



Requested Action:

Reservoir Committee and Authority Board consider approval of a consulting agreement/contract with Pacific Land and Energy, LLC (Dan O'Connell) to provide Deputy External Affairs Manager services in the amount not to exceed \$25,275/month for the period of August 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026.

Detailed Description/Background:

As was discussed at the December 2025 Board meeting, an important fourth goal area of the Strategic Plan is to develop an effective organization to deliver the project and transition to an agency capable of reliable and efficient operations. On several occasions, the Board has reviewed the list of core competencies that staff use to guide organizational development. This development process is ongoing, will continue throughout the project, and will evolve over time. However, the core competencies are expected to remain the same in perpetuity. Key staffing hires that act as owner representatives (similar to agency staff in your organizations) are fundamental to achieving the core competencies. This proposed contract is one of these owner-representative hires geared to advance the organization's capabilities in right-of-way acquisition, land management, public outreach, and government affairs.

A Request for Proposals (RFP) was released in April for Deputy External Affairs Manager services. The RFP was posted on [PlanetBids.com](https://www.planetbids.com), and was posted to the Authority's website. The Authority received four proposals. The selection process was led by the External Affairs Manager with support from other members of the Authority management team. The selection team reviewed the proposals and determined three proposals to be responsive and conducted interviews with the three candidates.

Mr. Daniel O'Connell with Pacific Land and Energy LLC was determined to be the best qualified candidate. He brings exceptional experience in project planning, right-of-way acquisition, land management, public outreach and government affairs with a depth of experience managing complex land development and acquisition programs for utility projects throughout Northern California.

Mr. O'Connell is well respected in the Sacramento Valley and has prior relationships with many landowners affected by the Sites Project and key stakeholders in the region. Mr. O'Connell has a strong understanding of Sacramento Valley agricultural operations and is indirectly familiar with the Sites Project. Mr. O'Connell has extensive experience leading multi-stakeholder coordination efforts, public communication programs, and engaging with key federal, state, and local elected officials – as well as serving in leadership positions for several regional and state-wide agricultural advocacy organizations.

A contract meeting the needs of the Authority has been negotiated with a monthly retainer fee of \$25,275. The contract is assumed to be a full-time position. The compensation has been reviewed and determined to be in line with similar public agency management positions with comparable experience and responsibilities. Mr. O'Connell has expressed a strong interest in serving in this capacity for the duration of the project; however, the contract is proposed for 2026 only to coincide with the current planned completion of Phase 2.

Prior Action:

None.

Fiscal Impact/Funding Source:

Funding for these services is included within the approved Amendment 3 workplan and is included in the FY26 Approved Budget. Continued services in subsequent phases would be subject to future Board approval and funding commitments.

Staff Contact:

Kevin Spesert

Primary Service Provider:

None.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Daniel O'Connell Resume

Attachment B: Revised Sites Organizational Chart

Attachment C: Deputy External Affairs Manager Roles and Responsibilities

DANIEL O'CONNELL

Deputy External Affairs Manager | Land Acquisition Lead

Daniel@pacificlandandenergy.com | (530) 632-3902 | DRE Broker Lic. #01440563

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Experienced real estate broker, land acquisition specialist, and rural/agricultural consultant with over 20 years of progressively responsible experience in land transactions, site acquisition, landowner negotiation, energy project development, and project development across Glenn and Colusa counties, the heart of the Sites Reservoir Project area. Deep roots in the local agricultural community, strong relationships with landowners, water agencies, and elected officials, and direct knowledge of rural land values and agricultural operations. Licensed California Real Estate Broker with extensive experience managing acquisition programs, coordinating multi-stakeholder projects, and delivering results within schedule and budget constraints. Thoroughly familiar with the Uniform Relocation Act of 1970 and California Eminent Domain Law.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Land Acquisition & Right-of-Way Management	Landowner Negotiation & Coordination	Agricultural Land Valuation
Community Outreach & Stakeholder Engagement	Public Agency & Government Relations	Project Development & Entitlement
Energy Project Development (All Phases)	Mitigation Land Transactions & Management	Multi-Stakeholder Coordination
Site Identification & Assessment	Team Leadership & Consultant Management	Uniform Relocation Act & Eminent Domain Law

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Land Acquisition & Community Outreach Consultant | Alta Gas / Perry Communications

2009 – 2011

Walker Ridge Wind Project — Land Acquisition & Community Outreach

- Served as the primary land acquisition and community outreach consultant for the Walker Ridge Wind Project on the border of Colusa and Lake Counties.
- Identified and directly contacted landowners in target acquisition areas, presenting project benefits and negotiating long-term land leases on behalf of the project owner.
- Led comprehensive community outreach engages individuals, stakeholder groups, agricultural organizations, policy makers, and elected officials at local, state, and federal levels to build project support and facilitate the entitlement process.
- Assisted in the entitlement, permitting, and regulatory approval process, coordinating with county, state, and federal agencies throughout the project development cycle.

