

SAN GORGONIO PASS WATER AGENCY

(Beaumont, CA)

*Senior Engineer, Geologist, Scientist, Planner, Water
Resources Specialist*



THE AGENCY

The San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency was established in 1961 by the California State Legislature. The Agency's service area of approximately 225 square miles is located in Riverside County, and extends from Calimesa to Cabazon. The service area includes the incorporated cities of Calimesa, Beaumont and Banning, and the communities of Cherry Valley, Cabazon and the Banning Bench which, at the present time, have a population totaling over 100,000. The Agency currently sells water to three retail service providers – Beaumont Cherry Valley Water District, Yucaipa Valley Water District, and the City of Banning – with the potential of selling water to four additional retail water service providers.

The Agency is one of 29 State Water Contractors. Each Contractor is responsible for the importation of water from Northern California through the State Water Project (California aqueduct) into each Contractor's service area. Phase 1 of the final link of the State Water Project to the Pass region, the East Branch Extension (EBX), was completed in 2003, and Phase 2 was completed in 2017, bringing the capacity of the Extension to 17,300 acre-feet, which is the Agency's official allotment of State Project Water. This is enough to supply just over 50,000 families each year.

The EBX is operated by the Agency and the San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District (Valley District) under an agreement with the Department of Water Resources. The East Branch Extension begins at the Devil Canyon Power Plant in San Bernardino (near the Cal State, San Bernardino campus) and traverses the cities of San Bernardino, Highland and Yucaipa before crossing into Riverside County. It then traverses the City of Calimesa and the community of Cherry Valley before ending near the intersection of Orchard and Noble streets. Phase 2 consisted of six miles of 66-inch pipe under the Santa Ana River and through Mentone to Yucaipa, the new Citrus Pump Station and Reservoir in Mentone, and additional pumps for the Crafton Hills and Cherry Valley Pump Stations.

The Brookside Recharge Facility is a new groundwater recharge facility that just came online in 2019 and enables the Agency to import more water in wet years when it is available and to store it in the local groundwater basin(s). By adding the ability to store more water in local aquifers, the facility will help to drought-proof the region. Storage is one of the keys to surviving droughts. The Agency is moving in to a major capital improvement phase to add additional recharge facilities throughout the service area.

In addition to the Agency's allotment from the State Water Project, the Agency has procured other sources of water, including: 1) Yuba Water (an average of 200-300 acre-feet per year); 2) Nickel Water (1,700 acre-feet per year for 20 years of 100% reliable water from the Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency, with an option to extend the lease, if desired); and 3) Valley District water (up to 5,000 acre-feet per year of additional supplies in years in which the District has a surplus). The Agency is focused on expanding their current water portfolio and looking at local and out-of-area banking opportunities.

The Agency's mission is to import supplemental water and to protect and enhance local water supplies for use by present and future water users, and to sell imported water to local water districts within the service areas of the Agency. The Agency's vision is to partner with other local stakeholders to assure that growing regional water needs are met, optimizing the use of existing resources, without adverse impacts on local groundwater basins. In order to bring this vision to fruition, the Agency will: 1) play a role in managing local water resources; 2) bring supplemental water to the region to meet short- and long-term needs; and 3) develop and work from a financial plan to ensure that funding is available to reach these goals.

The Agency has three primary roles:

- **State Water Contractor** – As one of the 29 State Water Contractors and the State Water Contractor for the region, the Agency is responsible for operating and maintaining the Project within their service area, and extending it to serve the entire service area from Calimesa to Cabazon. The Agency is also a major investor in the Sites Reservoir Project and is participating in the Delta Conveyance Project.
- **Groundwater Basins** – The Agency is an advocate for the groundwater basins within their service area, including the Yucaipa, Beaumont and Cabazon basins, as well as lesser groundwater basins. A goal of the Agency is to preserve the basins for current and future generations. In order to do this, the Agency imports supplemental water from whatever sources provide the highest quality at the lowest price water, including the State Water Project as well as other potential sources. The Agency works with local water retailers and others to manage local and regional water resources in a sustainable manner. The Agency is also the local CASGEM entity and works closely with the USGS.
 - The Agency jurisdiction contains three new Groundwater Sustainability Agencies and an adjudication. Information on these entities can be found at:
 - [Beaumont Basin Watermaster](#)
 - [San Gorgonio Pass Water GSA](#)
 - [Yucaipa GSA](#)
- **Water Conservation and Education** – The Agency encourages conservation throughout their service area as a means to stretch existing resources and help preserve local groundwater. The Agency considers part of its mission to educate the public on water issues so that there is an understanding that water is a limited resource in the region.

