

# HISTORY OF THE BEAUMONT-CHERRY VALLEY WATER DISTRICT

## EARLY OWNERS



This picture was taken in the late 1800's, showing the original Beaumont Land and Water Company in the background

The origin of the Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District dates back to the latter part of the 1800's when the Southern California Investment Company was the owner of the land that currently is the City of Beaumont and the Community of Cherry Valley. The Company was owned by a gentleman named F.P. Sigler, who intended to build a system of water lines for the purpose of developing subdivisions throughout the Beaumont and Cherry Valley area. In February of 1887, Mr. Sigler recorded his first subdivision which later became the City of Beaumont. In the 1890s following recordation of the subdivision map Mr. Sigler, a

Southern California Investment Company, sold all holdings, including its water rights and the water system, to Murray F. Vandall in 1896. Mr. Vandall held the property for only two months, and sold all interest to the German Savings and Loan Society of San Francisco. The German Savings and Loan Society held the property until 1907 when it was sold to Mr. C.B. Eyer and Mr. K.R. Smoot.



C.B. Eyer's home is still standing at the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Magnolia.

Mr. Eyer and Mr. Smoot began work through the Beaumont Land and Water Company to bring irrigation water to the subdivisions in the area. The Beaumont Land and Water Company established its first point of diversion at the confluence of Wallace and Edgar Canyon. A second diversion was established along the north line of

sections 10 and 11, T2S1W which was the northern limit of the property Beaumont Land and Water Company had purchased from Thomas Mellon, comprised of 160 acres. Along with the diversions in Edgar Canyon, a small diversion point in Noble Canyon at the upper reaches of the Noble pressure zone area was developed.



The German Savings and Loan Society building in San Francisco California.

These diversions allowed surface water to be taken into the system for irrigation and domestic uses. With the construction of the diversions, two downstream users (Hannon and



The confluence of Wallace and Edgar Canyon is seen here in present day.

Roach) entered into litigation against the Beaumont Land and Water Company which will be discussed later herein.

The predecessors to the Beaumont Land and Water Company had also developed six wells in Edgar Canyon in two groups of three. Three of the wells were located in an area which is currently known as the Old Shop, at an elevation of  $\pm 3,030$  feet near the current day intersection of Avenida Mira Villa and Edgar Canyon Road. The other 3 wells were located at a point approximately 600' to 1200' north of the Upper Edgar Canyon Reservoir, at elevation  $\pm 3,650$  feet northeast the present day

intersection of Wildwood Canyon Road and oak Glen Road. As those wells were added and began pumping, water was delivered from the lower group of wells to the Noble system (Cherry Valley), water from the upper well field was delivered to the Upper Edgar Canyon system through a steel pipe that paralleled a gravity concrete line from the upper diversion point.

### **BEAUMONT IRRIGATION DISTRICT**

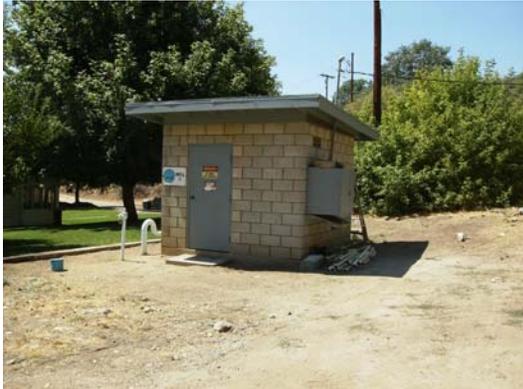
In March of 1919, the Beaumont Irrigation District was formed by a vote of the people in the community under the Wright Act of 1897. Following a year of investigation and negotiations with Mr. C.B. Eyer and his partner, Mr. K.R. Smoot, the Beaumont Irrigation District purchased the holdings of the Beaumont Land and Water Company and San Gorgonio Land and Water Company. The agreement to purchase was dated December of 1920. The Beaumont Land and Water Company and San Gorgonio Land and Water Company became a public agency known as the Beaumont Irrigation District. The district capital improvements included new water mains and additional wells to increase the service capabilities of the system. Throughout the 1920's, the District explored the Edgar Canyon and Noble Canyon areas, drilling and exploring for additional groundwater. 35 wells were drilled on canyon lands to increase service reliability (discussed later herein).



The Beaumont Land & Water Co. and the San Gorgonio Land & Water Co. were based out of this building built in 1909. It was demolished in the mid 1950's to make way for Interstate 10.

