Special Committee on Ag and Tribal Partnerships

Guest Speakers: Bard Water District and Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe

Item 6a
August 25, 2026
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Frank Venegas, Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe

Item 6a Summary

Subject

Partnerships for Sustainable Water Management

Purpose

Provide an overview of partnerships with Bard Water District and Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe

Partnerships for Sustainable Water Management

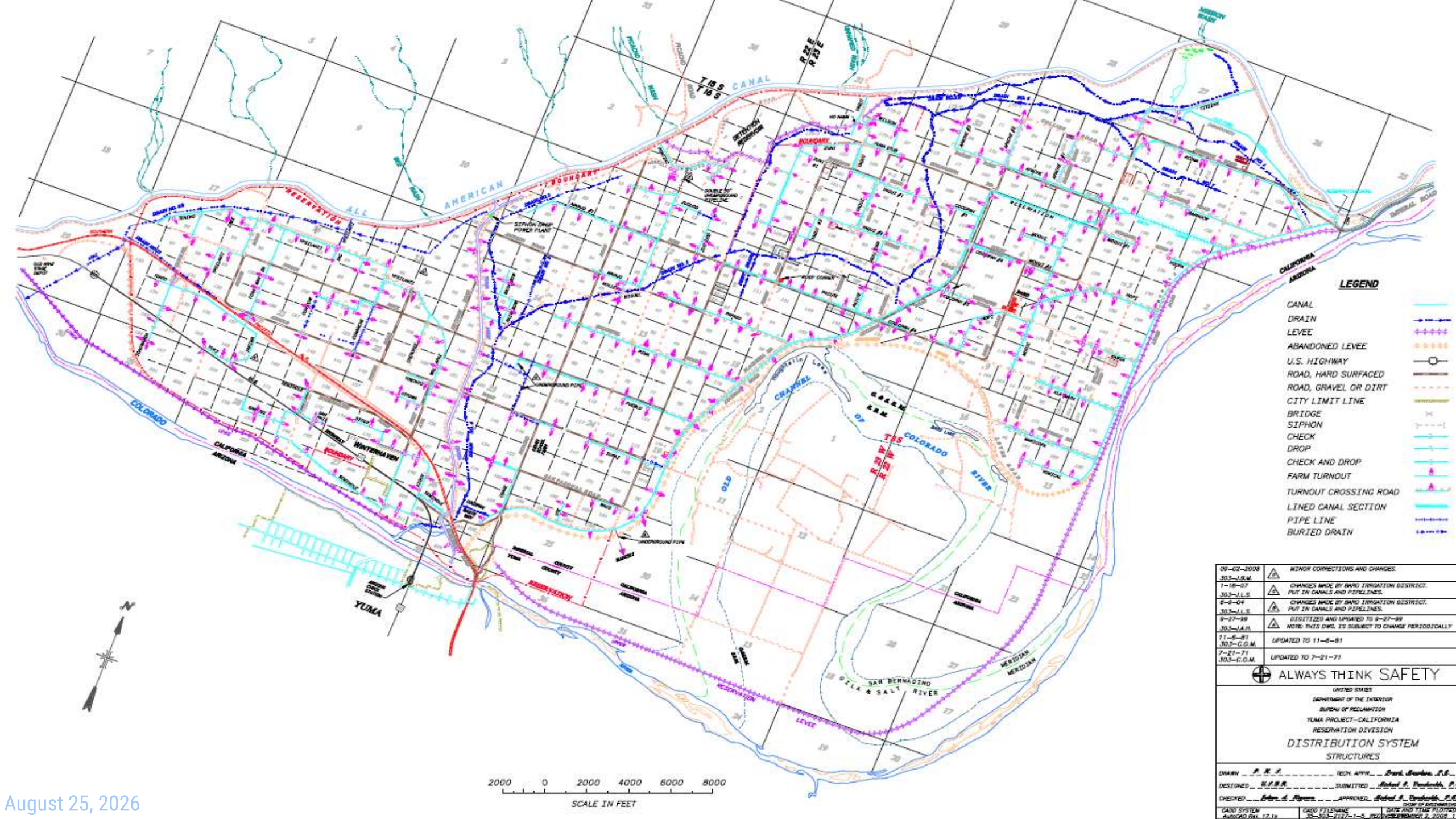
BARD WATER DISTRICT • QUECHAN TRIBE • METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT

Why Partnerships Matter

- Shared water challenges require shared solutions
- Collaboration improves reliability, efficiency, and funding opportunities
- Benefits extend to agriculture, tribal communities, and urban users

Bard Water District Overview

- Bard Water District provides Colorado River water for irrigation to the Yuma Project, Reservation Division
- BWD consists of two units: Bard unit and the Indian unit
- Bard Unit:
  - Bard unit consists of 7,120 acres of deeded land
  - 38,000-acre feet – Present Perfected Rights ("PPRs")
  - Priority 2 – Priority date of July 8, 1905
- Indian Unit:
  - Indian Unit consists of 7,556 acres of Tribal lands owned by individual Indian allotees
  - The Bureau of Indian Affairs(BIA) administers all leases on Tribal lands and collects all assessed operation and maintenance costs.



