

TID TIDINGS

Newsletter of the Tulare Irrigation District

ABUNDANT WATER SUPPLIES CONTINUE

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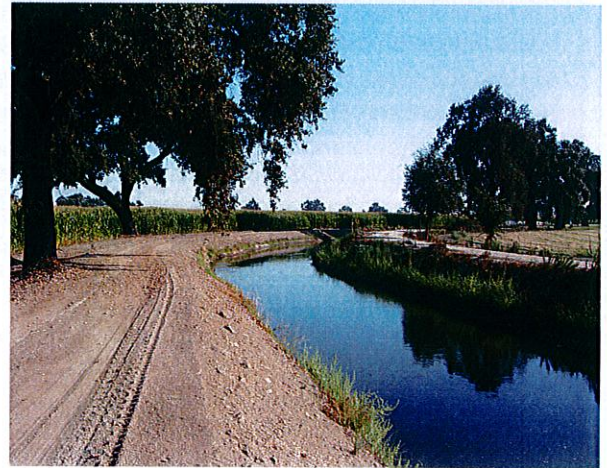
Dave Martin



J. Paul Hendrix
General Manager

The Board of Directors holds regular public meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 9:00 am at the District office in Tulare.

Starting out with a record-setting December, this year's water supply turned out to be near ideal. Ample snowfall, favorable runoff patterns with only nominal flooding issues, and strategic utilization of Friant exchanges all combined to produce a surface supply of about 345,000 AF, one of the highest on record. The District's ditch run has continued since December 9th of last year and, absent an early arrival of the 2012 winter, will wind down in early November – almost a 12-month span. Such a long run happens rarely given our water supply sources and storage capabilities.



TID's Packwood Creek Still Flowing in September

The Kaweah supply for this year amounts to about 210,000 AF, a product of a 190% runoff year. The Friant supply from Millerton Lake is currently projected to be about 135,000 AF, and more may be forthcoming this fall as there remains a lot of water in Millerton storage that USBR may need to evacuate and declare as late season Class 2 supply, some of which will come to TID. Newly-developed water exchange programs with other districts, including Consolidated Peoples Ditch Co. and Kern-Tulare WD, have produced another 35,000 AF for delivery this year. TID has also been aggressive in purchasing surplus Kaweah supplies from other Kaweah Units.

Additional water comes with an increased cost; however, prices for much of the Friant water have been low due to surplus conditions, and our exchange programs are set up to provide low-cost water in wet years like these in trade for smaller quantities to be returned later in drier years. Much of the diverted supply this year has been devoted to groundwater recharge, and we also earmark funds stemming from energy sales by the Kaweah River Power Authority and the City of Tulare water augmentation program to sustain these operations in wet years such as this.

TID will soon be reading groundwater levels from its battery of ag wells located throughout the area. Readings for this ample surface water supply year should reveal higher gains than those measured in 2010. Two years in a row of such gains will be welcome news in a region coping with the undeniable and worrisome downward trend as its long-term average.

Extended irrigation runs like this one and last year's, as well as our crew's long hours spent on recharge basin construction, take a toll on our ability to keep up with regular maintenance and repair tasks. Weeds become more difficult to control in wet years and routine work such as turnout gate replacements and canal levee reshaping become more of a challenge. While nobody relishes the dry times, we know they will come again, leaving many months of dry ditches during which we'll again resume the many responsibilities associated with maintaining a sizable irrigation and recharge delivery system.

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MARTIN BASIN—READY FOR SERVICE

