

San Geronio Pass Water Agency

DATE: November 17, 2025

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Lance Eckhart, General Manager

BY: Lance Eckhart, General Manager

SUBJECT: ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH CV STRATEGIES FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION SUPPORT SERVICES

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the General Manager to enter into a contract with CV Strategies to provide various public information support services.

PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION

- Board of Directors – August 23, 2023: The Board formed the Public Information & Outreach Ad-Hoc Committee to develop a plan to increase Agency public information and miscellaneous support services.
- Public Information & Outreach Ad-Hoc – August 6, 2025: The Committee reviewed and met with the current public information consultant to discuss continuing work through FY 2025-26, along with specific public information tasks. The committee recommended that a sole-source contract be moved to the Board for consideration.
- Public Information & Outreach Ad-Hoc – October 30, 2025: The Committee reviewed a revised scope through Fiscal Year 2026-27. The scope was revised to be more narrowly focused, and the Committee recommended that an updated sole-source contract be brought to the Board for consideration.

BACKGROUND

Strategic Goal 7: Engage and educate the public in a meaningful way that generates a greater understanding of the Agency’s role in water supply reliability and the importance of sustainability.

The Agency has been working with CV Strategies to support various public information campaigns for over a decade. Over the last three years, CV Strategies has assisted with social media, press releases, op eds, brochures/informational materials, assisted the Inland Empire Resource Conservation District with event support, ribbon-cuttings, and the 5-Year Strategic Plan update.

The public information efforts have been successful, and the Agency is more recognized locally and abroad. Staff believes the Board would like to continue the program: 1) using current efforts as a starting point; 2) continue efforts without interruption; 3) maintain momentum. In 2025-26, the Agency will make significant decisions to continue participating in “generational projects” such as the Sites Reservoir Project and pursuing

the Backbone Pipeline, where sustained local support will be paramount. Additionally, the Agency is pursuing various local recharge projects and continuing to develop our collaborative programs with local stakeholder partners. Education and support of local programs will promote awareness of Agency activities and collaborative efforts, helping to support the Agency's developing regional role.

ANALYSIS

The Committee met with Staff on four separate occasions to develop a strategy and an implementable plan to address the Agency's public information program. The main issues the Committee considered were the following: hire an in-house Public Information Officer or continue to outsource; how to accelerate the program and avoid any gap in public information; consider continuing with the Agency's current consultant or issue a request for proposals; and develop a program to be moved to the Board for consideration.

- In-house vs. outsource: In the past, the Committee considered adding a single professional staff addition (e.g., Public Information Officer) to the current staff. This would result in a single experienced position requiring a moderate compensation package. There would still need to be support for the new staff to execute the numerous initiatives the Committee was interested in, and therefore, a staff addition would be necessary, along with a significant degree of consulting support from the team. The Committee agreed that, although this option may be considered in the future, outsourcing to a consulting team would better align with the Agency's near-term desires.
- No gap in service/current support: The Committee wanted to avoid any gap in the current service (i.e., social media, press coverage, event support, etc.) and continue the current program. Hiring new staff or requesting proposals would take a material amount of staff time and calendar time to implement. Any new support, whether new staff and/or a new consulting firm, would require a considerable amount of time to onboard and familiarize with the Agency, local stakeholders, and the numerous initiatives the Agency is involved with related to the State Water Project. The Committee has considered the above and recommended that the Agency retain the current consultant to maintain momentum. It has also requested a tailored scope of services from CV Strategies, aligned closely with the Agency's present initiatives. If approved by the Board, this would result in a limited-term, sole-source contract.
- Committee recommended program: A proposal concept from CV Strategies was presented to the Committee. The Committee modified and refined the proposal (twice), resulting in the desired and optional future services. The term of the proposal was through FY 2025-27. This recommendation would enable the Agency to continue maintaining and accelerating its current public information program, aligning with our current strategic plan and being materially focused on key present Agency initiatives.

FISCAL IMPACT

The funds for this contract will come from the General Fund budget for FY 2025-26 (the Green Bucket), charged to the line item 'Public Information and Education (line #99), which has a budget of \$260,000 for the current fiscal year. The proposed contract value (two full fiscal years) is time and materials, not to exceed \$440,000. As of October 31, 2025, almost \$32,000 has been expended for this line item.

