

San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency

DATE: April 21, 2025

TO: Board of Directors Meeting

FROM: Lance Eckhart, General Manager

BY: Matt Howard, Operations Manager

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF NEW STAFF POSITION

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board adopt a change to the Organization Chart to include the position of Water Systems Operator I/II and authorize the General Manager to initiate recruitment and hiring for the position.

PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION

- Board of Directors – June 3, 2024: The Board adopted the 2024-2025 fiscal year budget, which included funds for additional Water Systems Operator staff.
- Board of Directors – January 27, 2025: The Board was presented with the upcoming addition of an additional staff member for the Operations team.

BACKGROUND

The San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency's Operations Department plays a vital role in ensuring the safe, reliable, and efficient delivery and management of water resources throughout the service area. However, with growing regional coordination efforts, increasing demands on infrastructure, and expanding operational responsibilities, the current staffing level is no longer sufficient to sustain the Agency's field operations at the required level.

Over the past several years, the Agency has assumed increasing responsibility for maintaining and overseeing its recharge facilities, pumping stations, flow control facilities, and groundwater monitoring network. These systems are critical to managing imported water deliveries, optimizing local groundwater supplies, and maintaining water quality. Additionally, the Agency's infrastructure requires regular and preventative maintenance, inspection, and timely response to equipment failures or system issues. These responsibilities often require physically demanding work in varied and sometimes hazardous field conditions, including emergency response and after-hours availability.

The new Water Systems Operator I/II will primarily support and focus on the following operational tasks to help meet the growing needs of the Agency:

- Provide coverage for pump station monitoring (pumping) for the East Branch Extension control center at Citrus Reservoir, on-call rotations, holidays, and emergency callouts
- Respond to underground service alerts (USAs), conveyance issues, water quality issues, and customer concerns in a timely manner
- Perform ongoing inspections and maintenance on recharge basins, pipelines, meters, valves, air/vac assemblies, blowoffs, and other appurtenances
- Monitor and control system flows using SCADA to maintain recharge facility levels and meet water delivery targets
- Manage the Agency's extensive monitoring well network in coordination with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), including regular measurements and compliance with groundwater management protocols

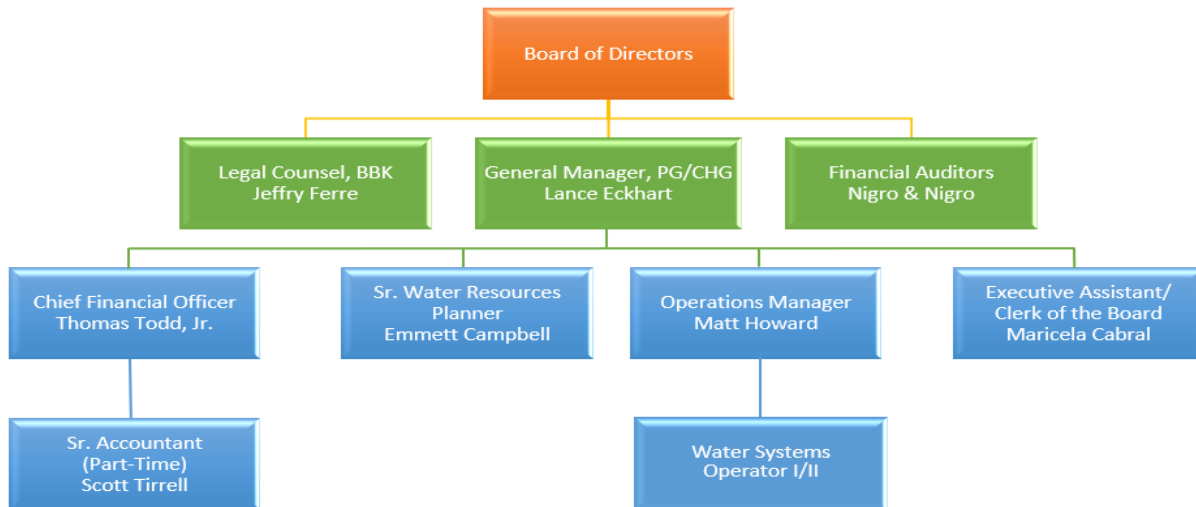
Recruiting a Water Systems Operator I/II will strengthen our operational flexibility and allow us to distribute the workload more evenly, reduce response times, and ensure adequate field coverage to support reliable system operations. The position will also improve our capacity to support data collection and reporting required for compliance with SGMA (Sustainable Groundwater Management Act) and GSP (Groundwater Sustainability Plan) implementation efforts. Investing in this position now will support day-to-day field operations and build long-term operational resilience as infrastructure demands grow and regional collaboration efforts expand.

