



# TID TIDINGS

Newsletter of the Tulare Irrigation District

## Board of Directors

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*The Board of Directors holds regular public meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 9:00 am at the District office in Tulare.*

## THE DELTA – CALIFORNIA'S WATER LINCHPIN

In the last issue of TID Tidings, we covered Governor Schwarzenegger's recent plans to fund a major expansion of the state's water infrastructure. His plan's emphasis was to expand surface water storage, and two locations were touted as proving to be the most feasible – Sites Reservoir off-stream of the Sacramento River and Temperance Flat Reservoir on the upper San Joaquin River. A bill to move this \$4.5 billion plan further along, SB 59, is now stalled in committee while further negotiations among the legislature and the Governor's office continue. Adding to the mix are the numerous water districts, environmental groups, and others with their own perspectives on what's needed for the next major phase in California's water system.

Some concerns coming from the water community regarding the Governor's plan, primarily those entities in Southern California and Kern County, were related to the plan's prime focus being on new reservoirs and not the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Much of the state, including the vast urban areas to the south, depend on water pumped from the Delta and delivered via state and federal water systems extending hundreds of miles southward and also into the San Francisco Bay area. While the plan contained some \$1 billion for the Delta and outlined a process to define its future, many felt the plan should be more ambitious, calling for the much-controversial Peripheral Canal to move fresh water around the Delta to the pumps at its southerly edge. After all, the Governor's plan was already no stranger to controversy, as new reservoirs too are the subject of much debate in the state.

It might seem that we on the east side of the San Joaquin Valley ought to view the ongoing struggle over the future of the Delta and its fisheries as a big fight that we could safely ignore. After all, here in the Tulare area we have access and utilize local groundwater, receive water from the Kaweah River, and bring in much-needed supplies from Millerton Lake, whose impounded waters have long been disconnected from the lower San Joaquin River and its discharges into the Delta. This imported water from Millerton Lake, the principal feature of the Friant Unit of the CVP, has served us extremely well the last 55 years, bringing in on average about

80,000 AF of water supplies annually which otherwise would be pumped from the underground. Adding in the Friant contract supplies of Ivanhoe and Exeter irrigation districts and surplus supplies purchased by Kaweah Delta, and the total is up to about 100,000 AF annually for the Kaweah Basin area.

It's safe to say that we're now very dependent on Friant water supplies, and our area would face ultimate economic devastation should this supply be cut off. We take the annual right to this supply for granted now, after many years of operation of the Friant-Kern Canal which delivers the water to us and many other districts up and down the east side of the Valley. Yet, a sudden severance of this vital water supply is just what could happen should there be a major disaster in the Delta or governmental decision to declare a lengthy shut-off of the pumps. Why? Our Friant water actually belongs to others and we only have access to it as long as those who own it are provided a substitute supply. This water supply substitution lies at the heart of the CVP and remains as one of the grandest water exchange trades ever accomplished in the nation. It is



**Delta Waterways - California's Water Hub**

a fascinating story, one that begins in the middle 1800's in the thriving entrepreneurial business climate of San Francisco.