This proposal has been reviewed by the Public Information and Outreach Committee and approved for presentation to the Board. The contract spans two fiscal years but will still require Board approval for the new budget year, 2026-27, affording the Board additional control over activities and expenditures. The Board reserves the right to cancel with 30 days' notice at any time.

This proposal is considered a sole-source proposal, based on previous Agency experience and a desire to maintain an already established working relationship with CV Strategies.

ACTION

Authorize the General Manager to enter into a contract with CV Strategies to provide various public information support services.

ATTACHMENTS

CV Communications and Outreach Proposal, through Fiscal Year 2026-27

November 10, 2025

Lance Eckhart, General Manager
San Geronio Pass Water Agency
1210 Beaumont Avenue
Beaumont, CA 92223

Dear Lance,

Thank you for the opportunity to continue our long-standing partnership with the San Geronio Pass Water Agency. For more than a decade, we have worked together to tell the story of water reliability and long-term planning in the Pass. In the last several years especially, the Agency's forward-thinking leadership, investment strategy, and transparency have elevated its standing in the region and across the state. It has been rewarding to help support that growth and momentum.

Following our strategic communications discussions with you and the Ad Hoc Public Information and Outreach Committee, we have developed a two-year communications and engagement plan that builds on the Agency's current successes. The focus is to reinforce public confidence in long-term reliability planning, highlight the value of major investments, and clearly connect the Agency's participation in Sites Reservoir to local and regional benefits. Our approach elevates outreach from simple reminders into story-driven communication that strengthens trust, understanding, and stewardship.

We are pleased to present the proposed scope of work and budget for FY2025/2026 and FY 2026/2027. This includes ongoing communications leadership, stakeholder engagement, media strategy, brand implementation, Board communications development, community visibility, and a phased modernization of the Agency's website to enhance transparency and measurable engagement.

We look forward to presenting this work plan to the full Board and to continuing our partnership to support the Agency's mission and strategic priorities.

Sincerely,



Erin LaCombe
Founder/CEO
CV Strategies

Scope of Work

Core Communications Program

Fiscal Year 2025/26: Launch Year

- Finalize and roll out updated brand messaging and tagline.
- Media relations, press releases, press outreach, placements and regional coverage.
- Begin coordinated digital and social storytelling tied to economic value, reliability, and investment.
- Facilitate quarterly Board communications development and training sessions.
- Establish youth, civic, and chamber outreach partnerships.
- Conduct project tours and community presentations.

Fiscal Year 2026/27: Sustaining Momentum and Measuring Impact

- Host Business and Water Leadership Roundtable.
- Regional Water and Economy Forum with chamber and civic partners.
- Ongoing infrastructure progress tours and community visibility events.
- “One Year Since the Summit” progress communications campaign.
- Public awareness and perception survey on reliability and trust.
- Water and Economy Progress Report and statewide communications award submissions.
- Annual KPI review and development of FY 2028 outreach plan.
- Media relations, press releases, press outreach, placements and regional coverage.

Events and Public Engagement

- **Ongoing:** Host groundbreaking and ribbon cutting events for partnership successes.
- **Spring 2026:** Project tours and regional open houses; end of year budget review.
- **Summer 2026:** “*State of the Pass*” *Economic Summit* and partner media coverage.
- **Fall 2026:** Regional Open House and KPI review.

Media and Digital Content

Website Overhaul and Digital Refresh (FY 2025–27)

- Modernize website branding, navigation, and user experience.
- Highlight Sites Reservoir benefits and infrastructure investments.
- Add interactive features such as a project map or “Your Water in Action” experience.
- Ensure WCAG 2.1 Level AA accessibility and strong mobile performance.
- Integrate analytics dashboards and quarterly reporting to track engagement.

Social Media and Digital Advertising

- Create an annual editorial calendar
- Draft and post innovative social media

Budget Category
Core Communications
Program

Annual Cost
\$120,000 annually

Description
Strategic communications,
media relations, digital
content, Board
development, collateral,
community partnerships,
analytics, statewide
recognition.

Events and Public
Engagement

\$60,000 annually

“State of the Pass” Economic
Summit, regional forums,
open houses, leadership
roundtables, tours, partner
events, and coordination.