ANALYSIS

Currently, the staff consists of five members: the General Manager/Chief Hydrogeologist, the Chief Financial Officer, the Operations Manager, the Senior Water Resources Planner, and the Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board. This position will be under the direct supervision of the Operations Manager.

The proposed position is flexibly staffed, which allows the Agency to recruit broadly and select a candidate based on qualifications and experience. A Water Systems Operator I would typically enter at a training level and progress toward full independence, while a Water Systems Operator II would be expected to perform duties with minimal supervision and bring a more advanced skill set.

The proposed Water Systems Operator I/II would be a non-exempt, entry-level to intermediate-level position. Recognizing a competitive labor market, the solicitation will be open to individuals with varied backgrounds and experience. A draft job description has been prepared (attached). The proposed solicitation will be broad to attract quality candidates with varied skill sets and experience that could benefit the Agency.



FISCAL IMPACT

The Board adopted the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget, including funding for an additional operations staff member (Budget line item #17) to be hired in Q2 2025. The budget also included funding for the benefits and required taxes as well (line items #18 through #26). The estimated salary range for the Water Systems Operator I/II position is approximately \$93,000 to \$128,000, based on preliminary figures provided by Gallagher Consulting. This range is subject to revision upon completion of Gallagher Consulting's comprehensive classification and compensation study for the Agency. A final salary amount would be negotiated depending on the individual's experience and qualifications. Employee overhead to cover benefits and other associated expenses is estimated to be approximately 65% of compensation.

AGENCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN APPLICATION

The addition of a Water Systems Operator I/II directly aligns with the Agency's strategic goals of positioning it for long-term success by continuing to create a welcoming and collaborative environment that attracts and retains devoted employees.

- Develop a staffing plan that addresses succession planning and staffing needs, challenges, and opportunities to ensure long-term organizational success.
- Annually review and update job descriptions, classifications, compensation, and benefits to competitively attract and retain top talent.

ACTION

Staff recommends that the Board adopt a change to the Organization Chart to include the position of Water Systems Operator I/II and authorize the General Manager to initiate recruitment and hiring for the position.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Water Systems Operator I/II Job Description



WATER SYSTEMS OPERATOR I/II

DEFINITION

Under immediate (Distribution Operator I) to general (Distribution Operator II) supervision performs semi-skilled and skilled work in the operation, maintenance, and repair of Agency recharge facilities, pressure control devices, pumping facilities, service lines, meters, valves, and fittings, and performs related work as required.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives immediate (Distribution Operator I) to general (Distribution Operator II) supervision from the Operations Manager. Exercises no direct supervision over staff.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

Distribution Operator I: This is the entry-level classification in the Distribution Operator series. Initially under close supervision, incumbents learn and perform semi-skilled and skilled duties involving the operation, maintenance, and repair of a variety of Agency operations systems and equipment. As experience is gained, assignments become more varied, complex, and difficult; close supervision and frequent review of work lessen as an incumbent demonstrates skill to perform the work independently. Positions at this level usually perform most of the duties required of the positions at the Distribution Operator II level but are not expected to function at the same skill level and usually exercise less independent discretion and judgment in matters related to work procedures and methods. Work is usually supervised while in progress and fits an established structure or pattern. Exceptions or changes in procedures are explained in detail as they arise.

Distribution Operator II: This is the fully qualified journey-level classification in the Distribution Operator series. Positions at this level are distinguished from the Distribution Operator I level by the performance of the full range of duties as assigned, working independently, and exercising judgment and initiative. Positions at this level receive only occasional instruction or assistance as new or unusual situations arise and are fully aware of the operating procedures and policies of the work unit.

Positions in the Distribution Operator I/II class series are flexibly staffed. Positions at the Distribution Operator II level are normally filled by advancement from the Distribution Operator I level. Progression to the Distribution Operator II level is dependent on (i) management affirmation that the position is performing the full range of duties assigned to the classification; (ii) satisfactory work performance; (iii) the incumbent meeting the minimum qualifications for the classification including any licenses and certifications, and Agency assessment testing requirements; and (iv) management approval for progression to the Distribution Operator II level.