*(See DELTA Pg. 3)*

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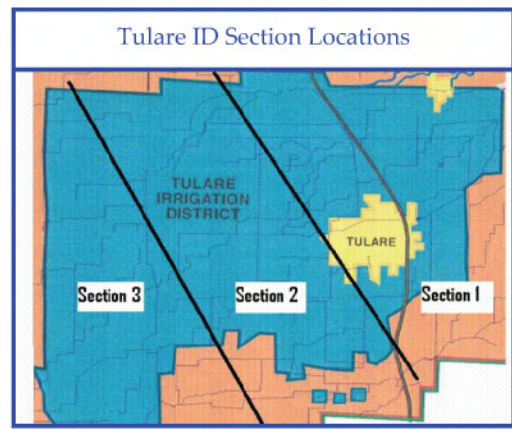
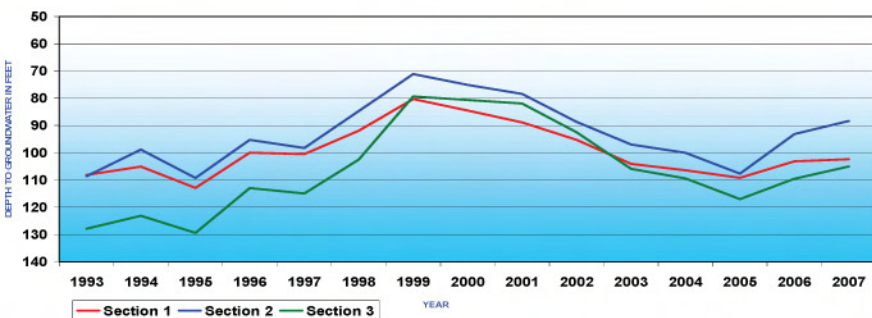
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TID's latest groundwater level data – gathered in the early spring – indicates that we are still reaping the benefits of the two previous wet years, during which time about 600,000 AF was delivered into the District for irrigation and groundwater recharge. The spring data shows that levels rose about 4 feet from where they were in the spring of 2006. This is depicted in the chart below, in which all three sections across the District showed gains. The average depth to water within TID now stands at just over 98 feet.

We are bracing ourselves, however, for a significant decline in levels after we get through this pumping season, since this year's meager

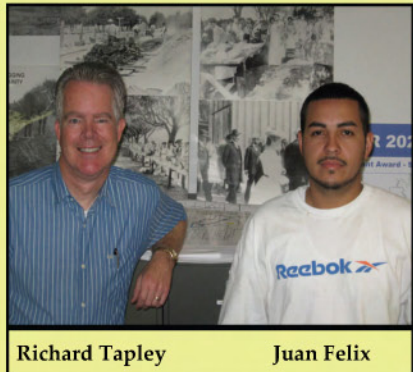
runoff has done little to provide for more recharge to the underground. This will be reported in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter issue of TID Tidings. Between the anticipated pumping of our farmers and the City of Tulare, we estimate that nearly 190,000 AF may be pumped from the underground this year in the Tulare region alone. With average pumping in the range of 115,000 AF, this additional extraction, coupled with little or no intentional groundwater recharge being conducted in this very dry year, will no doubt take its toll on the groundwater supply in 2007.

DEPTH TO GROUNDWATER  
Spring Measurements



**EMPLOYEE NEWS**

TID has lost two employees recently to other employers, but we have filled these vacant positions with two new people, both eager to get to work! We now have a new Controller, Richard Tapley, who will oversee all financial matters here at TID, as well as personnel administration and other business activities. Richard holds college degrees in business and accounting, and possesses extensive experience in the financial and accounting fields. Some of this experience includes various administrative roles while he served in the Air Force for 10 years. He has roots in the Tulare community, having grown up here and graduated from Tulare Union H.S. Coincidentally, his wife has been an English instructor there for many years. Our other new employee, Juan Felix, fills the position of Ditch Maintenance Worker and Ditch Tender. Also raised in Tulare, he comes to us from Saputo Cheese where he was engaged in various facets of Saputo's operations. He's also worked for Morris Levin & Son and there he gained concrete construction and equipment operation experience. We welcome both of these new employees to the TID family and wish them well in what we hope to be a long career here.



Richard Tapley

Juan Felix

**WATER SUPPLY**

The grim news has long been out – this year has turned out to be a very dry one, about 35% of normal to be more exact. Coming on the heels of back-to-back wet years, it's a stark reminder how variable our winter weather patterns and resulting water supplies really are. TID's diversion of Kaweah River water is expected to only amount to about 26,400 AF, and about 5,100 of that came from flood releases earlier this winter. Our average Kaweah supply is in the range of 70,000 AF. Likewise, our total supply from the Friant Unit of the CVP will be only 37,000 AF, and 19,000 of this was delivered during the winter pre-irrigation run. On average TID imports about 70,000 to 80,000 AF of Friant water for irrigation deliveries and groundwater recharge. We plan only a very short irrigation run, maybe 3 weeks at the very most. Contrast this to the last two wet years, during which we had water in the canal system from early January through September in each of those years.