Media and Digital Content

\$40,000 total

Website redesign, structure
updates, accessibility,
interactive features,
analytics integration and
ongoing monthly social
media

See Spreadsheet attached.

..... *Rates for Communication Services*

- » President – \$275/hour
- » Executives – \$250/hour
- » Account Manager – \$200/hour

- » Specialist/Design/Video/Photography – \$175/hour
- » Translator – \$125/hour
- » Support Staff – \$100/hour

..... *Terms & Compensation*

Strategies shall be paid for all hours and expenses accrued up to the date of termination. Hard costs incurred by CV Strategies will be billed to the client with a nominal service charge of 10% (not to exceed \$250 per item). This includes all anticipated hard costs such as printing, mailing, photography, video, advertising, etc. Required travel mileage will be billed at the published IRS rate. All services and hard costs will be billed monthly. Invoices should be paid in full upon receipt.

..... *Agreed & Approved*

Name

Signature

Title

Date

Description	2 Years - Fy 7/1/2025 - 6/30/27	Annually	Avg Monthly
Core Communications	\$ 240,000.00	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Events	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
Media and Digital Content	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 3,333.33
Totals	\$ 440,000.00	\$ 220,000.00	\$ 18,333.33

Core Communications			
Description	Services	Hard Costs	Total
Community Visibility & Tours	\$ 22,500.00		\$ 22,500.00
Design, Branding & Materials	\$ 30,000.00		\$ 30,000.00
Media Relations & Advertising	\$ 40,000.00		\$ 40,000.00
Board Development & Training	\$ 20,000.00		\$ 20,000.00
Measurement & Awards	\$ 7,500.00		\$ 7,500.00
Totals	\$ 120,000.00	\$ -	\$ 120,000.00

Events			
Description	Services	Hard Costs	Total
Local	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
Regional	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 40,000.00
Totals	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 60,000.00

Media and Digital Content			
Description	Services	Hard Costs	Total
Website Development	\$ 20,000.00		\$ 20,000.00
Social Media	\$ 20,000.00		\$ 20,000.00
Totals	\$ 40,000.00	\$ -	\$ 40,000.00



San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency Strategic Outreach Plan

2025-2027

Building Awareness of Water Supply Confidence and Regional Vitality

Purpose

- Launch of a coordinated, multi-year initiative to strengthen understanding of water reliability, economic vitality, and regional collaboration.



- Focus on visibility, trust, and leadership, beginning in Q4 2025 with a strong foundation of tone, tagline, and message consistency.

Outreach Goals

- Build public and stakeholder confidence in the Agency's water reliability and long-term planning.
- Strengthen visibility of major infrastructure investments and their economic impact.
- Connect Sites Reservoir participation to local and regional benefits.
- Elevate communications beyond conservation and simple water use reminders into substantive, story-driven outreach.
- Increase community engagement through events, education, and youth partnerships.
- Ensure Board and staff alignment through quarterly communications development sessions.
- Measure performance through defined KPIs and transparent biannual budget reviews.

*KPI= key performance indicators





Key Messages

Imported Water

- Imported water is the foundation of regional reliability and economic vitality.
- Investments in Sites Reservoir ensure stability for future generations.
- Reliable imported supplies make local projects, housing growth, and job creation possible.



Regional Reliability & Investment

- Every local infrastructure project strengthens water supply confidence.
- Water reliability drives the economy from schools and small businesses to logistics and housing.



Community Trust & Stewardship

- Stewardship means investing in systems that sustain our communities.
- Transparent communications and engagement strengthen confidence in local water governance.



Why is this important now?

- Imported water is the foundation of the region.
- Nobody else is telling that story.
- This is a defining moment with major decisions to be made.
- SGPWA has unique standing.
- Leadership means owning the message.
- Action helps protect the future.



Fiscal Year 2025/26

Launching the Two-Year Campaign for Reliability, Visibility & Engagement

Key Initiatives

- **Brand Launch:** Finalize and roll out tagline *focused on the connection between water supply confidence and regional vitality*
- **Regional Milestone:** County Line Road Groundbreaking (Oct 2025) with media coverage highlighting investment and collaboration.
- **Community Connection:** Youth partnerships, civic events, and educational messaging introduce the new brand identity.
- **Media and Visibility:** Begin coordinated digital campaign; consistent storytelling through web and social media.
- **Engagement and Education:** Launch project tours, economic insights, and Board communications briefings.

