

## ***San Vicente Dam expansion set to begin, finally***

**By CARLOS RICO**, The Daily Transcript  
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For more than 10 years, the San Diego County Water Authority has been planning to expand the San Vicente Dam by more than twice its current size. That plan is now becoming reality as construction has just begun.

The San Vicente Dam Raise project will increase the height of the dam by 117 feet and add 152,000 acre-feet of water, or 49.55 billion gallons of water.

Currently, the dam stands at 220 feet and can store up to 90,000 acre-feet of water (29.34 billion gallons).

"This is being done to help store more water to keep up with the growing demand of the San Diego region," said project manager Kelly Rodgers. "This has been in the planning stages since 1996."

The project will be completed in six packages and the dam has been "significantly" lowered to allow for construction, according to Rodgers.

The first package involved purchasing aggregate from a third party to reduce cost.

The start of construction is part of package two, which involves foundation excavation, blasting and grading for the new access roads.

**Barnhart Inc.** is the contractor that was awarded this task and is expected to be completed by summer 2010.

Next spring, the third package of work will commence with the raising of the dam.

The first 54 feet of the dam raise will provide 52,000 acre-feet of water storage capacity for use in an emergency -- enough water to supply 104,000 typical households for one year, according to the San Diego Water Authority.

The remaining 63 feet of the project will allow San Vicente to store an additional 100,000 acre-feet of water.

The new dam will be built in top of the existing dam using the roller compacted concrete technique.

"This procedure will make the dam just as strong as a conventional concrete dam, but will cost less and take less time to complete," Rodgers said.

This phase of the dam, which is located northeast of Santee off state Route 67, is projected to take about two and a half years to complete.

This package of work is scheduled to go out to bid later this year and is estimated around \$250 million to \$300 million.

In the fourth package, bypass pipeline work will begin, replacing the existing dam's reservoir bypass pipeline between the first aqueducts to the proposed limits of the dam raise.

This work will start in late 2011 and take one year to finish.

The dam-raising project will also involve renovating the marina, which is package six.

Once completed it will feature an extended boat ramp, larger parking lot, more trees and picnic areas, and roadways that are wider and less steep.

The final phase will entail site restoration with new vegetation and landscape in the surrounding areas of the newly expanded dam.

The entire dam raising project is scheduled for completion in early 2013.

The reservoir has been closed since September 2008 to all recreational use, and will continue to be closed until the water level reaches the boat launch ramp at the new marina sometime between 2014 and 2017, depending on water availability from the Colorado River and rainwater dropped during rain storms.

The San Vicente Dam Raise project is part of the Emergency Storage Project, which is a system of reservoirs, interconnected pipelines and pumping stations designed to make water available to San Diego County in the case of an interruption in imported water deliveries.