

REPORT ON THE ACQUISITION OF THE SAN DIEGUITO WATER SYSTEM
AS AN ADDITIONAL SUPPLY FOR THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

By C. HARRITT.

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Under date of July 20th 1925 Mr. John Treanor, in a letter to the Mayor and Common Council of San Diego, submitted the offer of this property upon a leasing basis with option to purchase.

The principal features making up this property are the following:

1. Hodges Reservoir
2. San Dieguito Reservoir
3. Hodges - San Dieguito Conduit
4. San Dieguito - Lockwood Mesa Gravity Conduit
5. Lockwood Mesa - City Limits Pipe Line
6. Lockwood Mesa Distributing Reservoir
7. San Pasqual Valley Pumping Lands
8. Super Hodges Damsite
9. Pamo Reservoir
10. Sutherland Reservoir
11. Various Tracts of lands adjoining Lake Hodges and lying below the 395 foot contour above sea level.
12. Certain engineering studies and water supply data relating to the Santa Ysabel-San Dieguito water shed in which Mr. J. B. Lippincott estimates that a safe domestic water supply of some 12 m.g.d. may be delivered to the City of San Diego after meeting all obligations to present contract holders.

Mr. Treanor's letter further names the approximate monthly rentals, etc., and also furnishes an estimate of the revenues which the City would receive from the operation of this property.

Mr. Treanor further states that certain contracts have been entered into calling for the maximum delivery of 10,500 acre feet of water per annum subject to a reduction to a 75 percent supply during a period of drouth. This 10,500 acre feet does not include 3 million gallons daily now under contract to the City of San Diego.

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a portion of which only is now being delivered.

This contract with the City was entered into in 1920-21 whereby the City were to receive a maximum of 3 million gallons daily from this system for a period of 10 years, the water thus sold having been allocated to certain lands for irrigation purposes, the assumption being that such lands would not require this water until the expiration of the City's contract in 1930-31.

Therefore, the obligation existing at this time against this property consists of 3 million gallons daily to the City of San Diego plus 10,500-acre feet to various irrigation districts. It is assumed the maximum demand will be reached at about the time the City's contract expires, leaving a net obligation of 10,500 acre feet annually which the City, in the event of the acceptance of this offer, must deliver at prices ranging from 4 to 10¢ per 1000 gallons, or at about 1/4 to 1/2 the prices paid by consumers within the City, practically all of the water being sold at the lower rate. It is assumed by the San Dieguito Company that the water sold at 10¢ per thousand gallons will, by 1940-41 have reached a percentage of about 30% of the whole, thus leaving at that time in excess of 6 million gallons daily which must be sold for 4¢ per thousand gallons.

Fortunately there have been a number of independent, unbiased studies and reports made on the yield and possibilities of this system which are available for public inspection. There is no reason why anyone who is sufficiently interested may not, upon examination of the various records referred to, arrive at his own conclusions as to the advisability of the acceptance or rejection of the offer now pending.

These studies and data have been compiled by -

The U. S. Geological Survey - Water Supply Paper #446 prepared in cooperation with the Department of Engineering of the State of California and the City of San Diego.

Mr. H. E. Savage,

Mr. J. B. Lippincott,

State Engineer of California

A Board of Engineers consisting of J. B. Lippincott, H. Hawgood, Francis L. Bellew, and Wm. S. Post.

The U. S. Reclamation Service.

These studies and reports have been prepared over a period of a long term of years.

A brief summary of the above reports follows:

UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

This gives the area of the San Pasqual Valley underlain by valley fill as 1880 acres. The effective area of valley fill is 1326 acres. The assumed average depth the water table could be lowered by end of three years is 40 feet. The percent of volume that could be drained is 25%. The total of volume that could be extracted by pumping during a three year period is 13,200 acre feet and the approximate annual safe yield is 4,400 acre feet.

This is important, as the pumping of water in large quantities from the San Pasqual Valley is necessary to supplement the gravity yield of the present system in order that it may meet the present contractual obligations during a period of dry years.