Fiscal Year 2025/26

Events and Outreach

- **Spring 2026:** Project tours and regional open houses; end of year budget review.
- **Summer 2026:** “State of the Pass” Economic Summit and partner media coverage.
- **Fall 2026:** Regional Open House and KPI review.

Outcomes

- Elevated public confidence in water reliability
- Visible alignment with regional partners and media
- Consistent tone, message, and digital presence



Current Successes

County Line Road Groundbreaking & Regional Media Coverage

Page 2 | www.newsmirror.com

News Mirror
25154 Yucaipa Blvd., Yucaipa, CA 92399
Phone: 909.797.9101
www.newsmirror.com

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Water agencies collaborate to bring water to Yucaipa/Calimesa

BY ADENYLL LATINO
Yucaipa, California News Mirror Reporter

Local and regional water leaders broke ground on the County Line Road Recharge Basin and Tunnel Project on Tuesday, Oct. 14. It is a \$3.1 million initiative designed to bring clean drinking water and drought resilience to the Calimesa region.

The San Geronimo Pass Water Agency, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Company and South Mesa Water Line Road Recharge Basin and Tunnel Project. The groundbreaking was located near 960 Fourth Street, Community Park.

This regional water supply project will deliver clean and reliable drinking water to 180,000 people. It will also import water to the Calimesa region for the first time, and stabilize Yucaipa Subbasin groundwater.

Situated at Bryant Street and County Line Road, the site will include a turnout facility capable of handling up to 470 million gallons annually, by connecting to California's State Water Project and recharging an abandoned pipeline, officials said. The three agencies will enhance their ability to import and store water.

\$3.1 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds secured by Riverside County Fifth District Supervisor Dr. Yustan Gutierrez. The general manager of the San Geronimo Pass Water Agency, Lance Eckhart, of the highest growth areas by percentage in the state historically. He believes this project will provide an ample supply of water for two high-demanding cities. "This ensures that we can bring supplemental supply to add to the naturally yielded to the groundwater water for this growing community".

Along with the water supply, Eckhart thinks that the project will warrant more jobs in the city and make way for future to the area to maintain these facilities. More importantly, it brings economic development because water supply allows us to water our economic engines," Eckhart said. "It allows the sustainable development because they know water won't be a limiting factor."

The General Manager of South Mesa Water Agency, Dave Armstrong, believes the collaboration between the three agencies grants access to pick water from the ground in areas in Calimesa where one basin, the largest basin in the whole Yucaipa Valley, but the one place where we didn't have a chance to pick ground-water strong said. "Now, with this collaboration between the three agencies, the two state water contractors, and South Mesa, we're going to put water in the ground." The ceremony included remarks from Supervisor Gutierrez.

LOCAL WEATHER REPORT

DATE	HIGH	LOW	PRECIP.
Oct. 7	86	57	
Oct. 8	81	56	
Oct. 9	77	56	
Oct. 10	82	64	
Oct. 11	82	63	
Oct. 12	79	54	
Oct. 13	86	48	

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Community Connection & Youth Engagement

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CONSERVATION FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

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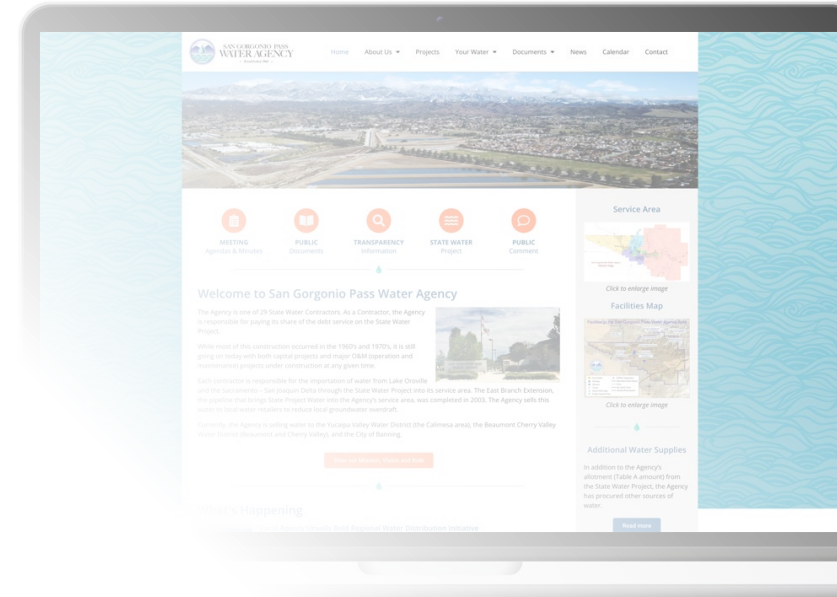
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Recognizing progress and partnerships