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Yuma Project Reservation Division consists of two units, the Indian Unit and the Bard Unit

The YPRD water conveyance system is a network of over 70 miles of pipelines, canals, and laterals. There are 4.5 miles of pipelines, 25.6 miles of lined canals/laterals, and 40 miles of unlined canals/laterals

BWD/MWD Seasonal Fallowing Program

- Seasonal – 4 Month Period in Summer
- Participation limited to no more than 3,000 total acres.
  - CY 25 & 26 Participation limited to no more than 6,000 total acres.
- Any parcel fallowed must be at least 10 contiguous acres.
- Acreage must have been in production in three out of the last five years.
  - Acres previously fallowed are still eligible.
- Consent required from Landowner if Grower participation.

Seasonal Fallowing Program Highlights

- Program is unique.
  - Seasonal nature of the program.
    - Lessens impact on community, environment.
    - Lessens impact on industry.
  - Contribution to the District.
    - Requested by the Board when approached about the program and agreed to by landowners/growers.
    - As a result, the District has additional much needed funds to address aging infrastructure.
      - In some cases, funds are even further leveraged by grant programs.
      - Additionally, Fallowing activities have been coordinated around district construction events to ease water demands in effected areas.
  - Long term program, but voluntary in each year.
    - MWD
    - Landowner/Grower

2 year Pilot Fallowing program

- In order to determine the viability of a long-term seasonal fallowing program within the Tribe MWD desires to enter into a two-year test program ("Pilot Program") for the years 2022 and 2023 with the objective of developing an understanding of the amount of water that will be unused within the Reservation as a result of the Pilot Program and the amount that will be available to MWD. The Pilot Program is separate and distinct from MWD's right to receive certain amounts of Colorado River water available to, but not diverted by, the Tribe as set forth in paragraph III.A.4 of the Settlement Agreement.

2022 fallowing program

Table 18. State of California - Transfers, Exchanges, and Water Made Available by Extraordinary Conservation, Calendar Year 2022. (Values are in acre-feet.)

PROGRAM OR PARTICIPATING AGENCIES	TOTAL
IID Conservation	**496,565**
1988 IID/MWD Water Conservation Agreement/1989 Approval Agreement (105,000 AF Total Conservation) [1]	
MWD's Use of Conserved Water	90,000
CVWD's Use of Conserved Water [2]	15,000
1998 IID/SDCWA Water Conservation Agreement (Transfer to SDCWA) [3]	202,500
2003 IID/CVWD Conserved Water Agreement (Intra-Priority 3 Transfer to CVWD) [4]	83,000
All-American Canal Lining Project (67,700 AF Total Conservation) [5]	
SDCWA Exchange with MWD	56,200
Supplemental Water Delivered to the SLRSP	11,500
Qualified Conserved Water Stored with MWD [6]	13,365
System Conservation Water [7,8]	25,000
CVWD Conservation	**39,933**
Coachella Canal Lining Project (30,850 Total Conservation) [9]	
SDCWA Exchange with MWD	21,500
Supplemental Water Delivered to the SLRSP	4,500
Used by CVWD for Environmental Mitigation [10]	4,850
System Conservation Water [7,11]	9,083
Total MWD Exchange with SDCWA [12]	**280,200**
PVID/MWD Forbearance and Fallowing Program [13]	**82,657**
Conserved Water Made Available to MWD [14]	29,736
System Conservation Water [7,15]	52,921
MWD/Bard Water District Land Management and Seasonal Fallowing Program [16]	**2,709**
MWD/Quechan Indian Tribe Pilot Seasonal Land Fallowing Program [17]	**225**
Pilot System Conservation Program (PSCP) [18]	**141**
City of Needles [19]	141

Note: Additional transfers and water exchange obligations may be found in Table 21, Exhibit B to the CRWDA.

1 participant

118 acres enrolled

Conserved 225 Acre Feet of water

2023 fallowing program

5 participants

147 acres enrolled

Water saving to be verified by BOR

2026 Quechan Seasonal Fallowing Program
6 Participants FOR 466.62 ACRES

System Benefits

- Benefits agriculture
- Supports regional conservation
- Provides capital improvement funding

Quechan Tribe & Bard Water District Partnership

- Long-standing relationship
- Shared irrigation reliability goals
- Joint infrastructure improvements

Shared Goals

- Improve efficiency
- Protect water resources
- Enhance resilience
- Support economic development

Infrastructure Through Partnership

- Canal lining
- SCADA and automation
- Renewable energy opportunities

Joint Infrastructure Improvements

- Canal modernization
- Reduced losses
- Improved operations

5 GATES

MOHAVE LINING PROJECT

ACOMA PIPELINE EXTENSION

Shared Benefits, Shared Success

- Reliable delivery
- Reduced costs
- Water conservation
- Stronger cooperation

What Successful Partnerships Have in Common

- Shared investment
- Mutual benefits
- Long-term planning
- Sustainable management

Looking Ahead

- Infrastructure investment
- Conservation opportunities
- Grant funding
- Continued stewardship

THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
1928