

FACTS

About The Proposed

Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District

FOREWORD

This pamphlet has been prepared in order to acquaint the people of the community with facts concerning the proposed Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District. (A water conservation district is not an irrigation district.)

It is distributed for the purpose of answering questions that have arisen regarding the need, purpose, function and cost of a district.

The pamphlet precedes the circulation of the required petition.

The Organization Committee hopes it will help to dispel any doubts and uncertainties about the project.

The Committee will be glad to answer any other questions.

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MAY, 1939

INTRODUCTION



For years the Santa Ynez and Lompoc Valleys have been faced with numerous problems relating to the maintenance of an adequate supply of water throughout the watershed of the Santa Ynez River and its tributaries for domestic, farm and range purposes in years of drought as well as in years of heavy precipitation. Periodic floods have damaged property and the danger of floods continues to be a serious menace to both property and life. The future development of these valleys depends upon an effective solution of these important problems.

Because of prevailing conditions, the general welfare and laws require that water resources be put to beneficial use to the fullest extent of which they are capable. Water alienated from range lands and put to beneficial use on other lands cannot easily be recovered. Water alienated from one watershed and put to beneficial use in another watershed is difficult, if not impossible, to reclaim. The future availability of water for use on range and farm lands in the Santa Ynez River watershed depends upon the beneficial use to which it is put in this watershed.

The Government has long recognized "*that destructive floods upon the rivers of the United States upsetting orderly processes and causing loss of life and property, including the erosion of land . . . constitute a menace to national welfare,*" and by act of Congress has authorized an investigation of the Santa Ynez River and its tributaries "*with a view to control of floods, water supply and conservation, run-off and water flow retardation, soil erosion prevention and vegetative cover*

of the watershed." But the act of Congress also specifies that no construction may be undertaken by the Government for these purposes unless "*a responsible local agency exists or be formed.*"

In December, 1938, the Government took under consideration an application for a flood control and water conservation survey on the Santa Ynez River watershed, and decision is now pending by the U. S. Engineers' Office of the War Department and the Department of Agriculture.

The existence of a deficiency of water supply for the normal development of farm and range land within this and neighboring watersheds impressed the people with the importance of taking action to protect the community from future dangers.

Out of this realization arose a movement to meet the situation. A public meeting was held at Buellton on February 8, 1939, at which a Committee of Seven was instructed to investigate possible methods of procedure.

At a second public meeting held March 23, 1939, the Committee reported its findings and made definite recommendations based upon the advice of legal and technical authorities consulted. The public meeting unanimously approved the recommendations of the Committee and instructed the same Committee to carry out the recommendations, which are as follows:

(1) That a Water Conservation District be organized under the Water Conservation Act of 1931;

(2) That further study and consideration be given by the people to the proposition of forming a soil conservation district;

(3) That a petition for formation of a Water Conservation District be prepared by the Committee and submitted to another public meeting prior to filing the petition with the Board of Supervisors of Santa Barbara County.

The Organization Committee recommends that the proposed district include the entire watershed of the Santa Ynez River and its tributaries, below Gibraltar drainage basin and excepting portions of the government land. The Committee also recommends that the proposed district be divided into five divisions.

THE ACT

(THE WATER CONSERVATION ACT OF 1931)*

(1) Why Was This Particular Act Selected?

Because it enables the district to deal adequately with governmental agencies in the program outlined by act of Congress;

Because, by and large, over a period of years water conservation is probably of greater import than flood control;

Because the directors are elected by the people, thereby insuring local control;

Because the directors are limited in the amount they may assess for administrative and running expenses;

Because it requires a majority vote of the people for a special assessment;

Because it requires a two-thirds vote of the people for a bond issue;

Because it enables the district to make surveys and investigations of the water supply and resources of the district;

Because it enables landowners of any particular area within the district to improve and benefit their properties without cost to the balance of the district.

(2) How Will the Proposed District Be Formed?