Founder & Owner / Licensed Real Estate Broker | Pacific Land & Energy / O'Connell Solar Consulting

2012 – Present

Real Estate Brokerage, Energy Project Development & Land Acquisition Consulting

- Operates a full-service real estate brokerage (DRE Broker Lic. #01440563) with primary focus on agricultural, commercial, mitigation and development land transactions throughout California.
- Manages all aspects of land acquisition, site assessment, landowner engagement, and mitigation land transactions for clients pursuing large-scale energy and infrastructure projects, serving as owner's representative from initiation through close.
- Owns and manages mitigation bank properties leased for cattle grazing and habitat preservation, providing direct experience in conservation easements and environmental mitigation compliance.

- Cultivates long-standing relationships with landowners, water agencies, county officials, and agricultural community leaders in the Sites Reservoir Project region.

Solar Client Relationship Manager | Colusa Indian Energy

2023 – Present

Energy Project Development & Client Relations

- Manages client relationships and leads solar project origination and development for various energy initiatives, coordinating across design, financing, permitting, utility interconnection, and construction phases.
- Engages with regulatory agencies, utility representatives, and government officials to advance project approvals and permitting.

Partner | O’Connell Cattle Company

2012 – Present

Agricultural Operations & Land Management

- Co-owns and manages a registered Black Angus cattle operation in Colusa County providing a firsthand understanding of agricultural land use, land valuations, water rights, cattle & farm operations and the priorities of landowners directly affected by the Sites Project.

Partner | Kaufman and Company, Renewable Energy Consultants

2008 – 2012

Energy Project Development & Business Development

- Managed day-to-day operations and led business development for a renewable energy consulting firm focused on distributed generation and utility-scale projects.
- Identified, acquired, entitled, and permitted sites for customer owned & utility-scale renewable energy projects throughout California, requiring land acquisition, landowner negotiation, and government coordination skills directly transferable to the Deputy EAM role.
- Represented facility owners throughout the acquisition and development process as owner’s representative; leveraged government relationships to facilitate project approvals applicable to local/state advocacy responsibilities.

Site Acquisition Consultant | Competitive Power Ventures LLC

2006 – 2008

Wind Energy Site Identification, Acquisition & Landowner Engagement

- Conducted site identification and assessment for potential wind power generation across large rural land areas, requiring systematic landowner outreach and parcel evaluation at scale.
- Identified and contacted landowners in target areas, presented project benefits, and negotiated long-term land leases for wind power generation, directly analogous to the landowner coordination duties of the Land Acquisition Lead role.

Licensed Real Estate Broker | Kaufman and Company Ltd / Kaufman Properties, Inc.

2003 – 2012

Farm, Commercial, Mitigation & Development Land Transactions

- Primary focus on farm, commercial, and development land transactions throughout California.
- Managed development projects from site assessment and acquisition through entitlement, permitting, political approvals, and disposition, providing end-to-end land development program experience.
- Engaged with elected officials and agency staff at local and state levels to advance project entitlements, building the government relations skills central to the Deputy EAM’s advocacy responsibilities.

COMMUNITY & ORGANIZATIONAL INVOLVEMENT

Highly engaged in the Glenn-Colusa agricultural and water community, the direct stakeholder base of the Sites Reservoir Project:

- President – Glenn-Colusa Cattlemen’s Association (serving since 2016; direct relationships with landowners in the project area)
- Current President – California Beef Cattle Improvement Association
- California Ag Leadership – Class 53 Fellow (studied both state and federal policy strategy & lobbying)
- Family Water Alliance – Member (alignment with water infrastructure mission)
- Colusa County Economic Development Corp. – Past Vice President & Board Member
- Colusa County Chamber of Commerce – Past Board of Directors
- Colusa County Intermediary Relending Program – Loan Approval Board
- Colusa County Community Development Block Grant Revolving Loan Fund – Loan Approval Board
- California Cattlemen’s Association – Executive Committee Member; participates in annual legislative advocacy trips to the California State Capitol to engage lawmakers and advance policy priorities on behalf of California ranchers, providing direct experience in state-level political engagement and legislative outreach
- Farm Bureau – Member
- Former Volunteer Firefighter – Sacramento River Fire District

LICENSES & CREDENTIALS

- California Real Estate Broker License – DRE #01440563
- California Contractor License – C46 Solar Contractor #1015327
- California Insurance Agent License – #4800120

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science – Business Administration & Economics

Saint Mary’s College of California, Moraga, CA | 1994–1998

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE & REGIONAL TIES

Raised on a diversified ranch in Colusa, California, where the O’Connell family has been involved in agriculture since 1880. This multigenerational connection to Glenn and Colusa County agriculture provides unmatched credibility, trust, and local knowledge when engaging with the landowners, farmers, and ranchers whose properties are central to the Sites Reservoir Project. I am deeply familiar with the water, land, and community values of the project area.

