

BANKS PUMPING PLANT

Located in the southern portion of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and almost 20 miles southwest of the city of Stockton, the Harvey O. Banks Delta Pumping Plant marks the beginning of the California Aqueduct. The aqueduct extends 444 miles southward to Lake Perris in Riverside County. Construction of the plant began in 1963 and was completed in 1969. The plant was built and is operated and maintained by DWR.

Water flows from Delta channels through intake gates into Clifton Court Forebay. The water then enters an open intake channel and flows through the Skinner Fish Facility before entering Banks Pumping Plant. The plant lifts this water 244 feet into the California Aqueduct, where it flows south by gravity to the San Luis Joint-Use Facilities (including Sisk Dam and San Luis Reservoir) in Merced County. Some of the water is diverted from Bethany Reservoir, a short distance downstream from Banks to the South Bay Aqueduct serving Alameda and Santa Clara counties.



MISSION

California Department of Water Resources

To manage the water of California, in cooperation with other agencies, to benefit the State's people, and to protect, restore and enhance the natural and human environments.

HARVEY O. BANKS DELTA PUMPING PLANT

INFORMATION

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THE STATE WATER PROJECT

Planned, designed, constructed and operated by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), the State Water Project (SWP) is the largest state-built, multi-purpose, user-financed water project in the United States.

The SWP, spanning more than 600 miles from Northern California to Southern California, includes 34 storage facilities, 20 pumping plants, four pumping-generating plants, five hydroelectric power plants and approximately 700 miles of canals, tunnels and pipelines.

The SWP's main purpose is to provide a water supply – that is, to divert and store water during wet periods – and distribute it to areas of need during dry periods in Northern California, the San Francisco Bay Area, the San Joaquin Valley, the Central Coast and Southern California. Other project purposes include flood control, power generation, recreation, fish and wildlife enhancement and water quality improvements to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.



The \$1.75 billion bond issue of 1960 provided initial funding for the SWP, and payments received from 29 contracting agencies are paying off the bonds. These 29 urban and agricultural water agencies have long-term contracts for the delivery of SWP water. Approximately 70 percent of SWP water goes to urban users and 30 percent to agricultural users. These SWP contracting agencies are repaying the cost, including interest, of financing, building, operating and maintaining the SWP water storage and delivery system.

PUMPING WATER

The plant was built in the 1960s with seven pumps, but with space for another four. The final four pumps were installed in 1986 to help improve California's water supply reliability. The new units boost the plant's capacity from 4.1 to about 6.7 billion gallons of water per day, which is about 21,000 acre-feet. (An acre-foot is 325,851 gallons, enough to supply one to two average families for a year.) Most of the pumping is done during the "off peak" hours at night and on weekends, when power is cheaper.

FISH PROTECTION

Located between Clifton Court Forebay and the Banks Pumping Plant, the Skinner Fish Facility was built so fish could be removed from the intake channel, collected and returned alive to the Delta.

A system of louvers in the intake channel creates turbulence in the channel while allowing water to pass through to the pumps. As the fish drift downstream with the current, they sense this disturbance and veer off into bypass pipes leading to a secondary louver system. This system in turn diverts the fish into adjacent holding tanks.



HARVEY O. BANKS

As State Engineer and then as the first Director of Water Resources (1956-1961), Harvey O. Banks initiated the design and construction of the State Water Project. He also served for five years as a member of the State Water Pollution Control Board (now the State Water Resources Control Board).

During Banks' tenure as DWR's Director, voters approved the Burns-Porter Act, known as the California Water Resources Development Bond Act of 1960. The \$1.75 billion bond provided initial funding for the construction of SWP facilities.

When enough live fish have accumulated in the holding tanks, they are transferred into specially built tank trucks, transported downstream in the Delta and released beyond the pumping influence of the Banks plant. Millions of fish a year are saved by this facility, one of only two of its kind in the nation.

The facility is named after John E. Skinner, a respected natural resource conservation expert whose career included service as a fisheries biologist and water projects supervisor for the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