In 2019, the Agency undertook an update of its [Strategic Plan](#) and identified five goals:

1. Regional Water Supply Plan
2. Effective Communication of the Agency's Strategy and Mission
3. Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Implementation
4. Infrastructure Plan
5. Financial Plan

The San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency is a public agency with a seven-member elected Board of Directors. Directors are elected to four-year staggered terms, with five members elected to represent specific divisions and two elected at-large.

The FY2021/22 General Fund budget is about \$11.5 million and Debt Service Fund budget is about \$27 million. The Agency currently has four employees: General Manager, Chief Financial Officer, and Operations & Maintenance Manager, Executive Assistant.

THE REGION

The San Gorgonio Pass is the narrow east-west strip of land between the San Bernardino Valley to the west and the Palm Springs/Coachella Valley area to east. The region is bounded by mountains on both the north and south. The region is in transition from primarily rural to urban land uses. It is among the fastest growing areas in Southern California due to its relatively inexpensive home prices. Many young families and retirees alike are moving to new homes and communities in Calimesa, Beaumont and Banning.

Natural landmarks include Mount San Gorgonio, Mount San Jacinto, and the headwaters of the Whitewater River. Other landmarks include Casino Morongo, Desert Hills Premium Outlet Mall, the wind farm, and the Cabazon dinosaurs. The water in this area is so pure that Arrowhead Water opened a bottling plant in Cabazon in the 1990s in order to bottle the pure water from the slopes of the San Bernardino Mountains.

The western half of the Pass is in the Santa Ana River watershed, while the eastern half drains to the Whitewater River. Major surface water streams include the Whitewater and San Gorgonio Rivers, San Timoteo Creek, Noble Creek, Marshall Creek and Smith Creek. Much of the Pass is above an elevation of 2,500 feet.

KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The region is experiencing significant development and is in the highest growth area in Riverside County. Local economic development is expected to continue. Key challenges and opportunities facing the position include the following:

- Identifying and securing additional sources of water at the most reasonable cost.

- Keeping abreast of what is going on in Sacramento with regard to Delta Conveyance and the Sites Reservoir Project, and conveying this information to the General Manager/Board.
- Assisting in developing a long-range financial plan, including major capital improvements, the possibility of the implementation of a capital capacity fee, and reviewing the current water rate.
- Implementing and updating the Urban Water Management Plan.
- Completing and implementing the requirements of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).
- Assisting with developing strategies of succession planning given that some employees will be eligible for retirement.
- Continuing to educate the public about the Agency's long-term activities.

THE POSITION

The Agency is experiencing a variety of new challenges. These include participation in the three new local GSA's, working with the local adjudication, entering a material capital improvement phase, expanding the region's water portfolio and is heavily focused on collaboration with other local resource managers.

The position's job duties will be tailored to fit the candidate:

The Position reports to the General Manager. Duties, responsibilities and authority of the Position may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Responsible for administration and the activities of the Agency under the direction and guidance of the General Manager. Directs, organizes, plans, manages, administers and supervises the work of Agency. Develop and execute required resource management plans while fostering and leveraging technical and policy partnerships with regional water leaders.
- Plans, directs and coordinates, the Agency's work plan(s); meets with management staff to identify and resolve problems; may assign projects and programmatic areas of responsibility; reviews and evaluates work methods and procedures. Provides technical oversight for the Agency in the fields of hydrogeology, engineering, science, planning or related resource management fields.
- Performs project management duties, which include: defining project requirements, timelines, and resources; coordinating with staff and external consultants; preparing requests for proposals; reviewing bids and selecting consultants; planning work (tactical and strategic); preparing agenda submittals; developing policy; tracking and reporting on project progress and costs; managing changes in project scope and change orders; monitoring schedules; and, performing other related activities.