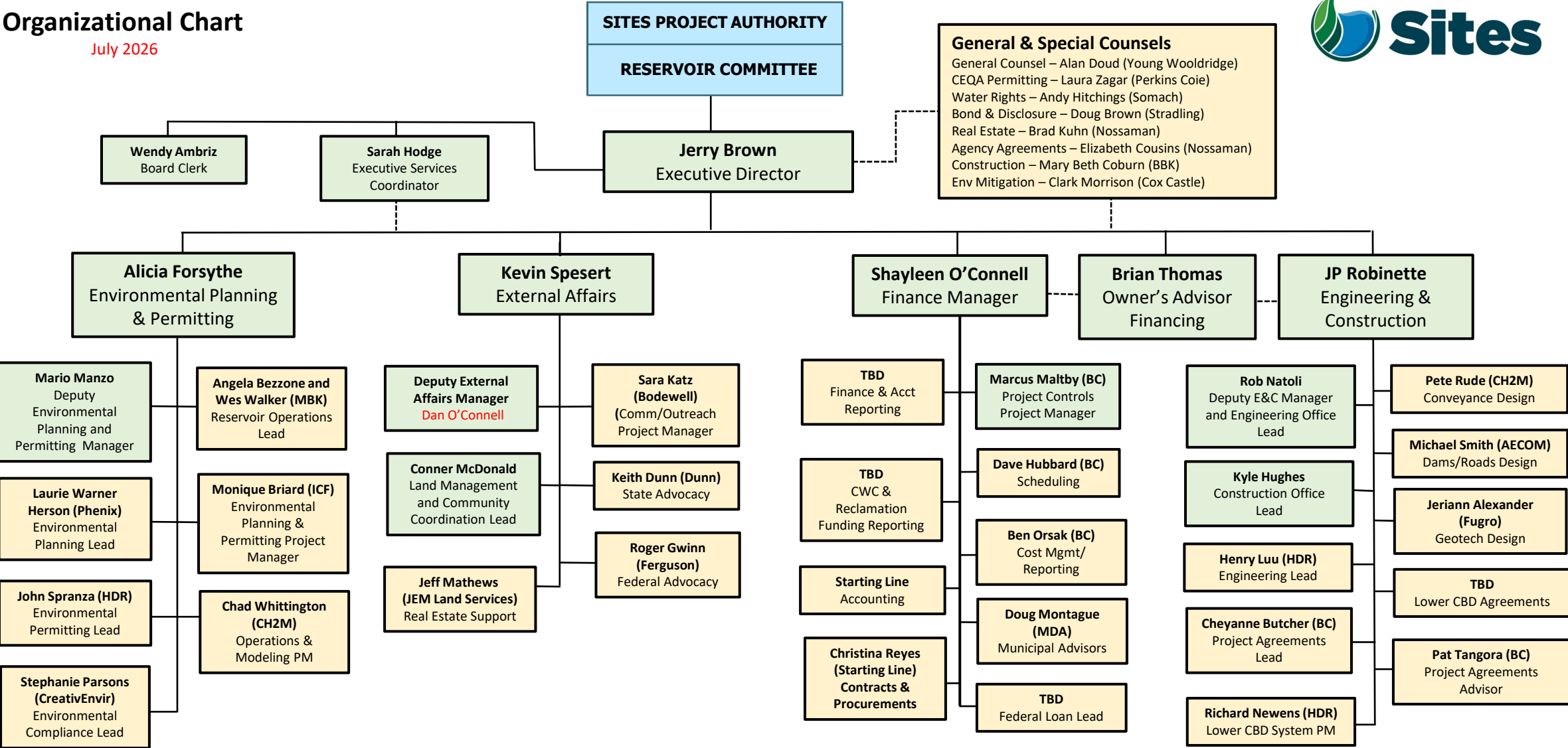
My father, E. Dan O’Connell, served as the Colusa County Assessor for nearly 30 years. Growing up in that environment provided an early and enduring grounding in land valuation principles, appraisal methodology, and property assessment practices. In addition to the formal appraisal and valuation experience accumulated through my real estate career, this background means I approach landowner conversations and appraisal oversight with both professional expertise and a deeply ingrained familiarity with how land is valued in this region, an advantage that translates directly into more credible, more efficient, and more respectful landowner engagement.

I am well-versed in the legal and regulatory frameworks governing public land acquisition, including the Uniform Relocation Act of 1970, California Eminent Domain Law, and California Government Code Sections 7260 through 7277. I also have practical experience with property exchange transactions, ensuring comprehensive coverage of the legal instruments and landowner protections that must be navigated throughout a complex acquisition program of this scale.