CITY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIF.
ADDITIONAL WATER SUPPLY INVESTIGATION
REPORT OF H. E. SAVAGE
August 8, 1923.

On page 475 of this report Mr. Savage finds that the safe yield of the Hodges Reservoir is 4,816 acre feet without taking into consideration any future development at Fenn or Sutherland,

but after making allowance for such water as may be diverted for irrigation uses and riparian right lands in the San Pasqual Valley. This study is important by reason of the fact that it shows the net safe yield to be less than one half of the contracts for the delivery of water outstanding not including 3 million gallons daily to the City of San Diego.

MR. J. B. LIPPINCOTT.

In Table No. 3 of Mr. Lippincott's report of May 5, 1925, the safe yield of Sutherland is given as 9.1 million gallons daily. In this estimate no consideration is taken of the probable necessary releases to take care of the riparian owners in the San Pasqual Valley. It is probable that these releases would not be important.

Mr. Lippincott in the same report assumes that the System as existing and as now offered for lease or sale to the City will be able to supply 3 million gallons daily to the City and 10,500 acre feet to the irrigators of the various districts by furnishing a minimum to the irrigator of 75 percent of his contract-ual demands or an average to the irrigator of 95.6 percent. This is of particular importance inasmuch as in arriving at these conclusions, Mr. Lippincott finds it necessary to pump 32,373 acre feet of water during a six year period, the amount pumped varying from 6000 to 8,373 acre feet annually. This is far in excess of the amount available based on the U. S. Geological Survey investigations.

It should be noted in reference to this pumping, that no large pumping plants are installed at this time, that the legal right to pump such enormous quantities of water, even if it were avail-

able, would necessitate the ownership or control of the entire San Pasqual Valley. That it has not been demonstrated that the lands now owned by the Company in the San Pasqual Valley will yield anywhere near this amount of water, that it would require in addition to the installation of the pumping plants and acquisition of the San Pasqual lands, some twelve to fifteen miles of transmission main to carry the pumped water to the Easterly end of the conduit at Lake Hodges Dam.

It is obvious that the cost of this development alone will run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Mr. Lippincott estimates that \$450,000 would be required for the acquisition of all the necessary lands in the Upper Hodges Reservoir Site, and that \$250,000 additional would be necessary for the acquisition of the remaining water rights and lands in the San Pasqual Valley. For the purpose of bringing the present system up to a reasonably efficient basis, a portion of the lands included in the above estimates would not be necessary. However, a major portion of them would be. Therefore it would require an expenditure of \$700,000 plus installing transmission and pumping facilities to bring the adequacy of the system up to a point where it would be able to meet the obligations now imposed upon it.

STATE ENGINEER'S REPORT.

On January 21, 1918 a report was prepared by Mr. V.L. Huber for the State Engineer and approved by him on the water yield of the Lake Hodges System. This report was revised as of July 25, 1918. In Table No. 6 of this report, the results of a 10,500 acre foot annual draft when available was given as follows: During the

critical period there was one year when the supply would be 83 percent of the requirements, the two following years there would be no water whatever available. The next year a 55 percent supply, the succeeding year a 13 percent supply, the next year a 79 percent supply, and the succeeding year nothing. In figuring the above supply, the 1 million gallons daily delivery to the City of San Diego was not included.

In this same report it is shown that even during the period of moderate growth such as 1912-13 to 1913-14 this System would be able to deliver 60 percent of its requirements one year and 27 percent the succeeding year, not considering any delivery to the City of San Diego. In other words, the safe yield of this system, based on the State Engineer's reports does not even approximate 10,500 acre feet. However, allowance was made for certain other development at Sutherland or Pano or both.

BOARD OF ENGINEERS' REPORT.

In 1916 and 17 a Board of Engineers, consisting of J.B. Lippincott, E. Mangood, Francis L. Selles and W. B. Post, made a study of the possibilities of the various properties then constituting the Volcan Land & Water Co. System. This Board found a net safe yield available for domestic use of 10 million gallons daily at Sutherland.