Website Overhaul & Digital Refresh



- **Modernize website** to reflect the new branding and tagline; Correct all existing errors.
- **Update structure and navigation** to emphasize transparency, projects, and community engagement.
- **Create new pages** highlighting Sites Reservoir, regional partnerships, and infrastructure investments.
- **Integrate an interactive project map** or “Your Water in Action” feature showing local impact.
- **Enhance accessibility**, readability, ADA compliance (WCAG 2.1, Level AA) and optimized mobile performance for all users.
- **Add analytics tools** and reporting to measure visitor engagement and improve content performance.

Fiscal Year 2026/27

Sustaining Momentum and Measuring Impact

Key Initiatives

Partnership & Leadership:

- Business and Water Leadership Roundtable to sustain post-summit momentum.

Public Engagement:

- Regional Water & Economy Forum and chamber collaborations.
- Ongoing community tours and civic events showcasing infrastructure progress.

Storytelling & Reporting:

- “One Year Since the Summit” campaign demonstrating progress.
- Economic impact updates and public perception survey on reliability and trust.

Recognition & Accountability:

- Publish Water & Economy Progress Report.
- Submit statewide award entries for communications excellence.
- Conduct annual KPI review and develop FY 2028 outreach plan.

Outcomes

- Demonstrated results from long-term planning and investment
- Stronger trust and community alignment
- Continued leadership as the region’s water reliability voice



Board of Directors Support

- Equipping Elected Leaders with Tools for Effective, Consistent Communication
- Ensure the Board of Directors is confident and unified in message delivery, engagement, and public representation.



Board of Directors Support

Training and Development Opportunities

- **Media Training:** Conduct annual sessions to prepare Directors for interviews, panel discussions, and public statements emphasizing reliability, stewardship, and fiscal accountability.
- **Social Media Protocols:** Provide clear guidance for professional online engagement outlining best practices, do's and don'ts, and procedures for referring inquiries to staff.
- **Message Consistency Workshops:** Quarterly workshops to align Board messaging with Agency priorities and brand tone, ensuring clarity and accuracy across all communications.
- **Spokesperson Development:** Identify and train designated Board representatives for key topics (Sites Reservoir, reliability, conservation, fiscal transparency).
- **Community Engagement Toolkit:** Supply talking points, FAQs, and presentation templates for public appearances, meetings, and partner events.
- **Crisis and Issue Response Process:** Establish a step-by-step communication process for emerging issues, including roles, timelines, and coordination with staff and media contacts.