The year turned nearly dry enough so as to lend consideration to the advisability of even having the summer irrigation run.

The Board of Directors recognize the importance of ditch water to most farmers and, even for such a short duration, it was determined that this surface supply will be an important part of crop irrigation during the peak water-use time period. By the use of reserves built up during the previous wet years and access to revenues generated by participation in local water exchanges, TID has been able to hold its water sale rate at the same level as the last two summer seasons.

It should also be emphasized that there will always be those occasional years when our canal supplies are next to nothing. There's not a lot we can do about that, except to pay exorbitant market prices to supplement our supply in such years. Even then, we may be able to buy only enough water to add maybe a few days to the run. Clearly what greatly helps us get through years like this is putting water back in the ground in the wetter years so farmers can continue to have access to good quality water at reasonable pumping depths when we hit the dry ones.

**IRRIGATION MOBILE LAB SERVICES**

The District has recently joined as a sponsor of the Irrigation Mobile Lab, based in Kern County. The Mobile Lab conducts field testing of farm irrigation systems and provides estimates of irrigation efficiency. Such services are free of charge to landowners within TID since we are now a sponsor of the program. See the insert in this newsletter for more information about this informative service which is now available to you. It's free, so why not give it a try!

A wealthy businessman named Charles Lux dominated the meat-packing industry in San Francisco, an industry growing quickly with the rapid influx of people into California, the already legendary and new land of opportunity. Enter a penniless German immigrant with the assumed name Henry Miller who sets up shop as a butcher and, within three years, becomes one of the largest meat retailers in San Francisco. These two joined together as a partnership in 1858 and set about determining how to expand their company and satisfy the ever-growing demand for beef in the state. Miller was a visionary and soon visited the untapped lands of the San Joaquin Valley and realized their potential to grow feed grains and house large herds of cattle. Right from the start he and Lux knew that this undertaking couldn't happen without water and they aggressively began securing water rights along with buying acre after acre of land, some acquisitions by the entire township. The most assured way to secure the right to water as far as the courts were concerned was to buy lands through which ran a water course, i.e., a *riparian* right, and that they did to great extent along both sides of the San Joaquin River, the second largest river in the state. They also built canals and were able to transport water to irrigate their extensive grain fields.

But the rapidly-expanding company of Miller & Lux, like most of the smaller agricultural operations in the west side of the Valley, suffered continuously from the huge swings in San Joaquin River flows from one year to the next. One year these pioneer agriculturalists battled floods and attendant devastation and the next year they saw their fields dry up with the mighty San Joaquin reduced to a mere trickle during the hot summer months, delivering little to irrigation canals. Pleas were made to the federal government and young state government to do something to bring stability to the Valley and burgeoning settlements, not the least of which was the Port of Stockton. Long forgotten now, but in that time barge traffic and the flows needed to support this in the lower San Joaquin River were key to commerce in Stockton.

The agricultural empire of Miller & Lux, due in large part to the energy and assertiveness of Miller, continued to grow, with land holdings as far south as the bottom lands of the Kern River west of Bakersfield. Lux died in 1858 and over time Miller bought out his family's interests in the company. When Miller died at the age of 91, he left behind an enterprise valued at \$40 million. Land holdings totaled 1.4 million acres, 900,000 of which were in the San Joaquin Valley. Miller was the largest private landowner in the U.S. at the time of his passing in 1916. He and the ditch companies he helped establish owned and controlled most of the San Joaquin River water flows.

Pressure mounted for the government to come up with plans to harness the San Joaquin River and other river systems in the San Joaquin and Sacramento valleys for flood control, Delta salinity regulation, and for reliable irrigation supplies. Both Washington D.C. and Sacramento officials conducted numerous studies over several decades, many proposing large-scale plans for water storage and delivery systems to deal with Mother Nature's challenges. It was State Engineer Edward Hyatt who finally put forth the ambitious Central Valley Project plan to capture supplies from the water-rich Sacramento Valley and move it to drier lands below the Delta using a system of reservoirs that would also provide for flood control and other water management features. There was to be a dam near the town of Friant on the San Joaquin River to control that river's flows for downstream users.