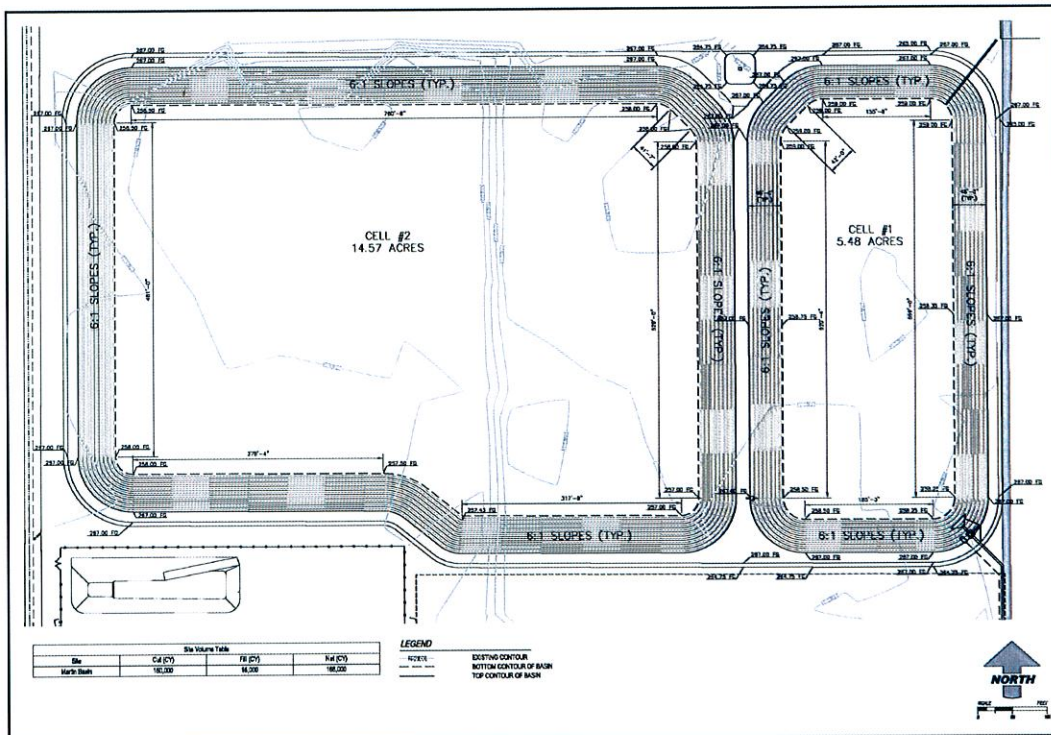
Back in 2007 when TID bought what's known as the "Martin place," its purpose for this was two-fold. About 5 acres was and is now the site of TID's new O&M and administration facilities, the 10-acre Martin place and dairy has been sold, and the rest was intended for a water regulation and groundwater recharge basin.

The Martin Basin project earned a \$300,000 grant from USBR and design and construction of the basin have continued in earnest over the last year or so. The TID maintenance dept. and crew has demonstrated considerable versatility in taking on this project. It shouldn't go unnoticed that of the 13 basins now within the District, most have been in place since the late 1950's and none have been added until very recently with the Swall and Martin projects. Together, these add 180 acres and about 1,100 acre-feet of storage space to help manage canal flows and expand local recharge capabilities.



Martin Basin Receiving its First Water on September 4, 2011

The Martin Basin is now complete, receiving its first water from the Area 10 Pipeline on September 4th. As the depiction below shows, water can be temporarily stored in the easterly regulation cell or turned into the westerly cell for underground recharge. When needed for water demands downstream, stored water in the regulation cell will be pumped back into the Area 10 Pipeline system. This will occur in conjunction with a planned extension of the pipeline south to the Rocky Ford Canal. Telemetry control equipment is also to be installed to provide for efficient operation of this new regulation facility.



Due in part to its grant funding, the Martin Basin will enable the District to replenish the underground water table at increased rates and to provide improved service to its irrigation customers in the lower Rocky Ford and Cameron Creek systems. It's projects like these that are intended to put TID in a position to accelerate the capture of wet-year supplies with the goal of offsetting the losses of surplus Friant water in average years anticipated to occur with advancement of the fishery restoration program for the San Joaquin River below Friant Dam.

Martin Basin Water Regulation and Groundwater Recharge Drawing

State Grant Award to Locals

Despite the state's financial woes, monies still flow outward in the form of grants. Out of Prop 84's \$1 billion program authorized in 2006 comes the first round of water project implementation grants under the Integrated Regional Water Management (IWRM) program. The IWRM is a process by which districts, cities and counties within broad regions in the state come together and identify water supply and management projects needy of seed money from the state. The Kaweah River Basin entities, of which TID is a member, formed such a IWRM group and has been awarded nearly \$5 million for five projects, two of which were sponsored or co-sponsored by TID.

While funding details haven't been finalized, we estimate that about \$1.5 million will be earmarked for the TID/City of Tulare Swall Basin project and about \$2.27 million for the proposed Visalia/TID Exchange Pipeline project. These grant funds greatly enhance our ability to earnestly proceed with construction on both projects and add to a series of nearly \$8 million in federal and state grants secured since 2004 for much-needed projects and programs. TID's partnerships with both the cities of Tulare and Visalia demonstrate innovative alliances and aided in achieving the grant awards.



AG WATER USAGE—THE STATE'S WATCHFUL EYE

A sweeping package of water legislation was passed by the state legislature in November 2009 which contained a bill, SB7X-7, that placed new reporting obligations and requirements on agricultural water suppliers such as TID. Essentially the bill requires, by certain near-term target dates, (1) the preparation and submittal of water management plans to the state DWR, (2) the demonstration to DWR that ag deliveries are being measured to specific accuracy thresholds, and (3) that DWR devise a methodology to determine ag water use efficiency and submit the findings to the legislature.

