

Farm Water Watch



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Irrigation project brings canal water to farms

Four local landowners are now using Colorado River water for the irrigation of their land, thanks to the Irrigation Expansion Project completed in the spring.

Ocean Mist Farms, CalSunGold (owned by Castro Family Trust), Artesian Acres and Sunrise Marsh teamed up with Coachella Valley Water District to execute this project.

It will save 3,480 acre-feet per year of water from being pumped from the aquifer, the main source of drinking water in the Coachella Valley. With the aquifer currently in overdraft, the expansion helps preserve this valuable resource.

This project also provides benefits to the four landowners who together represent 753 acres of land. By building this expansion, they avoid the costs of pumping groundwater. This includes the power required for pumping and the maintenance and depreciation of the wells.

The successful collaboration of skilled engineers, contractors, attorneys, and the CVWD project engineers, led to the completion of the project within four months.



Pictured at the completion ceremony are from left, Steve Robbins, general manager-chief engineer of Coachella Valley Water District; Ed Boutonnet, Ocean Mist Farms; John Powell Jr., vice president of Coachella Valley District Board of Directors; Jeff Percy, Ocean Mist Farms and Ben Olson, Olson Engineering Systems.

In order to fund this \$2.5 million project, an assessment district was formed and bonds were sold to allow the landowners to pay off the costs over time.

To celebrate this accomplishment, a completion ceremony took place in April 2011, featuring representatives from the district, and participating landowners and engineers.

“This project is the result of a strong partnership,” CVWD General Manager-Chief Engineer Steve Robbins said at the completion ceremony. “I want to thank all the property owners for their commitment to this important project.”

Ben Olson of Olson Engineering, which designed the 30-inch pipeline used in the project, and Jeff Percy of Ocean Mist Farms, were also among the speakers.

They both emphasized the importance of this collective effort by the private/public partnership. For everyone involved, this project has proven to be a great success, and the strong partnership has been extremely valuable.

At the completion ceremony, Jeff Percy of Ocean Mist Farms said, “The aquifer is now stronger. This has been good for the district, farmers and for the community. We should all be proud today.”