In 1919 the U. S. Reclamation Service made an investigation of the possibilities of water development on the Volcan System and in February 1920 submitted a report which did not take into consideration the possibilities of Lake Hedges but in which they give a yield for domestic purposes of 7.41 m.g.d. at Sutherland.

After careful consideration of the previously mentioned reports, and in order to be absolutely fair and give the San Die-

guito System the benefit of every possible doubt, I will base my conclusions which will appear further on in this report, as to the value of this property to the City of San Diego, upon an analysis of the reports of Mr. J. B. Lippincott and the letter of Mr. John Treanor.

Referring to this letter, a schedule has been submitted showing the estimated earnings of this property if acquired by the City of San Diego. This statement is misleading inasmuch as it assumes that the City, after purchasing the property, will continue until the year 1930-31 to pay themselves \$19,500 annually as rentals for a portion thereof. It also assumes that after the acquisition of this property by the City that they will continue to charge themselves \$109,500 annually for water used therefrom. It is also erroneous, as it is based upon the delivery of a quantity of water which, based upon Mr. Lippincott's report, is far in excess of the safe yield of the System as now developed.

At this time it should be stated that the Santa Ysabel-San Dieguito River possesses very great possibilities in the way of development of additional water supply for the City of San Diego. However, such development can be made by the City independent of the present development, which is wholly inadequate and would impose a heavy burden on the City in operating, depreciation and interest carrying charges.

It should also be noted that the City owns an excellent damsite at Sutherland and that they have filed on the waters of the River at that point.

In view of the facts as set forth in Mr. Lippincott's report and in Mr. Treanor's letter to the City, I would consider that

it is decidedly against the best interests of the City of San Diego to accept the proposition as submitted or to acquire the present development under any consideration whatever. In view of the utter lack of merit of the proposal it is difficult to understand how anyone who is familiar with the San Dieguito System and its contractual obligations and who has the best interests of the City of San Diego at heart, can for one moment lend any support whatever to the bare suggestion that the City of San Diego burden itself with this property.

CONCLUSIONS.

In view of the existing facts, I would consider that it is decidedly against the best interests of the City of San Diego to accept the proposition as submitted, or to acquire the present development under any considerations, for the following reasons:

1st.

That the System is obligated to sell approximately 9 million gallons daily at 4¢ per 1000 gallons. This is almost as much as the safe yield of the entire City owned system.

2nd.

That the System as developed is incapable of furnishing the amount of water which it has contracted to deliver.

3rd.

That it is improbable that the revenue to be derived from the sale of water will anywhere nearly reach the amounts as set out in the schedule.

4th.

That the depreciation, maintenance and operation of this property will amount to a very large sum annually.

5th.

That it will require the expenditure of very large sums of money in addition to the purchasing or leasing price, to place this System on an adequate basis.

6th.

That the main features comprising this property are of no value to the City for the reason that their fixed charges are now born by the San Dieguito Co., which is delivering water at the City Limits. There is no reason why the City should assume these obligations.

7th. The pumping lands in the San Pasqual Valley which it is proposed to transfer, are of value only in order to assist in meeting the obligations of the Company to supply water to the various districts and the City of San Diego. There is no reason why these obligations should be assumed by the City.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

First, that the offer of the San Dieguito Water Company be rejected.

Second, that the Sutherland Reservoir would be of very considerable value to the City of San Diego and should be acquired by negotiation if possible, and if not, by condemnation proceedings. The value of the lands at the Paine Site will possibly prove of some value in the future, but their present value to the City is uncertain and doubtful.

Respectfully submitted,

C. HARRIS.

Ed Fletcher Papers

1870-1955

MSS.81

Box: 37 Folder: 7

**Business Records - Reports - Harritt, C - "Report:
The Acquisition of the San Dieguito Water
System as an Additional Supply for the City..."**



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