A petition signed by either five hundred electors or twenty percent of the electors of the proposed district will be presented to the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors will hold a hearing at which persons may protest their inclusion or ask to be included.

*The legal title of this act is "Water Conservation Act of 1929," as re-enacted by an Act of the Legislature of the State of California (designated as Chapter 1020, Statutes of 1931), approved June 16, 1931, and amendments thereof.

After the hearing, the Board of Supervisors decides whether or not the petition complies with the legal requirements and definitely settles the boundary of the district. The Board of Supervisors also divides the proposed district into three, five, or seven as nearly equal geographical divisions, as requested in the petition. A date is then set for an election, at which every elector in the proposed district may cast a vote ("Yes" or "No") for the formation of the district. If the majority vote is "Yes", the district is formed. But the act also provides that the election may be contested by a property owner or owners within the proposed district.

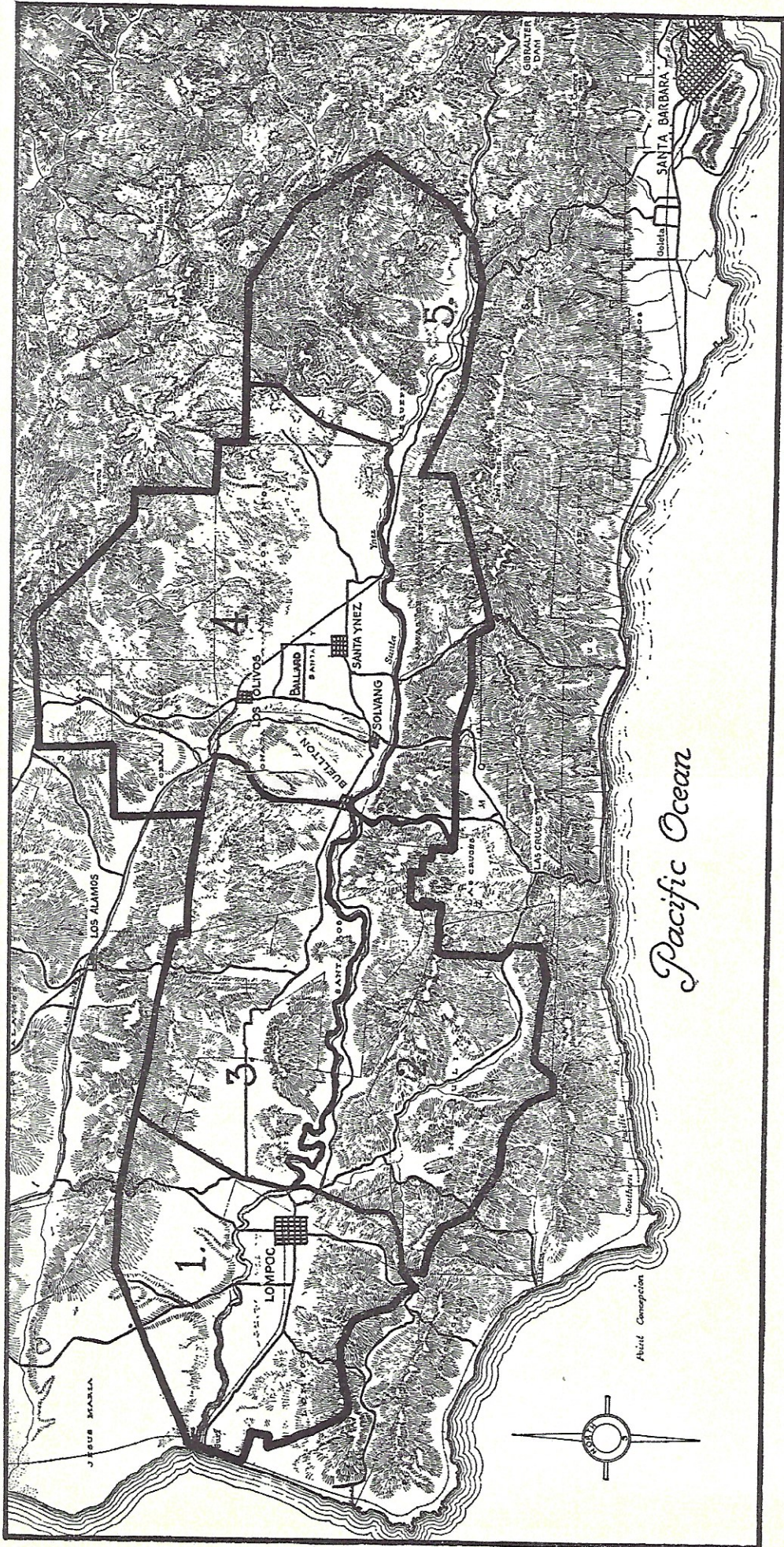
(3) How Large Is The Proposed District, and Why? (See Map)

