



# 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 every month at 9:00 am at the District office in Tulare.*

## CITY OF TULARE WATER PARTNERSHIP

For many years, TID and the City of Tulare have maintained a relationship, memorialized by written agreement, that has worked very well for both entities. The relationship is essentially that, as the City grows and lands are converted from farming to urban uses, the City picks up TID's land assessment in trade for the

City's access to TID's water system for the disposal of City storm water runoff. We expect that this relationship will continue for many more years. We are now expanding that relationship in several ways, probably the most important of which deals with City water supplies.

Like many Valley communities, the City depends solely on the underground to fuel its municipal water supply system. As the City expands, new water wells are drilled, tapping into the aquifer underneath to deliver water into a larger network of piping to serve new dwellings and commercial businesses. In many cases this transition replaces a former farm's use of groundwater, so at face value it may appear that the net impact is a wash. However, looking deeper into this continuing trend, we and the City realize two things – one, that the land is now essentially paved over, not allowing any

more infiltration of rain or applied farm irrigation water and, two, that the land now depends on City-supplied groundwater year in and year out, unlike the former farm operation which depended far less on wells in average and wetter years and instead had access to TID ditch water.

In recognition of this, the City has sought the consultation of a local engineering firm to analyze groundwater impacts of urbanization and, using this report as the basis, has established a new "water supply" ordinance. This significant ordinance requires up-front fees from developers for their planned subdivision or commercial projects and to require a new monthly charge on all water meter accounts within the City. Funds generated by this ordinance will be used to both enable the City to engage with TID in providing for expanded groundwater recharge capabilities in areas to benefit the City and to aid in the purchase of imported water brought into the region by TID for storage in the underground for future use via pumping.

*(See CITY pg. 3)*

## WATER QUALITY COALITION DEADLINE

Landowners within TID should have recently received a letter from the Kaweah & St. Johns Rivers Association regarding status of the local Kaweah Sub-watershed of the So. San Joaquin Valley Water Quality Coalition. Landowners have until **December 31<sup>st</sup>** to decide if they fall under the definition of a "Discharger" and therefore required to either join the Coalition or file independently to acquire either a waiver or a discharge permit with the state. Should you have any questions regarding this issue, you are encouraged to call Mark Larsen of the Association at 747-5601.

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## GROUNDWATER REPORT

Coming on the heels of a wet year in 2005, this year again enabled TID to further its mission to provide for groundwater recharge when water supplies permit. Not only did TID have ample surface supplies for water users, but our canal and recharge facility operations resulted in about 146,000 AF reaching the underground. The results of our efforts are indicated in the chart below, where one can see the sharp rebound in depth to groundwater the last two years 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 almost 13 ft. This gain adds to the 10 ft increase realized last year.

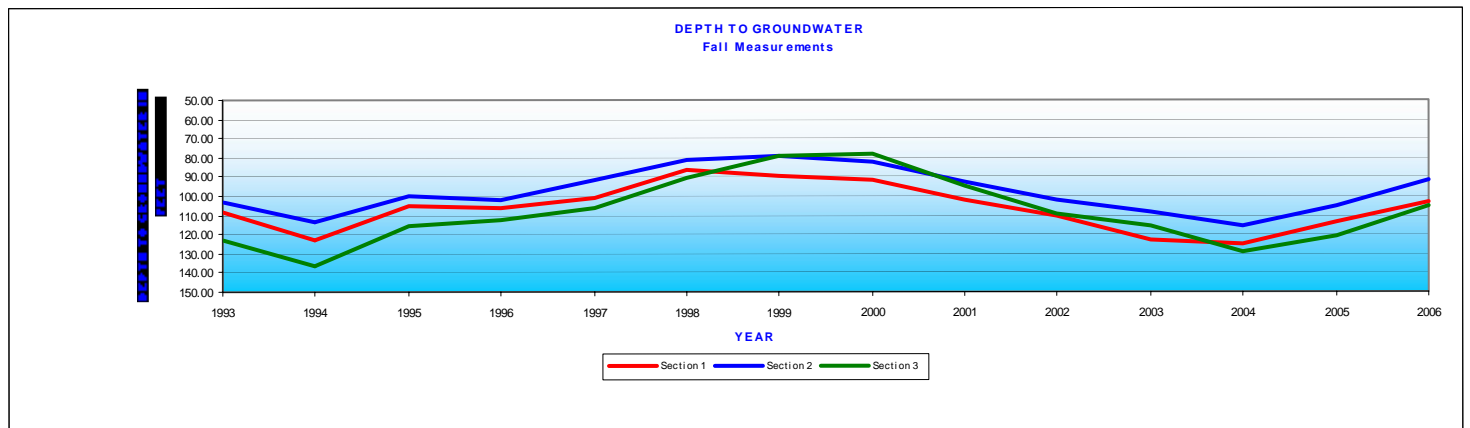
Average depth to groundwater across the entire District now stands at about 100 ft based on TID's last level survey.

As depicted in the chart, the western region in Section 3 realized the greatest gain overall, indicating that the upstream recharge mound in the Kaweah River area over the last two wet years is now propagating downstream as the groundwater pressure gradient works its way to the west.