EXAMPLES OF TYPICAL JOB FUNCTIONS (Illustrative Only)

Management reserves the right to add, modify, change, or rescind the work assignments of different positions and to make reasonable accommodations where appropriate so that qualified employees can perform the essential functions of the job.

Positions at the Distribution Operator I level may perform some of these duties and responsibilities in a learning capacity.

- Operates, inspects, maintains, and repairs water pumping facilities, treatment facilities, and water distribution facilities; identifies causes of malfunctions and repairs or replace equipment as needed; monitors and checks reservoirs; maintains and repairs waterlines.

- Operates the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system to monitor and control pump stations, turnouts, turbines, generators, and flow systems. Adjust water flows to meet schedules for reservoir levels, irrigation schedules and system demands; monitor and respond to alarms and potential pump station shutdowns.
- Performs routine and preventative maintenance of pipeline and recharge facilities, and exercise valves, air vacs, blow offs, hydrants, and other associated appurtenances.
- Performs routine inspection of pumping facilities, turnouts, reservoirs, turbines, generators, and other facilities.
- Reports actual and potential problems to management; performs maintenance as needed.
- Operates and maintains pumps and related flow and pressure control devices.
- Prepare flow and reservoir calculations.
- Investigate Underground Service Alerts and public complaints.
- Performs a variety of duties relating to operating and maintaining the water supply and water quality, including measuring water levels in wells; calibrating instrumentation equipment; investigating leaks; and conducting water quality sampling.
- Manages the Agency monitoring well network in conjunction with the USGS. Complies with best management practices for measuring monitoring wells.
- Reads and understands recording devices used in treatment and pumping operations.
- Checks reservoirs for levels and damages; ensures operating switches and safety valves are properly set and secure.
- Investigates and recommends corrections to water pressure or water quality problems.
- Works from work orders, drawings, plat book, recording devices, specifications, schematics, sketches, maps, and verbal and written instructions.
- Estimates labor, materials, and equipment needed for assigned projects; monitors inventory levels of materials and equipment; orders, receives, and maintains inventory of materials and equipment as needed.
- Maintains work, time, and material records and reports.
- Provides recommendations regarding needed parts and supplies.
- Observes safe work methods and makes appropriate use of related safety equipment as required.
- Performs general maintenance such as grounds maintenance, weed abatement, landscaping and janitorial duties, some of which require heavy manual labor and/or use of chemicals, including carpentry, cement work, paint and graffiti removal.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

Positions at the Distribution Operator I level may exercise some of these knowledge and abilities statements in a learning capacity.

- Principles and practices of water distribution system operations.
- Principles and practices of water hydraulics.
- Principles, practices, methods, equipment, materials, and tools used in the maintenance and repair of pumps, pumping facilities, reservoirs, domestic water distribution systems, automatic controls, and pressure regulating equipment.
- Principles and practices of distribution system design and hydraulics including system layout, storage facilities, system mapping, and flow rates and velocity.
- Principles and practices of plumbing.
- Watershed protection, wells, groundwater, surface water, reservoirs, raw water storage, and clear well storage.
- Principles and practices of chemical feeders, pumps and motors, blowers and compressors, water meters, pressure gauges, electrical generators, and SCADA system operations.
- Principles and practices of maintenance and repair of water mains and piping including excavation, installation, repair, joints and fittings, leak detection and repair, pipe selection, and service line installation.

- Safe application, operation, and maintenance of tools and equipment used in plumbing and construction trades.
- Occupational hazards and safety equipment and practices related to the work including confined space requirements.
- Basic arithmetic.
- Principles and procedures of record-keeping and reporting.
- Agency and mandated safety rules, regulations, and protocols.
- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with the public, vendors, contractors, and Agency staff.
- The structure and content of the English language to effectively perform the work.
- Modern equipment and communication tools used for business functions and program, project, and task coordination, including computers and software programs relevant to work performed.
- Operational characteristics, and the safe and proper use of, machinery, tools, equipment, and materials necessary to perform assigned duties.

