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NEWS RELEASE

INLAND EMPIRE RESIDENTS ARE URGED TO STAY AWAY FROM THE SANTA ANA RIVER NEXT WEEK AS THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS OPENS THE FLOODGATES AT SEVEN OAKS DAM FOR 4 DAYS OF TESTS

San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District will use the July 12th to 15th test to measure the absorption capabilities of percolation basins along the Santa Ana River as well as those of off-stream recharge facilities

SAN BERNARDINO, July 6, 2010 – Santa Ana River flows are expected to surge to their highest levels in years next week as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and flood control districts from San Bernardino, Riverside and Orange counties conduct a series of tests involving the flood control gates on the Seven Oaks Dam.

“What they are trying to do is test the gates under high flow conditions,” said Steve Copelan, a board member with San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District (Valley District). “Water flows are expected to peak at 600 cubic feet per second range on Monday, but will surge up to 2,500 cubic feet per second on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.”

The water outlet structure at Seven Oaks Dam was damaged during a similar test five years ago, but repairs have been made and water levels are now high enough behind the dam to conduct a similar test. The dam is currently about 12 percent full.

Valley District, for its part, will capture as much of the runoff water as it can, thanks to the new water rights permit it received from the State Water Resources Control Board this week. The permit entitles Valley District and Western Municipal Water District to capture storm flows after other agencies have received their permitted allocations.

Bear Valley Mutual Water Co. has pre-1914 water rights to Santa Ana River water, while the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District has licenses that allow it to capture up to 10,400 acre feet of water each year. Valley District and Western will capture runoff water from Seven Oaks Dam next week as part of a cooperative effort using San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District facilities.

Copelan said the district plans to conduct measurements along the Santa Ana River to measure the absorption capabilities of the riverbed as well as those of off-stream recharge facilities. “We normally want to slow down the river as much as possible to allow water to percolate into groundwater basins. But this

test also gives us a chance to measure how much water we can absorb each day,” Copelan said.

He said Inland Empire residents should use caution and keep their children away from the Santa Ana River next week, since river flow levels could rise quickly and unexpectedly. Sheriff’s deputies have been notified of the test and are expected to increase their patrols next week to advise residents of the test and of the dangers associated with rising water levels.

San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District was formed in 1954 as a regional agency to plan a long-range water supply for the San Bernardino Valley. It imports water into its service area through participation in the State Water Project and manages groundwater storage within its boundaries. Valley District’s customers include 13 retail water agencies from Rialto to Yucaipa, which collectively have more than 700,000 business and residential customers. Valley District’s 350-square mile service area spans the eastern two-thirds of the San Bernardino Valley, the Crafton Hills, and a portion of the Yucaipa Valley and includes the cities and communities of San Bernardino, Colton, Loma Linda, Redlands, Rialto, Bloomington, Highland, East Highland, Mentone, Grand Terrace, and Yucaipa. For more information, please contact Douglas Headrick at (909)387-9226 and visit www.sbvmd.com.