THE TRUE WATER STORY?

Water, that precious life sustaining liquid, should become more important to all of us as the water demands of our exploding population increase at an astronomical rate. The major concern expressed at the National Reclamation Association meeting in Spokane in October 1969 was that the general populace of the United States was indifferent to water. They take it for granted! To the average American, his only association with water is when he turns on the faucet and if water comes out he assumes the supply is unlimited.

The conclusion of the N.R.A. meeting was that "water people" have not told the true water story. Perhaps there is a stigma attached to reclamation, that has accused reclamation with contributing to our surplus crop problem. Some people have also taken us to task for defacing our river scenery with dams, canals, and roads. These are misconceptions that could lead to disaster.

The effects of these two misconceptions are being felt as political pressures against reclamation that stymie appropriations for construction of reclamation projects. Congressman Wayne Aspinall said, and I quote: "The reclamation program in the United States is in complete disarray; we have not done our job properly, and we must change." Unquote.

Reclamation is more than irrigation. It's electric power. It's water for industry, municipalities, and recreation. Reclamation is also concerned with many other facets such as water quality, pollution, and flood control. Reclamation is a do-it-yourself welfare program that provides jobs and homes for people without the "dole". Reclamation pays for itself many times over, and yet reclamation is fighting for survival.

Water people are conservationists in their own right and are working to conserve water! Without the crystal clear liquid, beautiful scenery becomes unimportant and our so-called "surplus crops" (really, there are none) would disappear quickly.

Reclamation must change its image and tell the true story. As a first step, the National Reclamation Association officially changed its name to the National Water Resources Association, and machinery was set in motion to indeed tell the true water story to the American people.
The San Miguel Water Conservancy District directors and friends pledge themselves to help tell this story whenever and wherever it can be told. There are many meetings to attend, including trips to Durango to the Southwestern Water Conservation District meetings. Your Southwest board members, George Mike Young and D. Lew Williams, backed by the other San Miguel directors, have worked diligently through the Southwestern board to hold the five Colorado Projects together as one group, united to push for all five projects. This is a difficult job, as there is always a temptation cropping up somewhere, to drop one or more of the projects, if another area could push through their project over the others.

The San Miguel board has always made an effort to have someone from the board attend all important water meetings such as the Colorado Water Congress, the Colorado Water Conservation Board, and the Colorado Water Advisory Committee meetings, mostly held in Denver. This diligent effort to be represented tells people we are in there pitching at all times. This has caused Larry Sparks, executive director of the Colorado Water Conservation Board to remark: "That San Miguel bunch is always here, rain or shine!" At times we wonder if the time and money spent attending all of these meetings is worth it; however, this is the one and only reason the San Miguel Project has progressed this far!

There are also the National Reclamation Association meetings, the Colorado River Water Users Association meetings, and the Colorado Water Conservation Board's educational meetings at Page, Arizona. At all of these meetings, the "political in-fighting" takes place and a lot of the decisions are made in smoke-filled rooms. If you aren't in there pitching all the time, and on many fronts, you soon get left by the wayside.

WHERE DO WE STAND?

At this writing, only $110,000 has been added to the U.S. House appropriation bill for the Dolores Project and $130,000 for the Dallas Creek Project; however, it is hoped that funds for the other projects will be added to the 1971 budget which will be acted on very soon, so that funds could be available shortly after July 1, 1970.

In view of the austere attitude expressed so far by Congress towards these reclamation projects, local participation has been encouraged to bring engineering studies of the projects up to date by the Bureau of Reclamation. In this regard, the San Miguel Project was forced into a political corner. It was proposed that each of the projects contribute $2500 to be matched by the Southwestern Water Conservation Board for the Bureau of Reclamation's Project Field Study which would total $15,000 (or contributions of $7500 from three projects and $7500 from the Southwest Board. The other projects agreed to this and left us no alternative but to join in.