Ability to:

- Operate, maintain, and make repairs to pumps, automatic control equipment, pressure regulators, and pressure recorders.
- Read and understand recording devices used in pumping operations and distribution system maintenance.
- Analyze the cause of distribution system malfunctions and take corrective actions.
- Recognize, analyze, and troubleshoot malfunctions with water meters, regulating valves and make appropriate repairs.
- Install, repair, and maintain water meters and valves for accurate measurement and flow.
- Install remote reading devices including measurement device, pipe, and wire.
- Use a diverse range of diagnostic tools to identify maintenance needs.
- Skillfully and safely operate a variety of equipment and power and hand tools used in the field.
- Perform heavy manual labor.
- Estimate necessary materials and equipment to complete assignments.
- Prepare records and basic reports.
- Read, interpret, and apply a wide variety of technical information from manuals, drawings, plat book and recording devices, specifications, layouts, blueprints, and maps.
- Make accurate arithmetic calculations.
- Maintain accurate logs, records, and basic written records of work performed.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy and procedural (add legal if applicable) guidelines.
- Effectively use computer systems, software applications relevant to work performed, and modern business equipment to perform a variety of work tasks.
- Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing, using appropriate English grammar and syntax.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

Education and Experience:

Any combination of training and experience that would provide the required knowledge, skills, and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the required qualifications would be:

Education: High School Diploma or G.E.D. equivalent

Experience:

- Distribution Operator I – One (1) year of experience working in a domestic water distribution system.

- **Distribution Operator II** – Two (2) years of progressively responsible experience performing duties similar to a Distribution Operator I with San Geronimo Pass Water Agency or other similar agency.

Licenses and Certifications:

Distribution Operator I/II

- Possession of a valid California Driver's License or comparable mobility, to be maintained throughout employment.

Distribution Operator I

- Ability to obtain within one year of employment, a valid Grade D1 Water Distribution Operators certification by the State of California Department of Health Services, to be maintained throughout employment.

Distribution Operator II

- Possession of a valid Grade 1 (D1) Water Distribution Operators certification by the State of California Department of Health Services, to be maintained throughout employment.
- Possession of, or ability to obtain within one year of appointment, a valid Grade 2 (D2) Water Distribution Operators certification by the State of California Department of Health Services, to be maintained throughout employment.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Must possess mobility to work in the field; strength, stamina, and mobility to perform medium to heavy physical work; to sit, stand, and walk on level, uneven, or slippery surfaces; frequently reach, twist, turn, kneel, bend, stoop, squat, crouch, grasp and make repetitive hand movement in the performance of daily duties; possible entry into confined spaces and the use of confined entry equipment; to climb and descend ladders and to operate varied hand and power tools and construction equipment; and vision to inspect and operate equipment. The job involves fieldwork requiring frequent walking in operational areas to identify problems or hazards. Finger dexterity is needed to operate and repair tools and equipment. Employees must possess the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects averaging a weight of 50 pounds or heavier weights, in all cases with the use of proper equipment and/or assistance from other staff.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Employees work in the field and are exposed to loud noise levels, cold and hot temperatures, inclement weather conditions, road hazards, vibration, confining workspace, work at heights, chemicals, mechanical and/or electrical hazards, exposure to biologic and infectious agents, exposure to vermin, insects, parasites, etc., hazardous physical substances and fumes, dust and air contaminants. Employees may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Agency employees are expected to work overtime, weekends, evenings and holidays as required to accommodate the Agency needs, in addition to responding as a Disaster Services Emergency Worker.

Employees in this classification are subject to on-call, which may include rotating-duty schedule, weekends and 24-hour emergency call out with little or no notice.