The proposed district includes the entire watershed of the Santa Ynez River and its tributaries below Gibraltar drainage basin and excepting portions of the government land. The district would be approximately 510 square miles in area; the assessed valuation of the land only within the proposed district is approximately \$7,500,000.00.

It is limited to the watershed of the Santa Ynez River and its tributaries because this district represents a unit area in which the problems of control and conservation are intimately associated and must be considered and solved together.

(4) Who Signs the Petition, and Who Votes at the Election on Formation of the Proposed District?

All qualified electors residing within the proposed district. Under this act, votes are by person, whether landowner or not. There were approximately 3,200 registered voters in the proposed district in the last register of voters.



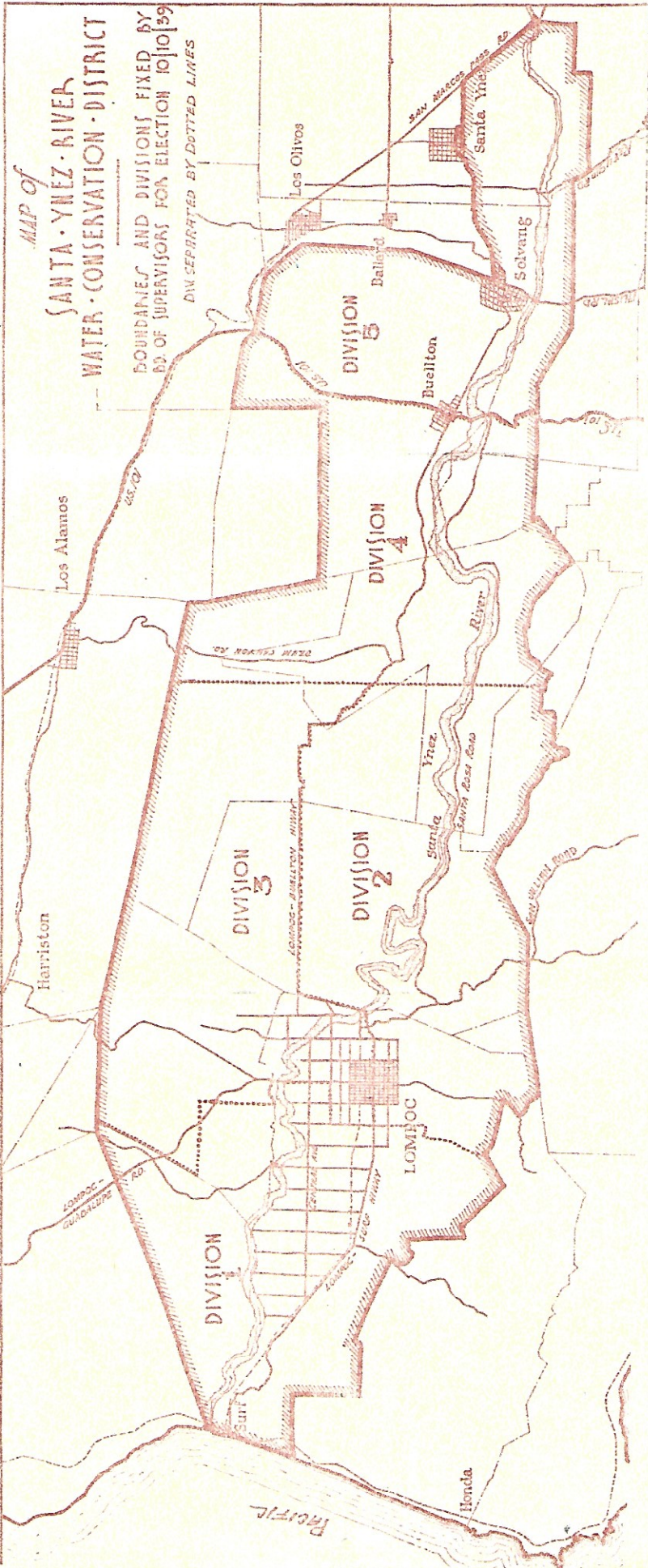
M A P
 SHOWING PROPOSED
SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
 AND ITS DIVISIONS

