1st/2nd Quarter 2006

TID TIDINGS

Newsletter of the Tulare Irrigation District

In This Issue:

FROM THE MANAGER

If you were missing the 1st quarter issue of TID Tidings earlier this year, this is it! Due to administrative delays, we've combined the 1st and 2nd quarter issues together. Our staff person who helped publish this newsletter has moved on and we are just getting back on our feet in this regard. There's much to talk about, not the least of which is the late winter rebound of snowfall and rain. See p. 3 for more on this.

CITY KEEN ON GROUNDWATER RECHARGE

The City of Tulare has made significant strides in its goal towards becoming an integral part of ongoing efforts to import water into the greater Tulare area. Unlike the District's customers, the City relies exclusively on wells for its water supply and its pumping needs increase each year with added urban growth. City officials are forward-thinking and understand that continued growth depends on adequate water supplies for the future. Through a newly-formed joint committee process, they have engaged in discussions on this and other water-related subjects with the District. Out of such discussions is emerging a program by which the City will play a role in furthering the District's groundwater supplementation programs.

This year the City is contributing $250,000 towards the District's program of water importation slated for groundwater recharge. The City funds are helping fuel a coordinated program with Farmers Ditch Co. through utilization of recharge ponds east of Tulare to store and percolate water. Also, other recharge facilities operated by the District – ones that provide direct groundwater benefits to the City – are also being utilized as part of this program. We anticipate that this year's participation by the City will evolve into an established annual program through which the City and the District can demonstrate an emerging partnership in the stewardship of our local water resources.

CANALS AS URBAN AMENITIES

Have you thought about what happens to irrigation canals and ditches as cities, including Tulare and Visalia, expand ever outward? It's been a subject of much study across the western United States, where urban encroachment into farm lands has been occurring at break-neck pace during the last several years. In some cases such smaller ditch systems are abandoned since all lands served by them are phased into urban developments. However, when such channels and canals transport water from water supply sources through urbanizing areas to thriving agricultural lands, such water courses must remain as a permanent part of the changing landscape. New city dwellers tend to look upon these long-established canals as a public resource to be made available for amenities such as walk paths, green belts and the like. There are numerous examples of cooperation whereby cities are able to realize some of these public resource values and amenities while still protecting the fundamental purposes for which these canals were built and continue to serve. The City of Tulare and the District, through their newly-formed joint committee, are looking at ways to address public values of canal and ditch systems in the greater Tulare area. The existing policy of the District,

(See CANALS/Pg,. 3)

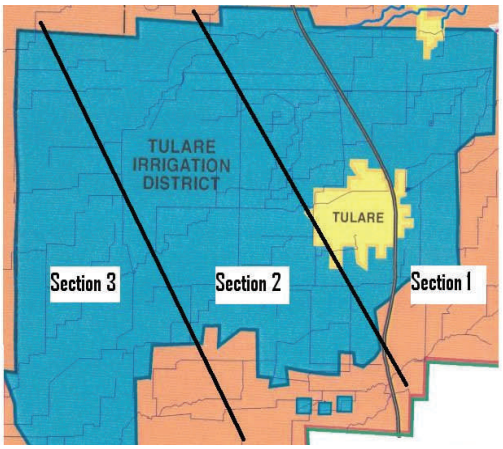
GROUNDWATER REPORT

As has been previously reported, 2005 was a much welcome year water-wise as compared to the previous six. Not only did TID have ample surface supplies for water users, but we engaged in substantial groundwater recharge operations as well. The results of our efforts are indicated in the chart below, where one can see the sharp rebound in depth to groundwater as compared to the steady decline beginning around the year 2000. The chart depicts annual fall measurements since 1993 of some 120 wells throughout TID. All of Sections 1, 2 and 3 show measurable increases in water levels, and the district-wide average was about 11.1 ft. Section 1, the eastern region, gained about 11.4 ft while Section 3, the western section, gained 8 ft. This is as expected, given the recharge programs of others east of TID and the larger groundwater extractions in the west, including adjacent areas in Kings County.