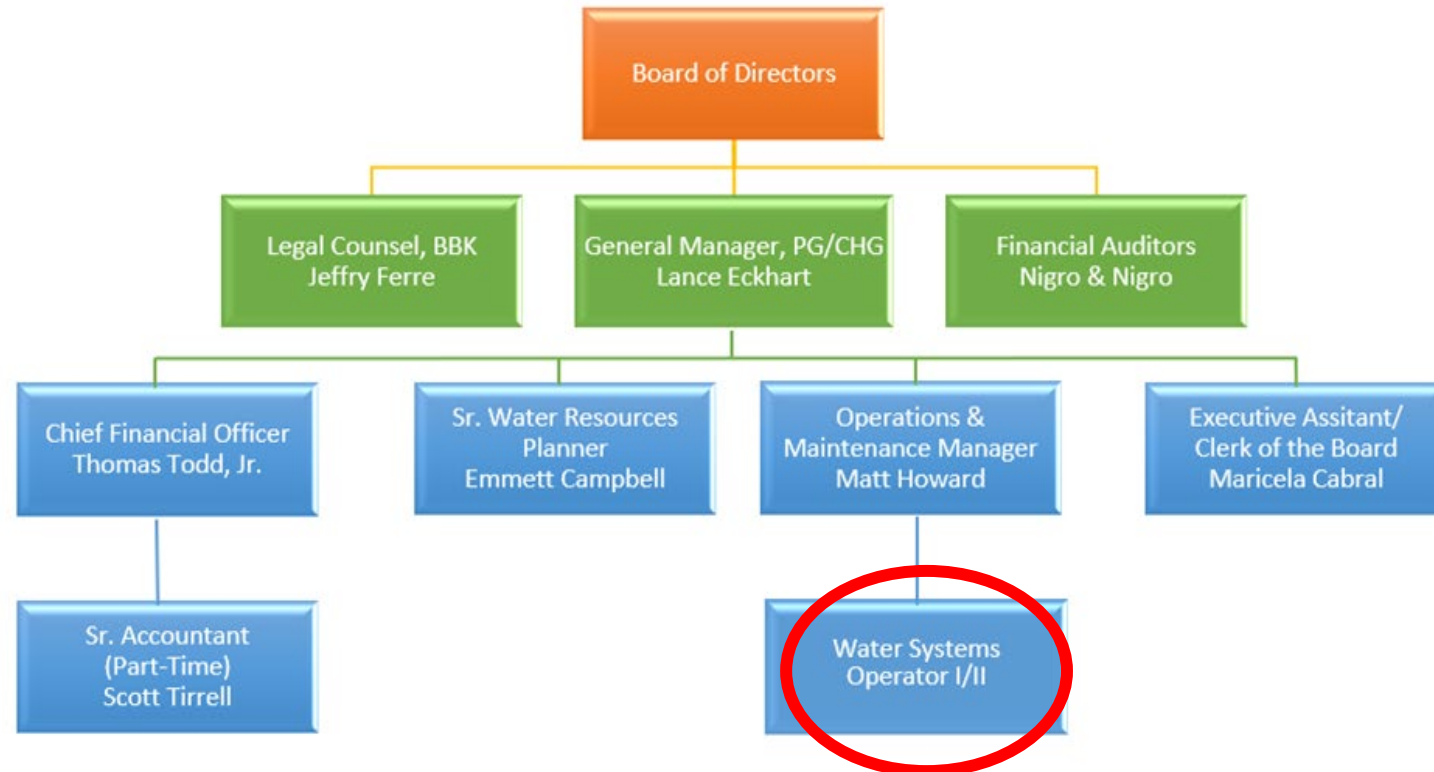
Consideration of New Staff Position – Water Systems Operator I/II

Board of Directors Meeting

April 21, 2025

Operational Need for Additional Staff

- Increased workload and scope tied to recharge operations, SCADA monitoring, and system maintenance
- Limited field coverage impacts response time, preventive maintenance, and overall project progress
- Growing regional coordination efforts, increasing demands on infrastructure, and expanding operational responsibilities, the current staffing level is no longer sufficient to sustain the Agency's field operations at the required level.



Water Systems Operator I/II – Role Overview

- Flexibly staffed position (entry-level to journey-level based on qualifications)
- Key responsibilities:
 - Perform ongoing inspections and maintenance on recharge basins, pipelines, meters, valves, air/vac assemblies, blowoffs, and other appurtenances
 - Responds to underground service alerts (USAs), conveyance issues, water quality issues, and customer concerns in a timely manner
 - Monitor and control system flows using SCADA to maintain recharge facility levels and meet water delivery targets
 - Provide coverage for pump station monitoring (pumping) for the East Branch Extension control center at Citrus Reservoir, on-call rotations, holidays, and emergency callouts Assist with on-call and emergency response

Operational Benefits of New Position

Enhances capacity to maintain and operate critical infrastructure

Increases responsiveness to water system issues, water quality problems, and incidents related to the EBX

Supports regulatory compliance (e.g., DigAlert, BBWM, SGMA, GSP implementation)

Provides relief to existing staff and strengthens safety by reducing workload pressure (having an extra hand)

Improves consistency and reliability of Agency operations

Fiscal Impact

- The Water Systems Operator I/II position is included in the Board adopted Fiscal year 2024-25 budget.
- Estimated salary range for Water Systems Operator I/II of approximately \$93,000 - \$128,000
 - Final salary range to be confirmed pending completion of compensation study
- The job description and finalized compensation details will be submitted to CPS HR to initiate the recruitment process for this position.



Staff Recommendation

- Staff recommends that the Board adopt a change to the Organization Chart to include the position of Water Systems Operator I/II and authorize the General Manager to initiate recruitment and hiring for the position.