A. G. Hollister, 1939

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Note: The above boundaries were modified and divisions changed by order of the Board of Supervisors on September 10, 1939. See Amended Map printed in red.



(5) What Has the Organization Committee To Do With the District?

Nothing whatever. The sole function of the Organization Committee is to carry out the wishes of the people who attended the meeting of March 23, 1939, by enabling the electors within the proposed district to determine by vote whether or not a district shall be formed. As soon as its work is completed, the Organization Committee winds up its business and disbands. The Committee receives no pay.

(6) Who Would Run This District?

At least one week prior to the first election, any ten persons living within one of the divisions, as set by the Board of Supervisors, may present a petition to the Board of Supervisors, requesting that the name of the candidate nominated in the petition be placed upon the ballot. At future elections, the nominating petitions are presented to the Board of Directors of the district. At the election the candidate receiving the greatest number of votes in his division becomes the director from his division. The directors elected from all these divisions comprise the Board of Directors. The term of directors is four years, some being elected every two years. The compensation of a director is \$10.00 at each quarterly meeting, and actual and necessary expenses when engaged in special business under order of the Board.

(7) What Can the Proposed District Do?

It can :

- (1) Deal with City, County, State or Federal agencies;
- (2) Acquire and hold property required for the purposes of the district;
- (3) Sue and be sued;
- (4) Undertake all manner of projects connected with water problems, including geographical surveys and investigations of the water supply and resources of the district;

- (5) Exercise right of eminent domain;
- (6) Levy limited annual assessments and call for elections on special assessments and bond issues;
- (7) Make contracts and employ labor;
- (8) Apportion taxes within the district according to the benefits accrued to the various tracts within the district;
- (9) Examine reasonableness of any proposed diversion of water to an outside area; (Note: the following is an extract from the report of Quinton, Code and Hill - Leeds and Barnard, made at the request of the County of Santa Barbara, page 84 thereof, under "Recommendations"—

"In (the opinion of Quinton, Code and Hill - Leeds and Barnard) the future of Santa Barbara County depends upon prompt execution of a plan for the storage of floods of Santa Ynez River in a reservoir at Tequepis and for the diversion of water so conserved to the South Coastal Area where the available supplies are so deficient that a critical situation exists."

(7a) How Can a Water Conservation District Benefit Range Lands?

It can forward a geographical survey to locate water-bearing gravels and subterranean reservoirs and, upon approval of two-thirds of the landowners of a particular area, the directors of the district can construct conservation works to recharge the gravels and promote the availability of water through springs, streams and wells.

(8) How Much Would the Proposed District Cost the Taxpayer?

The cost of organization is deemed a valid charge against the

district after it is formed. It is estimated that the cost of formation will not exceed \$2,500.00.

After the formation, the directors may levy over the entire district for organization and administrative expenses a maximum assessment of 1.5 mills for each \$1.00 of assessed valuation of *land* only. Improvements are not taxed.

