



Natomas Mutual Water Company

Natomas Central Mutual Water Company History Continued...

The 1960's brought other changes to Natomas, including the construction on the Sacramento Metropolitan Airport in the middle of its Elkhorn service area. The Airport removed many sections of gravity system canals and replaced them with pumps and pipelines to circumvent the airport runways, terminals and parking lots. Further disruption of the Natomas system was caused when Interstate Highway #5 was constructed, forcing modifications to other sections of the service area. Apart from the Airport and I-5, most changes brought about by urbanization did not begin to occur until the 1980's and construction in North Natomas. Most development was postponed in the late 1980's, for approximately twenty (20) years, due to a construction moratorium and the requirement for upgraded flood control systems. The moratorium has since been lifted and Natomas is once again being asked to modify their irrigation facilities to accommodate urbanization in the North Natomas area of the City of Sacramento.

On a positive note, the 1980's brought recognition to Natomas in the form of kudos for construction, maintenance and operation of the largest agricultural tail-water re-circulation system in Northern California. Unlike most agricultural water purveyors who use water once and let it be drained away, Natomas constructed a "closed system" where drainage water (tail-water) is re-used continuously during the irrigation season and only discharged back into the Sacramento River at the conclusion of the season. The re-use of water has been recognized by the City of Sacramento as helping to prevent water quality problems in their domestic water supply. In 2000, the State Water Resources Control Board recognized the Natomas re-circulation system as a water conservation activity, which results in saving over 17,000 acre feet of water per year. This savings is equal to over 20% of Natomas' average annual water use.

As the new millennium begins, Natomas is once again trying to adjust to a changing environment. Natomas is proceeding with a \$30 million project to construct fish screens for its river diversions and eliminate the potential of harming endangered fish species. The Natomas Board of Directors is considering the merits of supplying M&I water to the Sacramento International Airport and Metro Air Park in Sacramento County, industrial development in Sutter County and the anticipated expanded urban development north of the City of Sacramento. Natomas is also working closely with the Natomas Basin Conservancy to facilitate the conversion of agricultural land to managed marsh, wetlands and uplands for the propagation of the Swainson's hawk, giant garter snake and other endangered and listed terrestrial species.

Natomas is also involved in the protection and management of the region's water resources, including being on the Board of the Northern California Water Association (NCWA) and the Sacramento Groundwater Authority (SGA) and as a signatory to the Sacramento County Water Forum Agreement. In cooperation with these entities, Natomas is working with other agricultural and M&I water purveyors to assist in improving the water quality of the Bay-Delta, provide drought assistance to the region, and improve the utilization of all water resources within Natomas through the development of a conjunctive use program.

In 2001, Natomas celebrated 80 years of service to the agricultural community in the American Basin. During its 80 years of service, Natomas has supplied agricultural water to approximately one million acres of rice, and thousands of acres of tomatoes, wheat, corn, alfalfa, safflower and a multitude of other crops

Natomas it is looking forward to the next 80 years.