The San Miguel Water Conservancy District to date, has prided itself for operating on a minimum levy of 1/2 mill with little or no contingent fund; therefore, it had only one choice, it had to raise the $2500 in order to stay in the game. For this reason, and only this reason, the board reluctantly voted to raise the tax levy to the legal limit of 1.5 mills so that the San Miguel District could contribute $2500 and stay in the political poker game.

It is hoped that the contribution of $15,000 by the local people towards that project will strengthen the hands of our Congressional delegation, by, in effect, saying we want these projects bad enough "to put our own money where our mouth is". The $15,000 will also aid the Bureau of Reclamation in keeping engineering studies up to date so that they will be ready to move, if and when funds are appropriated by the U.S. Congress.

San Miguel Water Conservancy District Budget 1970

| Estimated Balance Jan. 1, 1970 | $250.00 |
| Estimated Income 1970 Total Resources | 4638.34 |
| Total | 4888.34 |

San Miguel County Mill Levy on Valuation of $1,952,450.00

Montrose County Mill Levy on Valuation of $1,139,780.00

| Professional Service | $0.00 | $350.00 |
| Travel, Mileage, etc. | $938.18 | $1200.00 |
| Office and Audit | 69.79 | 150.00 |
| Bonds and Insurance | 79.00 | 100.00 |
| Dues | 140.00 | 175.00 |
| Advertising & Promotion | $0.00 | 263.34 |
| Contingent Fund | 150.00 | 150.00 |
| Project Field Study (Burec) | $2500.00 |

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WHAT IS THE SAN MIGUEL PROJECT?

The main structure of the San Miguel Project will be a dam built in the San Miguel Canyon, approximately 13 miles by road, up the river from Norwood, where Specie Creek runs into the San Miguel River. This location is 3½ miles down the river from Placerville. The location of the dam is easily recognized by the silver steel bridge that crosses the San Miguel at Specie Creek.

A series of tunnels about 11 miles long will bring the water to a point one-half mile south and east of Norwood. From this point, the Mail Box Park Canal will deliver water to Mail Box Park and the existing canals now owned by the Farmers Water Development Company and the Lone Cone Ditch Company will receive supplemental water to bring a full service supply of water to the land around Norwood and Redvale.

The Norwood Canal will also carry water to the Naturita Reservoir which will result from the construction of a dam in Mud Springs Draw, seven miles south and east of Redvale. Naturita Reservoir will act to regulate the supply of water to the Lilylands area; and Dry Creek Basin Radium Reservoir, formed by the construction of two dams on the west fork and the east fork of Dry Creek Basin, will gather water from Dry Creek Basin and act as a regulating reservoir to deliver water to the East Paradox area.

Radium Reservoir will also offer an unique opportunity for fish and wildlife conservation. The Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife has recommended that the Colorado Department of Game, Fish, and Parks set up a fish and wildlife management area in and around the Radium Reservoir in the lower Dry Creek Basin.

What will the San Miguel Project mean to the San Miguel Basin?

(A) Direct Benefits: 1. 26,000 acres of new land brought under irrigation. 2. 12,000 acres will get supplemental water. 3. 44,000 feet annually for municipal & individual water. 4. 338 new farms. 5. 1,274 new farm people. 6. $3,588,000 in new farm production. 7. $11,505,000 investment in farm property.

(B) Indirect Benefits: 1. 1716 new jobs for urban people. 2. 4238 new people in local towns. 3. 78 new retail stores in local towns. 4. 130 professional or technical workers. 5. Undetermined dollars spent in area on recreation.

Are these benefits worth working for? I'm sure most of you will say that they are. Several people have worked over 30 years on this project. However, we all know that worthwhile things don't come easily. We must continue to work for it even though at times the horizon has many dark clouds. Too many dollars, too many man-hours, and too much blood, sweat and tears have been spent to give it up now!

The San Miguel Water Conservancy District board appreciates the fine support of the people of the San Miguel Basin, and they welcome any suggestion for support or opposition to any of its activities. It is our dedicated purpose to serve the best interests of all our constituents. With this in mind, four quarterly meetings will be held in 1970 and the schedule published in the local paper.