- Assists with management responsibility for Agency services and activities, and recommends and administers policies and procedures.
- Assists with the development and implementation of Agency goals, objectives, policies and priorities; and allocates resources accordingly.
- Evaluates proposed state and federal law, regulations, and court decisions for their impact on Agency groundwater resources; recommends and implements policy and procedure changes consistent with requirements; directs or conducts research and analysis of the Agency's needs and requirements in assigned areas of responsibility, recommends appropriate actions and implements programs.
- Meets frequently with the staff of the retail water providers within the Agency's service area to allow open communication and dialogue on current issues of concern, and to develop and promote long-term success in providing its citizens with an adequate water supply.
- Subject to General Manager approval, attends and participates in professional group meetings; stays abreast of trends and innovations in the field of water resource management and keeps the Agency informed about such matters.
- Assists with the planning of Board of Directors' agendas; prepares resource and background materials for agenda items; may recommend Board action.
- May respond to and resolve difficult and sensitive citizen inquiries and complaints.
- Assists with the business and functions of the Agency including, but not limited to, the purchase of water from the Department of Water Resources; sale of water to the Agency's customers; and collection of water rates, fees, assessments and other revenues of the Agency.
- May have project management responsibilities for carrying out the duties and obligations of the Agency pursuant to any and all contracts and/or agreements to which the Agency is a party.
- Does whatever is needed to carry out the purposes, policies and obligations of the Agency. Is prepared to perform whatever tasks are necessary to meet emergencies involving the Agency and to work whenever necessary to accomplish these requirements.
- Reviews and becomes knowledgeable about all programs, policies, contracts and issues of the Agency.

THE CANDIDATE

Education and Experience

- Desire a relevant bachelor's degree, from an accredited college or university. A Graduate degree in one of the cited fields above is preferred.
- Prefer at least five years of professional level water industry experience. California experience is important.
- Some form of professional license/accreditation is a plus but not required.
- Should have a good driving record. In addition, it is preferred that the selected candidate choose to live within a reasonable driving distance of the Agency.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

Excellent interpersonal and communication skills are important, including being a good public speaker. The selected candidate should also be able to:

- Monitor, collect and disseminate important information related to the Agency, State Water Project, State and Federal government, and others as it applies to the San Geronio Pass Water Agency.
- Provide information to the General Manager in a timely and complete manner, providing his/her best professional recommendations, yet implement Board decisions once made.
- Communicate technical information in lay terms.
- Oversee development of Board agendas.
- Manage projects and monitor and oversee the work of consultants.
- Work in a cooperative and productive manner with the retail agencies who purchase water from the San Geronio Pass Water Agency.
- Develop and maintain good working relationships with other water agencies, local governments, and similar organizations.
- Adapt to the ever-changing situation with regard to water (droughts, politics and other factors).

Management Style and Personal Traits

The ideal candidate will be a team player who works well in a dynamic and fast paced environment. A creative, strategic perspective is important along with the ability to execute hands-on tactics. They should develop a mutual trust relationship with area stakeholders and other government entities (e.g. DWR). It is important for this person to be intelligent and a quick learner, politically savvy, and professional. In addition, he/she should be patient and even-tempered, thick skinned, ethical, and have a pleasant and friendly demeanor.

COMPENSATION

The salary for this position is open, with hiring dependent upon the qualifications and experience of the selected candidate. In addition, benefits are provided which currently include: vacation, holidays, sick leave, bereavement leave and personal leave; health and dental insurance through CalPERS for employee and dependents; life insurance; cellular phone; professional memberships and dues. Retirement is through CalPERS. For classic employees the formula is 3% @ 60, with the employee paying 3% of the employee's 8% contribution. For other employees, per PEPRA, the formula is 2% @ 62 with the employee paying the full employee contribution.

HOW TO APPLY

Send resumes (email preferred) by **February 22, 2022** to:

San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency

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Beaumont, CA 92223

Phone: 951.845.2577

E-mail: cstiff@sgpwa.com

An Equal Opportunity/ADA Employer

Additional information about the San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency can be found at www.sgpwa.com.