California, United States v. Fallbrook Public Utility District, et al., Civil No. 51-cv-1247-GPC-RBB, to seek a judicial determination of all respective water rights within the Santa Margarita River Watershed. The Final Judgment and Decree was entered on May 8, 1963, and appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals. A Modified Final Judgment and Decree was entered on April 6, 1966. Among other things, the Decree provides that the Court:

... retains continuing jurisdiction of this cause as to the use of all surface waters within the watershed of the Santa Margarita River and all underground or sub-surface waters within the watershed of the Santa Margarita River, which are determined in any of the constituent parts of this Modified Final Judgment to be a part of the sub-surface flow of any specific river or creek, or which are determined in any of the constituent parts of this Modified Final Judgment to add to, contribute to, or support the Santa Margarita River stream system.

In March 1989, the Court appointed a Watermaster to administer and enforce the provisions of the Modified Final Judgment and Decree and subsequent instructions and orders of the Court. The appointing Order described the Watermaster's powers and duties as well as procedures for funding and operating the Watermaster's office.

Due to the large number of parties and their diversity in SMR region, in 1989, the Court appointed a Steering Committee that is currently comprised of representatives from the United States, Eastern Municipal Water District, Fallbrook Public Utility District, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Pechanga Band of Luiseño Mission Indians, Rancho California Water District, and Western Municipal Water District.

The purpose of the Steering Committee is to assist the Watermaster and Court in the oversight management of the case. The Steering Committee is responsible for coordinating the conduct of litigation in the following manner:

1. Recommend to the Court a candidate for the position of Watermaster in the Santa Margarita Watershed.
2. Recommend to the Court the scope of reference for the Watermaster's duties and responsibilities.
3. Assist the Watermaster by providing information and data as requested.
4. Meet with the Watermaster on a quarterly basis to discuss the status of the Watermaster's activities.
5. The Steering Committee shall review and make recommendations on the budget and proposed expenditures of the Watermaster.
6. Any other tasks as determined to be necessary by the Court.

The Steering Committee is currently seeking a candidate to recommend to the Court to fill the position of Watermaster. The position is open due to the upcoming retirement of the incumbent.

THE POSITION

The Watermaster reports directly to the Court. This position has been a part-time effort requiring, on average, 130 hours per month. Depending on activities in the Watershed and orders of the Court, the effort could require a full-time commitment. Watermaster manages one administrative assistant and an annual budget of about \$716,000.

Typical duties of the position include:

- To administer and enforce the provisions of the Modified Final Judgment and Decree and subsequent instructions and orders of the Court.

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- To collect water consumption data and require monthly reports from the substantial users including, for each such user, the amount of water diverted, extracted, impounded, imported, or exported, and the amount of water used.
- To make all reasonable efforts to collect, reconstruct, and update water consumption data for the period 1966 to date.
- To oversee and coordinate with other agencies the collection and reporting of groundwater level data.
- To operate and maintain gaging stations, investigate water availability and hydrology, and conduct water quality testing.
- To perform such duties as are required under the Memorandum of Understanding of Lake Skinner and the Memorandum of Understanding of Operation of Diamond Valley Lake.
- To take custody of existing records and reports, maintain proper records, and prepare periodic written reports as required by the Court.
- To conduct such tests and measurements as deemed necessary to carry out the provisions of orders and instructions by the Court.
- To design, print, and distribute forms necessary to convey the information required by orders and instructions of the Court.
- To report to and meet with the Watermaster Steering Committee, established pursuant to Court Order, on a quarterly basis regarding the status of the Watermaster's investigations, proposed budget items for the upcoming water year, and progress of any programs established by the Watermaster.
- To maintain an updated list of substantial users (currently identified as using an amount equal to or greater than 10 acre-feet per year) and the characterization of their use.
- To oversee and coordinate with other agencies the collection of water quality data for both surface water and groundwater.
- Administer Cooperative Water Resource Management Agreement (CWRMA) between Rancho California Water District and Camp Pendleton.
- Prepare Annual CWRMA Report Submitted to the Court.
- Maintain inventory of ponds and reservoirs in the Santa Margarita River Watershed.

GOALS/CHALLENGES

Projected tasks for the Watermaster over the next five years are listed below:

- Prepare Annual Watermaster Report Submitted to the Court
- Collect Water Production, Use, Import, Export, and Availability Data
- Collect Groundwater Well Location, Construction, and Water Level Data
- Collect Water Quality Data
- Collect Wastewater and Recycled Water Data
- Administer Cooperative Water Resource Management Agreement
- Administer Lake Skinner and Diamond Valley Lake Memorandums of Understanding
- Administer Steering Committee Matters
- Prepare Periodic Reports Requested by the Steering Committee and Court
- Administer Streamflow and Water Quality Measurement Programs
- Manage Systems for Data, Records, and Court Documents
- Manage Watermaster Office Staff and Consultants
- Develop and Administer Watermaster Budget and Assessments
- Identify Threats to Long-term Water Supplies of the Watershed including Overdraft Conditions, Quagga Mussel Infestation, Salt Loading, and Other Water Quality Conditions
- Prepare Reports for Adjudicated Groundwater Basins under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).
- Administer Future Agreements Subject to Judicial Review such as Indian Water Rights Settlements and Other Water Management Agreements

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate will be someone of high integrity, who is independent, able to work with little oversight, and a self-starter with excellent follow-through. This person will have strong interpersonal skills, excellent public presentation skills, ability to facilitate discussion, and will be able to handle confrontation.

Education and Experience

- Requires any combination equivalent to the completion of a bachelor's degree in public or business administration, law, finance, engineering, geology, or hydrology. A master's degree is highly desirable; and

At least ten years of experience in increasingly responsible senior management and supervisory positions, including seven years supervisory experience of which three to five should be working with, or as a consultant to water or wastewater utilities, municipal public utilities, military infrastructure and/or other public services.

- It is preferred that the selected candidate will have professional certifications. The individual or firm shall be knowledgeable in watershed management, watershed modeling, water rights, state and Federal legislation and regulation concerning water rights and water quality. In the event an outside firm receives the Watermaster appointment that firm shall designate a lead person who shall be primarily responsible as the Watermaster and who shall be present at Steering Committee meetings.
- Candidates should have knowledge of California water rights issues and Federal reserved water rights issues, including Indian reserve water rights.

Skills and Knowledge

The selected candidate should have skills in:

- Communicating with the public, boards, and agencies.
- Giving public presentations.
- Consensus building.

COMPENSATION

The compensation for this position will be dependent on the qualifications and experience of the selected candidate. The present Watermaster operates as a consultant with an all-inclusive rate. Alternative compensation proposals will be considered.

HOW TO APPLY

Please apply on-line as soon as possible at www.alliancerc.com.

For questions and inquiries, please contact:
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