For example:

<i>Assessed value</i>	<i>Maximum Yearly Assessment</i>
\$ 100.00	\$.15
1,000.00	1.50
5,000.00	7.50
10,000.00	15.00
25,000.00	37.50
50,000.00	75.00

If the maximum assessment of 1.5 mills per \$1.00 of assessed valuation were levied against the total assessed value of all the lands within the district, approximately \$7,500,000.00, the amount raised would be about \$11,500.00.

Costs of administering the affairs of the district and making surveys and studies of problems that are common to the whole district are provided by assessing the whole district. The costs of construction projects to solve problems common to the whole district are provided by district financing and by Federal, State or County aid.

In the event an improvement benefits the entire district, a special assessment, not limited in amount by the act, may be levied against the district as a whole, but only after a majority have voted "Yes" at an election; special assessments may be paid in two, three or four annual installments. This shall be in excess of the permitted annual assessment of 1.5 mills per \$1.00.

In the event an improvement benefits the entire district, a bond issue may be assessed against the district as a whole for such special purpose of general benefit, but only after two-thirds of the voters have voted "Yes." The first installment of princi-

pal on bond issues may be deferred not more than five years, and the whole principal must be paid off in forty years or less, as prescribed by the Board of Directors. This shall also be in excess of the permitted annual assessment of 1.5 mills per \$1.00.

(9) Will the Whole District Be Taxed for Improvements Benefiting Only a Particular Section of the District?

No. The costs of construction projects to solve problems common only to a limited area in the whole district are provided by the limited area benefited and by Federal, State or County aid. No such project can be constructed against the will of one-third of the owners of property in the area to be benefited. Such costs are not spread over the whole district.

(10) Who Has Custody of the District's Funds?

All payments are made by warrants drawn by the President and the Secretary of the Board of Directors of the District, against the funds of the district, which are in the custody of the County Treasurer.

(11) What Would Be the Liability of the Proposed District?

The Board of Directors shall have no power to incur any debt or liability whatever in excess of the express provisions of the act.

The District may or may not be liable for the maintenance of control or conservation works constructed by Federal, State, or County agencies, depending upon the nature of the agreements entered into between the District and the Government departments concerned.

(12) Can Land Be Withdrawn From the District After It Is Formed?

Yes. Within one year after the formation of the District, by petition of the owner or owners of a tract contiguous to the exterior boundary of the District to the Board of Directors who, after a hearing, may by unanimous vote exclude such tract.

(13) How Can the District Be Dissolved?

By the vote of sixty percent of the voters, after a petition signed by ten percent of the electors, or by the owners of one-half of the lands comprising the District to the Board of Supervisors of the County.

CONCLUSION

Conditions in the Santa Ynez River watershed are serious enough to warrant a District for proper local handling.

The Water Conservation Act of 1931 is adequate in every respect to deal with the problems, whether of control, conservation, or protection.

The people control the proposed District, both in management and in cost.

The area under the proposed District requires consideration as a unit.

The Government may undertake conservation and flood control measures if the community properly organizes itself.

The Government will pay for the work it undertakes.

At present, no solution for the specific problems can be offered, nor can any solution be recommended until proper technical studies have been made, and the Government and the people of the community, as represented by the proposed District, agree upon the measures to be undertaken.

To Residents:

Your attention is also called to other aspects of this proposition. No one, however safe from flood or drought, can justly say he is not concerned with the matter. Every one living within the boundaries of the proposed District is concerned—vitaly so—for whatever hurts the community as a whole hurts the individual, directly or indirectly. Productivity must be maintained. The good name of a community—one that is known to protect and look after the interests of all its residents—has a very direct bearing on real estate values and normal development. And so, consideration of a proposition of this kind must be approached from a humanitarian as well as a mere dollar and cents angle.

The Committee.

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NOTICE OF MEETING

A Public Meeting will be held on Friday, May 26, 1939, at 8:00 p.m. in the Veterans Memorial Hall at Solvang, California, at which time further questions may be discussed.

Your presence is urgently requested.