Through the 1960's, 1970's and into the 1980's, irrigation of crop lands began to diminish while domestic use of water began to increase. In 1982, the Board of Directors of the Beaumont Cherry Valley Water District rewrote all of the irrigation rules and regulations which, originally, were based on total number of acres irrigated, assuming a fruit crop with adult trees. With the change in the rules and regulations from a contracted amount per acre to the payment of irrigation water per 100 cubic feet, irrigation demand greatly decreased within the District's service area, to the point where there are currently 141 irrigation accounts remaining of which only about half actually consume water.

## PURCHASE OF PROPERTY AS A WATER SOURCE



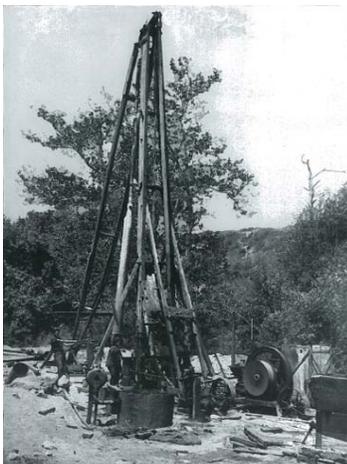
This building houses the pump for the historic Warren Ranch Well 1. It is still in service today using updated equipment. The yard for the Warren Ranch House can be seen in the background

In 1926, the Board of Directors of the Beaumont Irrigation District negotiated and purchased the Warren Ranch, located directly north and adjacent to their property line, which was described earlier herein as the north line of the section 10 and 11, where the second diversion was installed. With the District's purchase of the Warren Ranch they also received a recorded water right for the surface water of the Little San Gorgonio Creek, in favor of A.A. Warren and co-owner Mr. Hicks. The water right recorded was for 2,000 miner inch hours of flow of the Little San Gorgonio Creek that was to be used for irrigation and domestic purposes on a tract of land called the Houghten tract, which is further described as 5,000 acres of land east and

adjacent to the Yucaipa Ranches. A portion of this property is currently the City of Beaumont and the Community of Cherry Valley.

When the Warren Ranch purchase was completed, the District again began exploring for water on the 236-acre ranch. This exploration caused Mr. C.H. Fick to file a legal action against the District, claiming a well drilled along the north line of the ranch, current Well 11, and historically, Warren Ranch Well 1, drained the Cienegas (Marsh Lands) on his property and caused his ranch to lose its available water supply. Following negotiations, it was agreed that Warren Well 1, would be limited in production capability to allow the Fick Ranch to continue receiving all its water. It was also agreed that the District would purchase the Fick Ranch and a lifestyle agreement was entered into with the Fick family.

## WELLS IN EDGAR CANYON



This is a drill rig used in the 1920's.

Following the purchase of the Beaumont Land and Water Company by the Beaumont Irrigation District, the District began exploring for water in the Edgar Canyon area. Through the 1920's and into the 1930's, approximately 35 holes were drilled in the canyon area including the Warren and Fick properties. With the exploration that occurred, the District located a number of faults or groundwater barriers which caused water to pool underground upstream of the fault. Pumping equipment installed upstream of the faults allowed the District to develop small producing wells. There are currently 13 wells pumping in Edgar Canyon that have been added through the years. Those wells are generally grouped in three groups with the largest number of wells being in the upper well field located on the Fick and Warren Ranches, the middle well field or mid- canyon field located north and adjacent to the upper Edgar Canyon tank, and the lower well field located approximately 1,500' to 2,000' north of the old shop area at the lower elevation of



This is a modern day drill rig.

the canyon. All of the wells are controlled via the District's computerized telemetry system from the headquarters at the District's office. Total production from the 13 wells in Edgar Canyon is approximately between 20 and 25 percent of the District's current water demand.

With the purchase of the Fick Ranch, an agreement assigned to that ranch involving Fick and C.E. Wilshire, the property owner to the north of Fick, became property of the District. This agreement established the water rights south of a wagon axle driven in at the base of a tree to be the diversion point for the creek. All Waters flowing

below the wagon axle were the property of Fick; waters above the wagon axle were the properties of Wilshire. That wagon axle is currently visible along Oak Glen Road, near the Riley Farms. It is located approximately 50 yards south of the south line of the Wilshire apple shed.

### EARLY LITIGATION

In the Edgar Canyon area, from the late 1800's to the 1930's, there were several litigations filed regarding water rights. The earliest litigation was between Southern California Investment and Wilshire, which was based on Southern California Investment's concern that Wilshire was negotiating with the City of Redlands for export of water for sale to the City. When entered, the judgment established that Wilshire owned the water of the Little San Gorgonio Creek on his property, as his property was the headwaters of said creek. However, it also stated that water not used for the ranch could not be exported and would have to be allowed to continue downstream. The other major



The wagon axel used in the Wilshire/Fick agreement can still be seen on the west side of Oak Glen Road.