As is often the case today with large-scale public works, money became the central question. While the immense project was approved by the California voters in 1933, the state could not secure bonds due in large part to this being the height of the Great Depression. Overtures were made to the federal government and the rest is history. The state's Central Valley Project was redesigned, constructed, and paid for by Uncle Sam. This was accomplished through the efforts of U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, who by this time had been successfully building and operating many water reclamation projects throughout the west. The USBR added a key feature to the state's project, that being a bold plan to bring additional water to the east side of the San Joaquin Valley, which by now was experiencing severe groundwater overdraft under the fertile fields along the river deltas of the Kings, Kaweah, Tule, and the Kern. These yet undammed rivers were not sufficient in flow to offset the groundwater pumping needed to sustain the agricultural fields now in production.

To pull off the USBR's creative plan, much of the water impounded behind the future dam at Friant would be needed to shunt into a canal system up and down the east side. This water supply was largely controlled by the Miller & Lux interests and their successors, whose agricultural holdings along the lower San Joaquin River depended on that supply. Key to the plan was the delivery of Sacramento River water, regulated in the to-be-constructed Lake Shasta, through the Delta, and into a canal system to bring it to these water users, now referred to as the Exchange Contractors. With this water as a substitute supply – and a firmer and more reliable supply at that – the San Joaquin River water rights would be provided to the USBR to utilize in its Friant system. However, these Miller & Lux interests did not wish to actually sell their water rights in perpetuity in exchange for the CVP water from the Delta, so they agreed to the substitution contingent upon the Delta supply being available from year to year. The voluminous exchange contract that was negotiated requires that USBR would need to deliver water from Friant Dam to the lower San Joaquin River if there ever occurred an interruption of supply from the Delta that wound up shorting the Exchange Contractors.

So the answer as to why we should be concerned about the water wars raging over the Delta and its ability to sustain water exports becomes alarmingly clear. As goes the Delta, so goes our access to waters stored behind Friant Dam in Millerton Lake. We on the east side of this productive and growing Valley need the Delta water exchange to remain a success, and that hinges on USBR's continued ability to export water from the Delta. This massive exchange has been taken for granted for many years but still remains as the underpinning of the operation of the Friant Unit for the benefit of the east side. Add this to the fact that the Delta also supplies export water for many thousands more acres in Kings and Kern counties, municipal supplies for three-fourth's of the state's population, local water supplies for in-Delta agriculture, and supports many other water-related benefits. It's no wonder, then, that the Delta is considered as California's water linchpin, without which much of the state could not function.

We continue to support the planning and ultimate construction of Temperance Flat Reservoir, whose stored waters could potentially be used to shore up the needs of the Friant contractors as well as lower San Joaquin River users should the Delta fail. We also need to support a major project in the Delta to secure the state and federal projects' export supplies, including the commitments made by USBR to the Exchange Contractors along the lower San Joaquin River. As big and diversified as this state is, we are in many ways interconnected in our water plumbing and the Friant Unit itself is most certainly one of those ways.

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**LOOK INSIDE...**

*The Delta – California's Water  
Linchpin  
Groundwater Report  
Employee News  
Water Supply  
Irrigation Mobile Lab Services*

*Visit Us At...[www.tulareid.org](http://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	20 <sup>th</sup> – Tax Assessment Due Date (2 <sup>nd</sup> Installment) 25 <sup>th</sup> – Start of Irrigation Run
July	Mid-Month – Anticipated End of Irrigation Run
August	10 <sup>th</sup> – 1 <sup>st</sup> Publication Notice – Delinquent Assessment List 17 <sup>th</sup> – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Publication Notice – Delinquent Assessment List 17 <sup>th</sup> – 1 <sup>st</sup> Publication – Equalization Notice 24 <sup>th</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup> Publication Notice – Delinquent Assessment List 24 <sup>th</sup> – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Publication Notice – Equalization Notice 31 <sup>st</sup> – Certificate of Sale – Tax Sales Record