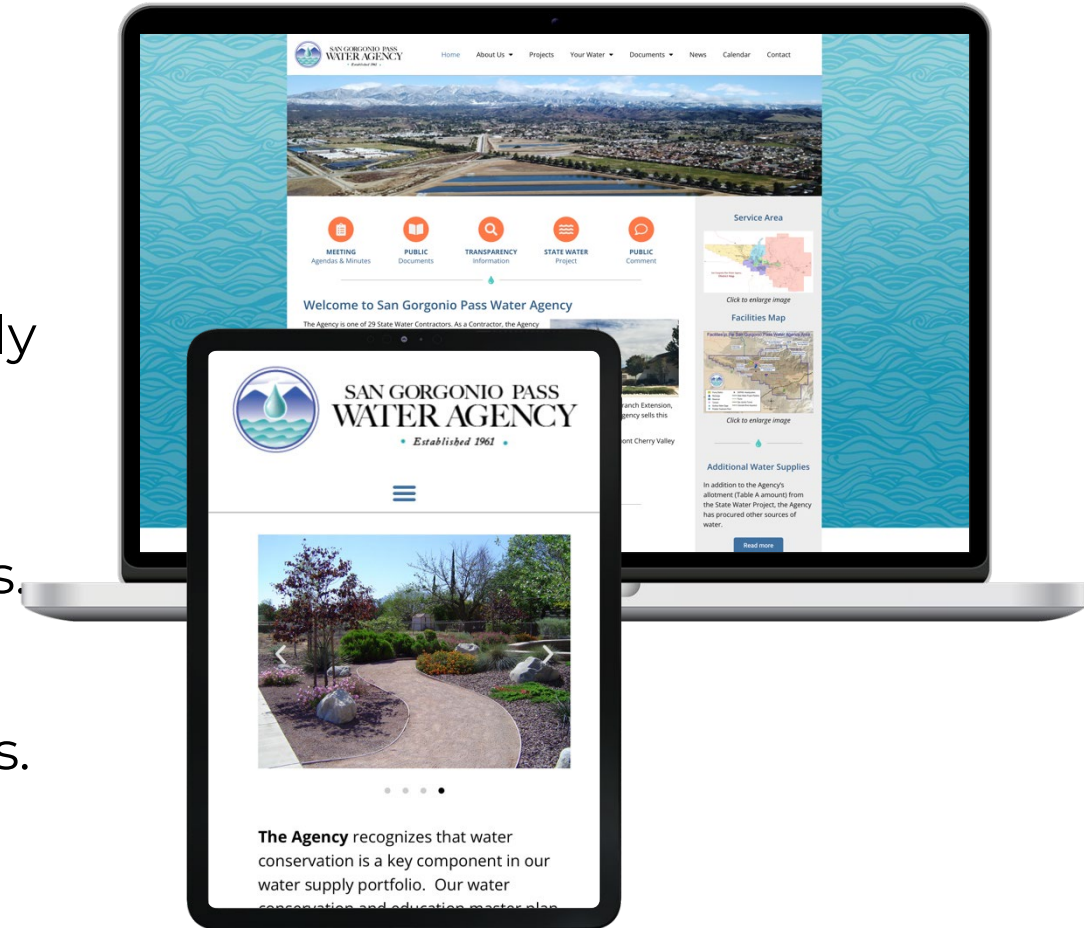
Performance & Accountability

- Quarterly Board communications development
- Biannual Communications Budget Reviews
- **Defined KPIs:** engagement, visibility, earned media, brand consistency
- **Awards:** Pursue statewide and industry recognition for excellence



Annual Communications Budget

- **Core Communications Budget:** \$120,000 annually (~\$10,000–\$12,000 per month).
- **Supplemental Event Budget:** \$60,000 annually (major public and regional events).
- **Events:** State of the Pass, Regional Forums, Open Houses, Community Appreciation Events.
- **Media & Digital Content:** \$35,000 – Social media, website, video production, and analytics.



Annual Communications Budget

- **Community Visibility & Tours:** Local partnerships, chambers, public tours, and civic presence.
- **Design, Branding & Materials:** Collateral, signage, tagline rollout.
- **Media Relations & Advertising:** Press outreach, placements, and regional coverage.
- **Board Development & Training:** Quarterly sessions, workshops, and message development.
- **Measurement & Awards:** KPI tracking, evaluation, and statewide awards submissions.



Strategic Plan Alignment

Communications initiatives align with Strategic Goals 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7.



Water Supply & Stewardship



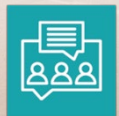
Infrastructure & Reliability



Finance & Administration



Governance



Public Engagement

Each initiative reinforces stewardship, leadership, and community partnership while ensuring transparency, fiscal accountability, and alignment with Sites Reservoir messaging.



Next Steps

- Board adoption of Strategic Outreach Plan
- Tagline launch – Q4 2025
- Begin 2026 media rollout and visibility campaign
- Conduct quarterly and biannual reviews
- Evaluate metrics and adjust strategies as needed



An aerial photograph of a large reservoir in a green, hilly landscape. In the background, a line of wind turbines is visible against a blue sky with some clouds. The reservoir is surrounded by green hills and a paved road. The word "Discussion" is overlaid in the center in a large, white, sans-serif font.

Discussion