PALMDALE WATER DISTRICT
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PRESS RELEASE

Contact:
Judy Shay
Public Affairs Director
d: 661-456-1041
c: 661-297-3011
jshay@palmdalewater.org

Laura Gallegos
Public Affairs Specialist
d: 661-441-5944
c: 661-208-2581
lgallegos@palmdalewater.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONSTRUCTION BEGINS AT LITTLEROCK DAM, AREA CLOSED TO PUBLIC

Palmdale, CA – The first phase of the Littlerock Sediment Removal Project involving the construction of a grade-control structure to protect the habitat of the federally endangered arroyo toad is starting this week with the installation of de-watering wells near Rocky Point.

ASI Construction, which was awarded the $9.275 million contract by Palmdale Water District (PWD) to build the grade-control structure, has moved heavy equipment, including bulldozers, and staff trailers to the site. They also have stationed security at the dam's entrance gate to fully enforce the closure rule during construction.

"It is important that the public respects the closure due to safety associated with the construction," said PWD Engineer/Grant Manager James Riley. "There are a lot of heavy equipment being used, and we don't want anyone getting hurt."

(more)

Construction, which is expected to take place through early 2019, calls for first installing temporary de-watering wells about one mile upstream of the dam. At 60-feet deep, the wells will remove water from the soil so that construction of a concrete structure is possible. These de-watering wells, which will be removed after December, will not affect the natural wells below the dam.

Once the de-watering wells are in place, ASI will begin excavating soil for the grade-control structure that will run the width of the 260-foot channel. The length of the structure will be about 200 feet long and is designed in a staircase fashion to prevent erosion and to protect the upstream habitat of the arroyo toad, which has required environmental protection as an endangered species since it was discovered in the area in the mid-1990s.

According to ASI's preliminary schedule, roller-compacted concrete will be poured for the grade-control structure and the streambed protection at the end of this year. About 8,000 cubic yards of concrete will be used. In early 2019, protective rip-rap will be placed next to the structure.

"It is exciting to get this first phase of construction started," Riley said. "The sediment removal at Littlerock Dam is going to take many years, and we cannot start until this grade-control structure is in place."

Once the structure is built and the rainy season is over, PWD can begin its Littlerock Sediment Removal Project next fall. Plans call for removing 1.1 million cubic yards of sediment, which will take seven to 12 years. It will be followed by annual removal of about

38,000 cubic yards of sediment. This would bring the reservoir back to its 1992 water-storage capacity of 3,500 acre-feet and maintained at that volume. Accumulated sediment has caused the reservoir to lose about 500 acre-feet of water capacity, which limits PWD's stored water supply.

The Littlerock Dam was closed temporarily by the U.S. Forest Service in 2015 for health and safety reasons. Working with PWD and the Friends of the Littlerock Dam, a grass-roots community group dedicated to getting the dam re-opened for recreation, the Forest Service did allow public access to the area on two weekends this past summer.

Since 1918, the Palmdale Water District has provided high-quality water at a reasonable cost. We pride ourselves on providing great customer service; advocating for local water issues that help our residents; educating the community on water conservation; and leading our region in researching and implementing emerging technologies that increase operational efficiency. For more information about PWD, visit www.palmdalewater.org.

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