The Wilshire Apple Shed is still standing south of the Wilshire Ranch.

litigation was between Fick and Wilshire, (described earlier herein), which established that water rights below the wagon axle were the property of C.H. Fick. Additional litigation that occurred regarding the District's water rights and surface flows occurred in the early 1900's when the Beaumont Land and Water Company still held title.

The Beaumont Land and Water Company had diverted all surface flows and apparently did not concern themselves with downstream users. A Hannon family, or Hannon Mutual Water Company as it later became known, and a Roach family, both using surface flows from the Little San Gorgonio

Creek area filed actions against the Beaumont Land and Water Company. A settlement was reached where the Beaumont Land and Water Company purchased the surface rights of both Hannon and Roach with agreements to provide a minimum of 1 inch of water at two locations in the District's system. One location is currently at Taylor and Vineland, and the other location is along Oak Valley Parkway. Water is delivered without charge through meters to those properties formerly owned by Hannon and Roach up to a certain point, which is about 5,000 gallons of water per piece of property, per day. However, water is delivered on a schedule of one day in every ten.

## **WATER PRODUCTION IN BEAUMONT STORAGE UNIT BY BEAUMONT-CHERRY VALLEY WATER DISTRICT**



Well 1 is seen here being flushed for the first time in 1935. Well 1 is located at the intersection of 12<sup>th</sup> and Palm but predates the surrounding structures

the turn of the century, with a new 1 million gallon steel tank. The two Cherry tanks were replaced in the early 1960's. Additional well production was added to the system in the 1960's with the construction of Well 16, which is located north of Vineland Avenue and west of Noble Street, next to the Noble Creek wash. In 1969, following a United States Geological Service and a Department of Water Resources investigation of groundwater's of the San Gorgonio Pass, the District drilled a well at the Cherry Yard which is currently Well 21. The addition of Well 21 brought the total number of wells in the Beaumont Storage unit to seven, including Well 15 which is located on Highland Springs Road, south of 6th Street. This well came to the District in an annexation in 1954 when the Grand View Mutual Water Company annexed its service to

Water production by the Beaumont Irrigation District in the Beaumont Storage Unit began in 1935 with the drilling of Well 1, located at the intersection of 12th and Palm in Beaumont. Following the exploration that occurred in the Edgar Canyon area, it was determined that the District should look at the Beaumont Storage unit for additional water supplies as the demand for water was increasing. With a large number of wells located in Edgar Canyon, the surface flows were diminishing to a point where the stream flow used in the early 20th century was no longer reliable. By the 1950's, the Beaumont Irrigation District had established three wells in the Beaumont basin, Well 1, Well 2, located at 12th and Michigan, and Well 3, located south of 12th Street on Michigan. During the 1950's, the District added to its Beaumont Storage unit wells by adding Well 55 (currently know as Well 22), located at the intersection of Oak Valley Parkway and Michigan. Also in the late 1950's, the District began to replace its old concrete tanks with the replacement of the Noble tank, originally constructed at



This is Well 1 today updated with a more efficient and modern pump.

Beaumont-Cherry Valley as it could no longer meet its demand.

In 2001 the District began test drilling for establishing a Recharge Project adjacent to Noble Creek north of Brookside Avenue (discussed later herein). One of the test wells was drilled to a depth of 1,500' below the surface of the ground. This is the first known public agency well to drill this deep in the Beaumont Basin. The outcome of the drilling was that the District discovered that the groundwater area of the Beaumont Basin is much deeper than previously thought. Past tests established the base of good water to be about 1,000' below the surface. Today, the test well is a production well pumping 2,800 gallons per minute.

### **DEVELOPMENT OF POTABLE WATER SYSTEM FOR DELIVERY OF WATER**



The Upper Edgar Reservoir, seen here under construction, was built in 2000.

Over many decades, the water system of the Beaumont Cherry Valley Water District has evolved from a small privately owned company that was started to support development in the District's service area, to the system today that serves over 35,000 people in both the City Of Beaumont and the community of Cherry Valley.

With the growth that we have experienced over the last 10 years and with the planned growth that we will see in the future, the District has begun a program of rebuilding its Transmission and Distribution system. For example in 2000 the District's reservoir system included 7 million gallons of storage. Today the District has 22 million gallons of storage.

The District has also rebuilt its main pressure zones transmission system greatly increasing its delivery capability by installing many miles of 18", 24", and 30" water mains. As the area develops, new pressure zones are added to insure adequate service to the community. Two new high capacity wells drilled into the deepest aquifer have been added. Additionally, Wells 25, 26 and 29 finished construction and came on line during late summer 2008.