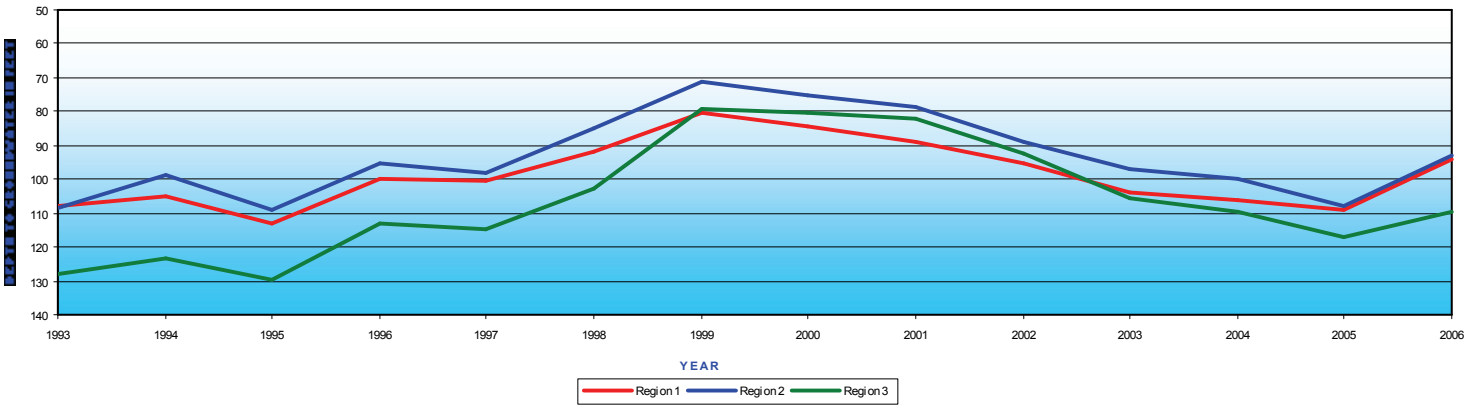
The chart also tells a more sobering tale, in that one wet year is not nearly enough to bring groundwater levels back to where they were as of the last dry cycle. That cycle ended with a total reduction in water levels of about 40 ft, so the 10 ft gain this last year is to be considered as only a partial recovery at best.

As was reported in the article "Water Supply Rebound" on p. 3, this year, like 2005, is proving to be well above average in terms of water for conjunctive use recharge operations. Coming on the heels of last year, we should again see further gains in groundwater levels when this current irrigation run is over.

SECTION LOCATIONS



DEPTH TO GROUNDWATER
Spring Measurements



EMPLOYEE NEWS

There are quite a few new faces here at the District lately. Attrition, internal transfers, and increased workloads have combined to bring these individuals into the fold. Both Richard Cisneros and Jed Jackson have been hired as Ditch Main. Persons as well as Ditch Tenders. Richard volunteers at his local church, has experience in light industrial work, and recently spent time doing hay harvesting. Jed worked for 3 years at A1 Hay Company and did construction work. Daniel Castro is our new Shop/Yard Main. Person, replacing Chris Soria who is back out on the canals as a Ditch Tender. Daniel comes to us from Soults Pump Co., where he spent 5 years as a pump installer.

On the administrative side, we've filled a Admin. Secretary slot with Rhonda Scott. She's bringing to us her extensive experience, including that with the City of Visalia and most recently San Joaquin Valley College. Lastly, due to the increasing activities involving engineering, regulations, and planning, we've added a new District Engineer position now filled by Aaron Fukuda. He has college degrees in civil engineering and public administration and has departed Summers Engineering in Hanford to become part of our team.

Best wishes to all of them for a successful career at the District!

Pictured Left to right are Jed Jackson, Rhonda Scott, Aaron Fukuda, Richard Cisneros, and Daniel Castro.

WATER SUPPLY REBOUND

By the end of February, a water supply barely reaching average conditions was all we could hope for. After the big New Year's storm event, the months of January and February were real dusters, averaging 30% below normal between the two of them. What a turnaround since then! The near-extreme rain and snow situation during March and April has been nothing short of amazing and a great follow-up to a wet 2005. Unfortunately we must take the good with the bad - flooding concerns have cropped up both locally and state-wide. Surplus water is available for the taking from the San Joaquin River via the Friant-Kern Canal and to-date about 1,854,888 AF has been released from Friant Dam down the river, stressing levee systems downstream. While we would like to import some of this surplus water into the Kaweah basin, we remain up to our ears in Kaweah River water needing to be released from Terminus Dam. Some of this water cannot be captured within the basin groundwater recharge areas and must necessarily be sent into the Tulare Lake bed area where it is managed by entities such as Reclamation District No. 770 and Corcoran ID. Such lake-bed entities are fast approaching conditions of too much water too quickly and are looking at ways to move water elsewhere to minimize damage to croplands.