As to item 1, TID has maintained a water management plan on file with USBR for some time and, for the most part, this should fit the need for DWR's purposes. This was the intent of the legislation at the urging of the numerous CVP districts. Ours, and all other CVP districts' plans, has been required by USBR for many years now. Item 2, the assessment of canal turnout measurement accuracy, may be challenging for TID as well as other districts with open-ditch delivery systems. Typical turnout gates have been laboratory-tested for accuracy; however, proving up such measurements in the field cannot be easily done. More interaction with DWR is anticipated to come up with something workable. With item 3, concerns remain as to the purpose and application of the efficiency report called for by the legislature. The agricultural community has stressed that water use efficiency is evaluated in vastly different ways depending on water delivery, irrigation methods and soil types, and resulting numbers mean different things depending on the particular region's water balance and availability of underlying groundwater. Some environmental advocates have suggested that efficiency needs to also be addressed in terms of economics, i.e., the value judgment as to whether a particular crop choice is economically efficient or not. Clearly, the agricultural water community will not support any such value judgment by the state and, moreover, will strongly point out that this was not the intent of the legislation.

Like the groundwater monitoring requirements put in place by companion bill, SB7X-6, these new water use obligations and compliance measures are indicative of closer scrutiny by the state of its largest water user group – farmers. TID staff have been heavily involved in the efforts underway to proceed forward with the bill's directives and we've been engaged in the various committees entrusted with these tasks. Too much is at stake to simply wait on the sidelines until the rules are fleshed out, only to find in the end that they are infeasible or, at best, very expensive to comply with.

WELL DRILLER'S LOGS — PUBLIC INFORMATION OR NOT?

The agricultural community has been fending off over-reaching state legislative attempts for years now regarding groundwater management. After extensive negotiations, SB7X-6 was passed in 2009 with amendments rendering it more palatable to the Valley agricultural community. We viewed this bill, however, as perhaps the "nose in the tent," in that the state's efforts to address groundwater overdraft and water quality issues would not end there. Fresh on the heels of this new law is another Senate bill, SB 263, the intent of which is to consider as public information well driller's logs. Such logs are presently considered private property information, on file with the drilling contractor, the state DWR, and only released to others with permission by the well owner.

In its original form the bill would allow any member of the public to access well driller's logs for any well in the state. There was initially a host of concerns expressed over such public access. Drilling contractors viewed logs as proprietary and representative of their drilling experience in a particular region. Some urban water suppliers felt that disclosing well locations may jeopardize the security of groundwater production facilities in cities. Farmers who pump groundwater deemed the bill to be yet another intrusion into what by current law is private property.

The bill has since been amended and, as of this writing, sits on the Governor's desk for action. The amendments have been acceptable to most, and now the only members of the public who may access driller's logs without the owner's permission are certified hydrogeologists, licensed civil engineers, or other well drilling contractors. Punitive fines are to be imposed for any unauthorized release of the information. It was always the collective view in the Valley that well logs, containing rather technical information such as casing depths, size and soil strata geological data, would in essence be "Greek" to those not qualified to analyze them.

So, should SB 263 be signed, is your well data now compromised and open to public access? To some degree yes but with justifiable limits. Take note, however, that the state and others want to know more about your groundwater pumping and underlying aquifers, and we anticipate more inquiries and regulatory inroads to follow.

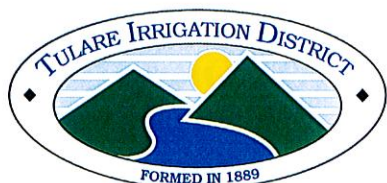
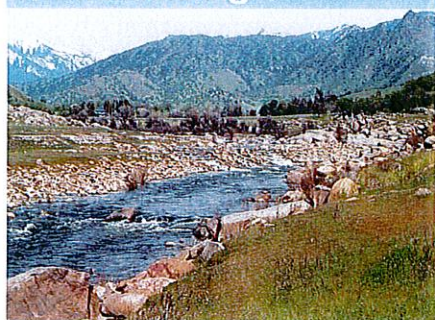


Tulare Irrigation District
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LOOK INSIDE...

*Abundant Water Supplies Continue
Martin Basin - Ready for Service
State Grant Award to Locals
Ag Water Usage - The State's Watchful Eye
Well Driller's Logs -
Public Information or Not*

Visit Us At...
www.tulareid.org



Founded in 1889, Tulare ID was one of the first irrigation districts in California. Its purpose is to serve the water supply needs of the greater Tulare area, a rich and agriculturally diverse region within the Southern San Joaquin Valley. The water provided comes locally from the Kaweah River and is also imported from the Federal Central Valley Project.

Important Dates to Remember

September

13th—TID Board of Directors meeting
13th—Date specified in the notice for the Board to act as a Board of Equalization to hear and determine objections to the valuations
23rd—Board of Equalization sessions closed

October

11th—TID Board of Directors meeting

November

1st—2011-2012 Tax assessments mailed
8th—TID Board of Directors meeting
24th & 25th—TID office closed for Thanksgiving

December

13th—TID Board of Directors meeting
20th—First installment tax assessments delinquent
26th—TID office closed for Christmas