### **RECYCLED WATER**

In the late 1980s the District began to explore the possibilities related to the recycling water from the Beaumont waste water plant. In cooperation with the City of Beaumont the District began the planning for a new water system that would run parallel to the existing and proposed potable water system for the purpose of distributing recycled water.

With the new development that has occurred in the Beaumont area, the recycled water system has been built with fee contributions from the newly developing areas. The current system is approximately 85% complete and plans are underway for the construction of the remaining system. Full system completion in the Beaumont area is planned for 2010.

## BEAUMONT STORAGE UNIT HISTORY OF EARLY LITIGATION

As the District was establishing its source of supply in Edgar Canyon, a group of property owners from outside of the area established the Moreno Mutual Water Company, and purchased a 700-acre ranch overlying the Beaumont Storage Unit generally located southwest of the intersection of the 1-10 Freeway and Singleton Road. This occurred in 1926. The intent in purchasing the ranch was to develop the water resources on the land for export to a group of Moreno Valley area farms for irrigating crops. The Moreno interest, developed a number of wells on the ranch and began pumping large quantities of water for delivery to their land via a 42" pipeline that ran through an easement across the Badlands and into Moreno Valley. This became a great concern to the Board of Directors of the Beaumont Irrigation District as well as a number of other individual water companies and water right holders. The Beaumont Irrigation District, being the only public agency water purveyor in the Pass at the time, entered into a joint action with a number of other litigants, Yucaipa Water Company #1, Yucaipa Water Company #2, South Mesa Water Company, Western Heights Water Company, to name a few, and sued for the Moreno interest to stop the export. That group of litigants, which became known as the Beaumont-Yucaipa Water Conservation Association, negotiated a stipulated judgment with the Moreno interest that was entered into in 1929. Basically, the stipulated judgment allowed for Moreno to continue to export water for irrigation purposes until such time, a well known as the Index Well (Moreno Well 6, currently the Suzy "Q" Ranch well), water level dropped to an agreed level. At that time, Moreno was to stop its export. In 1945, the Moreno interest filed a second action with the intent of overturning the 1929 stipulated judgment. This action was filed in San Bernardino County Superior Court; however, the San Bernardino County Superior Court did not overturn the 1929 judgment.



This crew is installing some ductile iron pipe that is wrapped in a purple plastic covering to indicate that the pipeline contains recycled water.

The Moreno interest appealed the lower court decision and sent the issue on to the Appellate Court level, which agreed with the lower court ruling. The Moreno interest then proceeded onto the California State Supreme Court who upheld the lower court decisions and did not overturn the 1929 judgment. Through all the litigation that occurred regarding the Moreno incident, the courts had ruled that the plaintiffs would be reimbursed for damages incurred, which amounted to approximately \$96,000. The Beaumont Irrigation District was to receive the largest portion of that settlement which was approximately 25%. As the Moreno interest could not pay the damages, they agreed to turn over the Singleton Ranch and all the wells and pipelines, easements and water rights, to the Water Conservation Association. The ownership of the ranch was then reduced to stock, and as previously stated; the District received 25% of the Ranch and water system stock. In the late 1950's, it was jointly agreed to sell the ranch and all of the water rights with the stipulation that water produced on the ranch could not be exported. The ranch later became known as the Virginia City Land and Water Company, and was held by a Mr. McGowan for a number of years, until it was sold to the Landmark Land Company, and is currently listed under the ownership of the Oak Valley Mutual Water Company. The most important point concerns use of water from the Ranch. As previously stated, the Association recorded a limited right requiring that water produced on the Ranch must be used on the Ranch, and could not be exported from the Ranch.

## 2004 ADJUDICATION OF THE BSU

In 2001 the District, the City of Beaumont, South Mesa Mutual Water Company and Yucaipa Water District formed a joint powers authority called the San Timoteo Watershed Management Authority to develop planning and management of the San Gorgonio Pass area watershed. As part of their management strategy was to file in Riverside Superior Court to Adjudicate the Beaumont Basin, as it is the largest groundwater area in this portion of the Pass and is used by all public litigants including the City of Banning, as well as all private land owners that use water from the Beaumont Basin. Following 18 months of discussions and negotiation, there was a Stipulated Judgment entered in Court that established water rights in the Beaumont Basin and a Watermaster to manage the basin.