When it's all said and done, this year should be at least as bountiful in terms of water supplies as last year, wherein the District diverted about 304,000 AF into its delivery system for recharge and water sales. The numbers we know thus far are that the snow pack within the Kaweah and San Joaquin watersheds are about 187% and 197% of normal as of May 1st, respectively. Also, like last year, the District has been running water since early January and has diverted into its system a total of about 85,000 AF as of the end of April, largely for groundwater recharge purposes.

CANALS

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embodied in a City ordinance, requires that all such ditches be converted to buried pipelines, largely for safety and maintenance considerations. Both entities are willing to modify this policy to reflect the growing interest to preserve open ditches and provide open spaces for new housing communities. The District's three key requirements in this process, ones that the City appreciates and understands, are (1) that the water-carrying capacity of the ditch is not decreased, (2) that the access to the ditch for maintenance purposes is fully preserved, and (3) that any additional liability created by encouraging public access to such open waterways is assigned to the City.

Both District and City officials are looking forward to new opportunities for cooperation afforded by this process. Meeting the needs of the City and its citizens in this regard, while preserving the functionality of the ditches for the area's farms, will be yet one more example of the many ways we can work together for the good of the community at large. Look to future editions of TID Tidings for news of some on-the-ground examples of how such opportunities become a reality. Or, perhaps take a drive through some newer subdivision in the area and you'll see new landscaping or maybe a walking trail where there may have been nothing but an open ditch bank in the past!

WHAT IS CONJUNCTIVE USE?

A commonly-used term in the water business, conjunctive use is an operational practice which has been aggressively encouraged by the state in recent years. We at the District have been engaged in conjunctive use water operations for many decades. Here's a long-winded explanation of what it is:

Despite the many water storage reservoirs in California, most water districts cope with highly variable water supplies from year to year. We see many years where surface water supplies (from canals or pipelines) are inadequate to meet customer demands, some years where surface water exceeds by many times such demands, and rarely a year where surface supplies closely match demands for water. Like Tulare, some areas of the state are blessed with good quality groundwater which can be used *conjunctively* with surface water to better manage the total supply picture. Like the proverbial chipmunk with acorns, surplus water is stored underground in the wet years when it's not needed to meet customer demand. Water district customers too can play a role in these wet years by using more surface water in lieu of pumping groundwater. Water directly recharged or stored in lieu of pumping can then be tapped into in the lean years of depleted surface water. Optimal conjunctive use operations would make maximum use of ample surface water and convert it into groundwater so the "well doesn't run dry" in drought times.

VALLEY AG WATER COALITION

The Valley Ag Water Coalition was formed last year and the District joined as one of the early members. Its mission is to represent the collective interests of its San Joaquin Valley member ag water companies and agencies in state legislative and regulatory matters, providing leadership and advocacy on issues relating to the development and delivery of a reliable farm water supply.

Key bills moved through the state legislature last year which caused the ag water-delivery sector to realize that it must be better able to move quickly and decisively in the capitol halls of Sacramento to play a role in shaping the final form of legislation to be voted on. About 40 districts have joined the group, contributing funds for the retention of a well-respected lobbyist based in Sacramento to further our cause. See the insert in this issue of TID Tidings for the May 2006 "Sacramento Report" of the Coalition.

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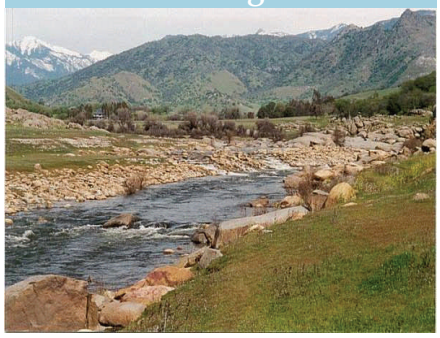
www.tulareid.org



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

June
- 15th —Collector's Deed Issued
- 20th —Second Installment Due Date

July

August
- 24th—Estimated End of Water Run

The TID Tidings is published quarterly by the Tulare Irrigation District. Questions about the articles or items appearing in the TID Tidings can be answered by reaching the Tulare ID office at (559) 686-3425