The chart also tells a more sobering tale, in that two wet years in a row are not nearly enough to bring groundwater levels back to where they were as of the previous dry cycle. That cycle – from year 1999 through 2004 - ended with a total reduction in water levels of about 40 ft, so the 23 ft gain over the last two years should be considered as only a partial recovery. Going back further in time, depths to groundwater have been as shallow as 40 ft in the mid-1980's compared to 100 ft today. Clearly, we still have a lot of catching up to do!

## TULARE ID

### SECTION LOCATIONS



## EMPLOYEE NEWS

TID values experience within its employee ranks and the promotion last summer of three people will better utilize their experience and knowledge on the job. These employees include Beth Homes, who was promoted from Senior Accounting Clerk I to Senior Accounting Clerk II. Beth has been with TID since 1986 and has progressed through most all of the activities associated with the administrative office. She also serves as TID's Assessor-Collector, having been appointed to that office by the Board of Directors in 2004. Her many abilities and exposure to administrative and fi-

ancial activities continue to be of great value to TID. Also, Roy Bell, employed in 2003 as a Light Equipment Operator, has been promoted to a Heavy Equipment Operator I. His prior experiences with various equipment and rapid acquisition of new skills on TID's road grader and excavator, for example, have more than prepared him for this promotion. Lastly, Anthony Gomes, hired in 2004 as a Ditch Maintenance Person, has advanced to the position of Light Equipment Operator. Anthony has performed well in general


*(See EMPLOYEE on pg. 3)*

## CITY (continued from pg 1)

TID credits the City with forward thinking and its awareness of the adverse groundwater impacts associated with its population growth. The City is taking aggressive steps to mitigate for the water supply impacts of such growth and we applaud them for such actions. TID looks forward to this new partnership being forged as both we and the City work towards sustaining our precious underground water supplies – an asset of considerable importance that both our farmers and City dwellers alike share the benefits.

## DVD AVAILABLE

Want to learn more about the recent settlement reached between the Friant water districts, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and Natural Resources Defense Council? Call the TID office and ask for a free DVD to be mailed to you on your viewing. As the settlement agreeable for restoring the channel and ultimately from Friant Dam to pro-toric salmon runs in the



this historic settlement for you've probably heard, ment establishes a time lower San Joaquin River calls for water releases vide for the return of his- river. The five-minute video presents a good summary of the arrangement and why it is so critically important to the Friant districts and the many communities within the San Joaquin Valley's east side.

## NEW DISTRICT RESERVE POLICY

Like most public agencies, TID maintains reserve funds within its budget to cover unanticipated or unforeseen needs. These needs include emergency repair or replacement of major facilities, equipment failures and, perhaps most importantly, funds that can be tapped to aid in paying for the purchase of water for landowner irrigation needs and for groundwater recharge operations. Consider the last two wet years, during which the District needed an additional \$5 million to purchase the extra CVP water which was available for delivery to offset pumping and to recharge the underground. These water purchases could not be carried out without adequate reserves, since the water must be bought on short-term notice and the District cannot quickly generate funds to pay for such water when it's there for the taking.

The TID Board grapples each year with determining water sale rates, keeping in mind prudent cash reserve levels that need to be maintained. The relationship between fluctuating reserve fund levels and water sale rates in wet and dry years can be daunting in terms of complexity, but an understanding of the long-term trends in this relationship are critical in maintaining the financial health of the District and the ability to serve its customers. For this rea-

son, having a more detailed policy regarding reserves was felt to be advisable. Also, there has been a concern that the state, in its recent period of financial difficulties, could draw from the "surplus" funds of other public agencies to cover state-wide cash shortfalls. For this reason, too, water districts like TID have been advised to develop more detailed reserve fund policies to shore up their utilization of such monies.

With all of this in mind, TID's Board adopted a revised reserve fund policy in September. It includes set-aside funds for equipment replacements, building improvements, water stock purchases, and water facilities repairs and expansions, as well as funds to pay off existing long-term debt obligations. It also contains funding to help stabilize water sale rates at affordable levels and to enable TID to aggressively purchase imported water in wet years for groundwater recharge which is so urgently needed. The Board is confident that these established reserve fund levels, and the policy for their administration, will be sufficient to sustain the financial health of the organization now and into the foreseeable future.

## EMPLOYEE (continued from pg. 1)

maintenance and has learned the basic operation of some of the essential pieces of O&M equipment here at TID, such as the loader and backhoe. TID wishes these valued employees well in their new capacities and in handling their increased responsibilities!

Also, special recognition is due again to all of TID's Ditch Tenders for their lengthy service in the 2006 water delivery season. They all worked long and countless hours, weekends included, over a nine-month period commencing in January, to shepherd water throughout the 300 miles of ca-

nals in the delivery system and upstream diversion channels. This last water run came on the heels of a similar extended water run in 2005, thus affording only a brief break in between within which they were able to take time off and/or work a normal 5-day work week.

Their commitment and stamina on the job is crucial to TID's success in providing efficient service to growers and landowners. This last marathon water run was manned by Rick Beall, Kevin Searcy, Eric Orong, Anthony Gomes, Chris Soria, Roy Bell, Raymond Thompson, Richard Cisneros, and Jed Jackson. Overseeing their water-run duties with like commitment and dedication has been our Watermaster Marc Crenshaw.

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**LOOK INSIDE...**

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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**

November	1 <sup>st</sup> —2006-2007 Tax Assessments Mailed
December	20 <sup>th</sup> —First Installment Tax Assessments Due 31 <sup>st</sup> —Sign Up for Water Quality Coalition
January '07	