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# California

## Farmland acquisition planned for proposed water tunnels

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER  
Associated Press Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — State contractors have readied plans to acquire as many as 300 farms in the California delta by eminent domain to make room for a pair of massive, still-unapproved water tunnels proposed by Gov. Jerry Brown, according to documents obtained by opponents of the tunnels.

Farmers whose parcels were listed and mapped in the 160-page property-acquisition plan expressed dismay at the advanced planning for the project, which would build 30-mile-long tunnels in the Delta formed by the San Joaquin and Sacramento rivers.

“What really shocks is we’re fighting this and we’re hoping to win,” said Richard Elliot, who grows cherries, pears and other crops on delta land farmed by his family since the 1860s. “To find out they’re sitting in a room figuring out this eminent domain makes it sound like they’re going to bully us ... and take what they want.”

Officials involved in the project defended planning so far ahead regarding the tunnels. “Planning for right-of-way needs, that is the key part of your normal planning process,” said Roger Patterson, assistant general manager for the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, one of the water agencies that would benefit from the twin tunnels.

The district serves 17 million people in Southern California as well as large farms and businesses.

Brown’s administration said re-engineering of the delta — the largest estuary on the West Coast — is essential to undoing mistakes of past water projects and to supplying water to Southern California.

Brown has pushed for a massive Delta makeover since his first stint as governor in the 1970s and 1980s. In May, he told critics of the tunnels to “shut up.”

Opponents say the tunnels would jeopardize delta farming and destroy vital wildlife habitat.

“If these reports are correct, then we have further confirmation that the tunnels project has been a forgone conclusion,” state Sen. Lois Wolk, D-Davis, who chairs a committee on the Delta, said in an email Monday.

The environmental review, “which should be used to choose a project, is simply being used to justify the favored project,” she wrote.

Through October, the project officially is in a period of public comment on the environmental impact of the tunnels. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which opposed an earlier version of the project, also must still weigh in.

Restore the Delta, a group of farmers, fishing associations, environmental groups and other opponents, released the property plan that was obtained with a request made under the state open records law. The plan targets public and private land in Sacramento, San Joaquin, Contra Costa and Alameda counties to be acquired for the project.

Under the plan, landowners would have 30 days to consider and negotiate a one-time state offer, while officials simultaneously prepare to take the land by forced sale if owners declined to sell. “Negotiations to continue in parallel with eminent domain proceedings,” the plan notes.

Contractors also appear to call for minimal public input.

“All transactions are conducted, reviewed and approved internally by DCE staff and managers to maintain control and avoid unnecessary delays to schedule,” the property plan outlines. “DCE shall seek to minimize external review and approval requirements.”

DCE is short for Delta Conveyance Facilities Design and Construction Enterprise, a private-contractor group embedded within the state Department of Water Resources to work on the proposed tunnels.

## Fairs to get \$10 million for upgrades, operations

By TIM HEARDEN  
Capital Press

ANDERSON, Calif. — Tucked inside the \$167.7 billion budget approved by California lawmakers this summer was a partial reprieve for cash-strapped local fairs.

The state’s network of 79 local fairgrounds will receive \$10 million in fiscal 2015-16, marking the first time fairs have received significant state fiscal help since Gov. Jerry Brown zeroed out their \$32 million annual allotment in 2011.

About \$3 million will go toward operational support, handing the 45 smallest fairs between \$40,000 and \$50,000 apiece, said Stephen Chambers, the Western Fairs Association’s executive director.

The rest of the money will be spent on needed fairgrounds repairs and upgrades and will be awarded for individual projects, Chambers said.

## New UCANR vice president wants to boost partnerships, advisers

By TIM HEARDEN  
Capital Press

DAVIS, Calif. — The new leader of the University of California’s agricultural division says she wants to expand economic opportunities for farming industries and increase the number of advisers and specialists in the field.

Glenda Humiston, who started last week as the UC’s vice president for agriculture and natural resources, said she also wants to build better partnerships with commodity groups and urban leaders.

The former USDA deputy undersecretary and rural development director said she’s excited to take part in UC President Janet Napolitano’s Global Food Initiative, a research and out-



Tim Hearden/Capital Press

The sign at the Shasta District Fair grounds in Anderson, Calif., advertises upcoming events. The state has partially restored funding to California fairs, including money to spruce up facilities.

reach project that is seeking ways to feed a world population expected to reach 8 billion by 2025.

Among Humiston’s biggest priorities is to boost the ranks of the more than 700 academic researchers and 300 UC Cooperative Extension advisers and specialists, she told reporters in a conference call Aug. 13.

“I am a long-time, very strong supporter of Cooperative Extension, its mission and what it does for all the people

in California,” Humiston said. “We definitely need more advisers in the field as well as specialists on the campuses to find answers to the really complex questions (growers face). ... We’re already on a trajectory to increase those, and I’m putting that at the top of my agenda.”

Humiston takes over for Barbara Allen-Diaz, a former UC-Berkeley professor who led the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources before retiring June 29. She reports directly to Napolitano.

She grew up on her parents’

paint buildings and upgrade facilities, she said.

“We need to keep our grounds looking good for the public so they’ll keep wanting to hold their events here,” Workman said.

“We’re absolutely thrilled

that they (legislators) understand that fairgrounds are such a huge part of the economy,” she said. “We’re pleased to have an outcome like this.”

Brown put the fairs’ allocation in his January budget proposal after fairs advocates failed to get it included in last year’s budget, Chambers said. While fairs have found creative ways to make ends meet, state funding for site improvements is necessary, he said.

“With everything we looked at, from basketball arenas to parks and convention centers, there’s always a public financing partner for public facilities,” Chambers said. “Most fairs are able to sustain themselves operationally, but the cost of electrical upgrades, roof replacement, paving, fire and safety repairs — I know of no public facilities that cover those costs by themselves.”

Local fairs have sought

innovative ways to bring in money since their state funding was eliminated to reduce the state’s deficit. At the Shasta District Fair, a boosters’ club was formed to sell raffle tickets, operate a beer booth at the fair and do other fundraisers for the annual June festival.

This year, for instance, the Friends of the Shasta District Fair asked an FFA group to build a new ramp to load hogs sold at auction onto trucks. Other fairs have held consignment auctions and asked for donations at the gate to raise funds.

Chambers said the efforts showed legislators that fairgrounds — particularly in rural areas — are important to their constituents.

“It proves they’re relevant,” he said. “If fairs had had no success, that would have made the argument for no fiscal support.”

The advocates hope the state resumes supporting the fairs with annual allocations.



Glenda Humiston

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She grew up on her parents’

cattle ranch in Colorado and served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Tunisia after graduating from Colorado State University with a bachelor’s degree in animal science. She later earned a master’s degree in international agricultural development from UC-Davis and a doctorate in environmental science, policy and management at UC-Berkeley.

Humiston served then-President Bill Clinton as deputy USDA undersecretary for natural resources and environment, worked on sustainable development issues for two inter-

national conferences and was then appointed by President Barack Obama in 2009 as California state director of USDA Rural Development.

At the UC, she assumes control of an organization that includes 1,350 scientists and other employees working in 60 county extension offices, nine research centers and three UC campuses.

“Even though I loved the job at USDA Rural Development, I just couldn’t let this pass,” Humiston said. “It’s an opportunity to step into a bigger, broader way to serve California.”

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