

**SANTA BARBARA COUNTY  
BOARD AGENDA LETTER**



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

**Agenda Number:**  
**Prepared on:** 06/03/02  
**Department Name:** Flood Control/Public Works  
**Department No.:** 054-04-05  
**Agenda Date:** 06/25/02  
**Placement:** Admin  
**Estimate Time:** N/A  
**Continued Item:** NO  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Document File Name:** Brdjun25.twitchell.doc

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**TO:** Board of Directors  
Santa Barbara County Water Agency

**FROM:** Phillip M. Demery  
Public Works Director

**STAFF CONTACT:** Thomas Fayram, Deputy Public Works Director, Ext. 3436  
Cathleen Garnand, Civil Engineer Associate III, Ext. 3561

**SUBJECT:** Twitchell Reservoir Emergency Sediment Removal Project, Fifth Supervisorial District

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**Recommendation(s):**

That the Board of Directors:

- A. Approve the Twitchell Reservoir Emergency Sediment Removal Project and the attached CEQA Notice of Exemption (post);
- B. Approve plans and specifications for the project; and
- C. Authorize the Public Works Director to advertise and receive bids for the project.

**Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:**

[{Double-click here}](#) The recommendations are primarily aligned with Goal No. 2. A Safe and Healthy Community in Which to Live, Work, and Visit.

**Executive Summary and Discussion:**

Twitchell Dam and Reservoir were constructed by the United States Bureau of Reclamation for two principle purposes: conservation of water for groundwater recharge and flood control. Since the completion of its construction in 1958, the reservoir has accumulated sediment at an average annual rate of 1,200 acre-feet per year, more than twice the rate designed for the reservoir. Currently, the loss of storage capacity due to sedimentation exceeds 25 percent of the total capacity.

Sedimentation threatens the operation of the reservoir's outlet works. Following the 1998 rains of El Nino, a substantial amount of sediment and debris washed into the reservoir and completely blocked the opening of the lower port. Blockage of the lower port prevents passive flushing of sediment. Passive flushing is the only means of removing excess sediment and maintaining normal operations of the reservoir.

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In the winter of 1999 while the reservoir was dry, the Santa Maria Valley Water Conservation District excavated material from the outlet works and opened the lower port. This work included construction of a gravel access road (along the alignment of existing ranch roads or on the reservoir sediment) to the lower port, construction of a gravel platform to provide a working surface for an excavator and dump truck, and removal of the accumulated sediment and debris that blocked the opening. Following the 1999-00 season, additional sediment and debris has covered the temporary access road and has partially blocked the lower port.

The proposed project would remove sediment and debris from the outlet works in order to keep the outlet works in a normal operating condition. This work would be similar to the work performed in 1999 by the Santa Maria Valley Water Conservation District. The work will consist of removing sediment and debris from the lower port, improving the gravel access road and gravel platform at the lower port to support the excavating equipment, and minor repair of the metal trash racks at the outlet works.

The work is funded by a \$498,900 congressional appropriation through the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The funding will be made available upon approval of the project by HUD. Approval will be obtained once the completed application package, which includes compliance with NEPA and CEQA, has been approved. The completed application package has been submitted to HUD and is in the review process. Approval by HUD is expected in July; implementation of the sediment removal work is anticipated to begin in August or when HUD funding is approved.

The Santa Barbara County Water Agency, under contract with the Bureau of Reclamation for Twitchell Reservoir, has conducted the environmental review under CEQA. The Bureau of Reclamation, owner of the Twitchell Reservoir, is NEPA lead and will provide oversight approval for the project. The project is categorically excluded under NEPA.

#### **Mandates and Service Levels:**

There are no changes in mandates or service levels for the current fiscal year. Completion of the project would help to preserve the capacity and operability of Twitchell Reservoir.

#### **Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

The project will be funded entirely under a federal appropriation from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This funding was provided under the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Appropriations Act of FY 2001 (PL 106-554) under the Economic Development Initiative as a special project for Santa Barbara County as "\$498,900 for costs associated with emergency sediment removal in Twitchell Reservoir". This project was included in a final budget adjustment for fiscal year 2002/03 in the Water Agency cost center of the Water Resources Division. The estimated project cost for FY 2002-03 is \$100,000 and will be paid from Dept: 054, Acct; 7460, Fund: 3050, Program: 3011. The remainder of the \$498,000 federal appropriation will provide for similar work to be done on an as needed basis over the next five years.

Certain requirements must be met before the funds will be released to the County. These requirements include submittal of an application and completion of environmental review. The application has been submitted to HUD and environmental review is nearly completed. Environmental review includes the attached Categorical Exemption, to be approved by your Board,

under CEQA, and a Categorical Exclusion under NEPA. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is completing the environmental review and will approve the Categorical Exclusion.

Once HUD has approved the application and environmental review, funds will be released. No actions will be taken prior to HUD's written approval.

**Special Instructions:**

Direct the Clerk of the Board to post the attached CEQA Notice of Exemption for the Project and also send a copy of the minute order of these actions to the Flood Control District office, Attn: Christina Lopez.