I am very excited about the Sites Reservoir project and the benefits it will provide to our state’s water infrastructure and local economy and would be honored to be a part of the team! Thank you for your time and consideration of my application.

Organizational Chart

July 2026



Attachment A

Deputy External Affairs Manager/Land Acquisition Lead SCOPE OF SERVICES SITES RESERVOIR PROJECT

Reports To:

External Affairs Manager

Functions Reporting to Position:

Land acquisition agents, appraisal services, title & escrow services, various Project Managers.

Committee/Working Group Staff Lead :

NA

Roles & Responsibilities:

The Deputy External Affairs Manager (Deputy EAM) reports to the External Affairs Manager and serves as an integral member of the External Affairs Management team. In this role, the Deputy EAM acts as the owner's representative, leading a team of consultants that deliver support services specifically in the land acquisition area in addition to providing both strategic and operational support to the broader External Affairs Team.

The Deputy EAM plays a critical role in supervising and directing all aspects of the project's acquisition functions on behalf of the owner. This responsibility includes ensuring the effective execution and completion of acquisition activities within the defined parameters, while maintaining alignment with the Authority's core values.

In this capacity, the Deputy EAM collaborates closely with other owner representatives and team members to confirm that the project is implemented in accordance with the values of the Sites Project Authority. The position maintains a continuous focus on advancing the Authority's Strategic Plan, guiding the project team to fulfill established objectives.

The Deputy EAM must assess and balance multiple interests, ensuring that the External Affairs Team remains focused on the pursuit of a project that delivers the anticipated goals. This is achieved by meeting scheduled deadlines and budgetary constraints, and by fostering a sense of pride among those involved in the project. While reporting to the External Affairs Manager, the Deputy EAM may be authorized to act as a spokesperson for the team and may receive delegated authorities as necessary to facilitate efficient project execution.

The Deputy EAM has two major functions:

- Deputy External Affairs Manager (A Role)
- Land Acquisition Lead (B Role)

It is expected that Deputy EAM position will be a approximately 30-70 split between A role and B roles respectively.

A Role - Deputy External Affairs Manager: The Deputy External Affairs Manager (Deputy EAM) serves as a pivotal leadership role within the Sites Reservoir Project, providing both strategic oversight and operational direction for all external affairs activities. This position is designed to support senior management by ensuring seamless coordination among owner representatives, project team members, and consultant staff. The Deputy EAM is tasked with upholding project standards, facilitating effective communication across multiple work streams, and stepping in to make critical decisions when necessary. Given the complexity and scope of the Sites Project, the Deputy EAM must possess technical expertise, strategic thinking skills, excellent communication skills, and demonstrate strong leadership capabilities. A commitment to collaboration is essential, as well as the ability to manage several high-stakes initiatives simultaneously. Additionally, the Deputy EAM plays an important role in mentoring and developing junior staff, facilitating knowledge transfer, and building organizational capacity to ensure the long-term success of the project. The Deputy EAM must be capable and have experience in and directing work of consulting staff providing internal/external communications and messaging, and state and federal advocacy activities.

B Role – Land Acquisition Lead: Responsible for the overall management and development of the Project's Land Acquisition Program. This includes.

- **Resource Management:** Oversee staffing, allocation, and professional development of team members and developing resource pools for both project team and consultant staff
- **Standards and Processes:** Develop, implement, and maintain best practices and standard operating procedures regarding land acquisition.
- **Tools, Operations, and Systems:** Identify, implement, and optimize tools and systems to enhance departmental efficiency.
- **Cross-functional Collaboration:** Work closely with other office leads for seamless integration across the project.
- **Performance Oversight:** Ensure adherence to rigorous quality standards and regulatory compliance while managing schedules and budgets

Specific responsibilities of the Deputy External Affairs Manager in Phase 2 of Project

- Establish land acquisition standards, business processes, approval protocols, tools, and systems necessary to support the Phase 3 land acquisition program
- Update the Project's acquisition plan to reflect current land acquisition assumptions
- Develop the Project's relocation plan and begin outreach to landowners who will be displaced by land acquisition activities

- Oversee the procurement of “On-Call” appraisal services to support Phase 3 land acquisition activities
- Oversee the procurement of title and escrow services to support Phase 3 land acquisition activities
- Oversee the procurement of right-of-way acquisition services to support Phase 3 land acquisition activities
- Support current early propriety land acquisition that are being conducted in 2026
- Lead landowner coordination and engagement activities with landowners who are affected by the project
- Coordinate cross-function alignment between engineering, construction, environmental compliance, and project controls to provide integrated land delivery
- Oversee and direct the work of consulting firms providing internal/external communications and messaging support to the project
- Serve as Acting External Affairs Manager in the absence of senior leadership, maintaining continuity of decision making and project momentum