### PERCOLATION OF SURFACE FLOWS

As wells were drilled in the canyon areas in the early portion of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the District began to establish Recharge Facilities in the canyons to recharge surface water for later use. Additionally, in cooperation with Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, there were a number of large settling ponds constructed at the mouth of Edgar Canyon for any surplus runoff flows not percolated in Edgar Canyon which could then be percolated into the Beaumont Basin. These percolation operations are still continuing today with four large ponds being located at the mouth of Edgar Canyon maintained by Flood Control, which cover approximately 11 acres and an additional 30 to 40 ponds upstream in Edgar Canyon, primarily in San Bernardino County. These percolation areas allow the District to take advantage of any runoff in Edgar Canyon other than that, which occurs during the most intense storms where debris and sediments would cause damage to the ponds. Percolation studies have occurred on at least two occasions in the last 30 years at the ponds maintained by Flood Control.



This satellite image shows the settling ponds located at the mouth of Edgar Canyon, just north of Orchard Street.

Beginning in 2000, the District began to explore the possibility of recharging the Beaumont Basin with storm capture, surplus recycled water and California State Water Project water. To accomplish this task, the District Engineer completed a reconnaissance level study of the rainfall and runoff data that the District could capture from storm runoff that is coming from the District's watershed lands north of the community of Cherry Valley. Based on the District Engineer's study it was determined that the District could expect 4,100 acre feet on average of runoff from the District's watershed land.

The District's Board of Directors authorized staff to begin a series of studies and tests to determine if recharge in the BCVWD service area was a viable alternative to supplement the District's groundwater supplies. One such test, included construction of a 2 acre basin on a 78.8 acre site adjacent to Noble Creek below the confluence with the Little San Gorgonio Creek south

of Cherry Valley Blvd. east of Beaumont Avenue. The study took two years to complete and included construction of 10 wells and bore holes to determine if the site would be able to recharge large amounts of water. Studies were also made to determine the underground movement of the water that the District recharged in the test basin.



This is the Recharge Facility located on the south/east corner of Cherry Valley Blvd. and Beaumont Ave.

Following completion of the recharge study, the District's Board purchased the 78.8 acres of land and began the planning process for construction of a Recharge Facility for the recharge of storm runoff, surplus recycled water and State Project Water. The first phase of the Recharge Project was constructed in 2005/06 and began recharging California State Water Project water in September of 2006. In the first year of operation over 2,300,000,000 (2 billion 300 million) gallons of water have been recharged in to the Beaumont Basin over 400' below the surface of the ground.

The Recharge Project is funded entirely by new development. Fees are paid when construction of new dwelling units commence. A portion of those fees is used for the Recharge Project. A portion of the fee structure is also used to purchase new water sources for import to the District. Usually this water is in the untreated state which means the water will be recharged and naturally treated as it recharges the groundwater much like rain and runoff is naturally treated as it seeps in to the ground to become groundwater.

Recharged water is monitored as it seeps in to the ground at rate between 10 and 15 feet per day. 6 monitoring wells electronically monitor the water as it moves downward 400' to the regional water table.

As part of the overall project, the District has included over 9 acres of drought tolerant and California native gardens that will be irrigated with recycled water. The facility is open to the public and includes between 3 and 4 miles of walking paths, picnic and barbeque areas and several hundred plants some only needing water twice per year. There are also numerous park benches along the trails for the use of the public. When complete, the landscape area will include names and watering characteristics of all plants as well as instructions and demonstrations of drip or low water use solar powered irrigation systems.



The Recharge Facility has many trails that travel through gardens of drought tolerant plants. For more information see the [Recharge Facility page](#).

## TELEMETRY

In 1984, the Board of Directors approved the installation of the District's first computerized telemetry system to control all of the District's wells and tank or reservoir levels. Today, a more modern and state of the art telemetry system monitors and operates 23 wells and 13 reservoirs. This allows the current operation to be based on the most economical well to be pumped first and the least economical well to be pumped last. The telemetry system also allows the District operation to take full advantage of available water supplies in Edgar Canyon while minimizing the need to pump the Beaumont Storage Unit. The changes in the irrigation rules and regulations and the installation of the telemetry system, which allowed for better control of the District's pumping and operational needs, have allowed the District to reduce its demand on the Beaumont Storage Unit to a point where in the early to middle 1980's, water levels in the Beaumont Storage Unit actually began to increase for a short time (approximately four years), as opposed to continuing its decline which had been occurring since the mid 1920's when the Moreno wells came on line.



This is the mainframe computer for the telemetry system. This computer has dedicated power and communication lines to ensure seamless operations.

## **BEAUMONT IRRIGATION DISTRICT**

In the early 1970's, the Beaumont Irrigation District's name was changed to the Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District. However, the District today, is still the original Irrigation District which was formed under the Wright Act of 1897.