

Summer 2003

The mission of KRCD is to provide flood protection, achieve a balanced and high quality water supply, and develop power resources on the Kings River for the public good.

Features inside...

Kings River Watermaster Tim O'Halloran resigns, page 3

Presentations about the Kings River are a great opportunity for any group to learn about our area's most precious resource. KRCD and KRWA are pleased to be able to provide programs for those interested in learning about the Kings River, its history, facilities, and operations.

Programs run about 25-30 minutes. Two slide shows are available. One offers an overview of the river's history and how the system works. The other uses dozens of rare photos to look back at the river's colorful past.

KRCD and KRWA are also be glad to provide tours of the Kings River. There is no charge for either service. To learn more or to make arrangements for a tour or speaker, please call Cristel Tufenkjian, at 237-5567, ext. 118.

Turbine Bypass Dedication Opens New River Chapter

Brand new pipelines gleamed and one speaker after another grinned April 25 as Pine Flat Dam's new Turbine Bypass System was dedicated.

"This is truly a day for everyone to be very pleased and know they all did super work," Robert Hight, Director of the California Department of Fish and Game, told the invited audience of about 100 just outside the Kings River Conservation District's Pine Flat Power Plant.

"The key element is people working together," Hight said. "I use the example of the Kings River and this work around the state."

Work was completed on the \$6 million Turbine Bypass over the winter. It is now ready to be used during the late summer and fall months to help control the temperature of water being released into the river at times when flows are too minimal for the Power Plant to generate electricity.

Generally, the system of pipes, valves and support structures connecting the Power Plant's three penstocks will provide cooler water for the trout fishery downstream from the dam but the new plumbing can also be used to preserve remaining reserves of cold water in the reservoir under very dry conditions.

David Orth, KRCD General Manager, termed the project's completion "a tremendous accomplishment." He said KRCD has backed the project for years with staff involvement and as its local cost

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The Turbine Bypass pipelines link and span the Pine Flat Power Plant's three penstocks at the base of Pine Flat Dam.

Ag Discharge Issue Remains Unresolved

Controversy and concern continue to grip a growing water quality issue.

The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board is to meet July 10 to discuss an interim conditional waiver program to temporarily fill the void created by the December 31 expiration of ag discharge waivers that had been in effect for two decades.

A 3-year conditional program, outlined in a dozen pages, since shortened to two years, was approved in December but the board's staff issued more than 220 pages of proposed highly restrictive rules and regulations that would go far beyond the Regional Board's action.

The Regional Board staff favors a "one-size-fits-all" method of strictly regulating ag discharges on a farm-by-farm basis rather than a watershed and sub-watershed approach favored by most ag and water interests. Such a process was included in the December board action.

"Things appear to be coming to a head," said Kings River Watermaster Tim O'Halloran, Southern San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition Coordinator.

The Kings River Conservation District, Kings River Water Association and the Coalition have been aggressively involved. KRCD is helping refine and modify an extensive Kings River monitoring and data collection system that has been in place for years. 

Spring Storms Give Big Boost To Water Supply

An old Yogi Berra baseball saying that "it ain't over until it's over" has certainly proven to be true for the Kings River's 2002-03 water year.

One big April and early May storm after another accomplished what had been mostly elusive during much of the winter months by adding significantly to the high Sierra's snowpack.

The result has been a dramatic increase in the Kings River's predicted April-July peak season runoff.

On April 1, when the snowpack and its associated water content readings were assumed to have peaked, the California Department of Water Resources was predicting the Kings would yield just 790,000 acre-feet of runoff during the four-month span, or 64 percent of average.

Only seven weeks later, the DWR's "most probable" April-July runoff forecast had jumped to 1,080,000 acre-feet, or 88 percent of average, a remarkable gain of 290,000 acre-feet.

Kings River Watermaster Tim O'Halloran said it is highly unlikely this late in the season that runoff totals will reach average but he said the added supply will give a big boost to the entitlements of nearly all of the 28 Kings River Water Association member units.

This is destined to be the fifth below-average water year in a row but three of those five years will have been not far below average.

Several districts and canal companies have started deliveries. The lower Kings River units on June 5 will begin a coordinated water run in order to minimize channel losses caused by seepage.

Pine Flat Reservoir storage, which now stands at 768,438 acre-feet (76 percent of capacity), is likely to top out this spring at approximately 86 percent of capacity, O'Halloran said.

Natural river flows remained fairly low during April and early May because of cool weather and mountain cloudiness. A major weather pattern change in mid May brought the season's first summer-like heat and set the snowmelt runoff in motion. 



General Manager's Report David Orth

Power for the Future

It might well be said, without too great a play on words, that these are electrifying times around the Kings River Conservation District, for lots of promising reasons.

The completion and dedication of the Pine Flat Turbine Bypass System (please see front page), is a major accomplishment for the Kings River. A resources agency such as KRCD loves to see a project like the Turbine Bypass become reality, thanks in large part to many agencies and individuals who pulled together to make it happen.

KRCD became involved years ago as the project's local cost-sharing sponsor because it was the right thing to do, a means of helping the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers enhance the Kings River's fishery while recognizing and respecting other historic beneficial river uses and users. It was natural for us to respond to the environmental challenge as we always do - professionally, reliably, efficiently and constructively - in search of solutions that benefit all.

That approach is exactly what KRCD has been using in dealing with the central San Joaquin's power needs, and it is why we are actively engaged in efforts to bolster the Valley's future energy supply.

KRCD Power has been a reality since the first energy crisis of the mid-1970s when planning began for what was then envisioned as a comprehensive Kings River energy generation project that might have rivaled other historic and beneficial western Sierra power projects.

What emerged was KRCD's tremendously successful and reliable Pine Flat Power Plant at the base of Pine Flat Dam, where the Turbine Bypass System was recently built.

Since commercial operations began in 1984, KRCD's Pine Flat Power Plant has been making important and cost-effective energy contributions to California's ever-growing power needs. KRCD Power sells the energy it produces to the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) for use in the State Water Project's vital pumping facilities.

Now, KRCD Power has a pair of brand-new opportunities and challenges, one very real and another beginning to take shape in planning sessions, studies and widening rounds of discussions.

The first materialized unexpectedly late last year. KRCD was approached by DWR about taking the lead in a project to provide "peaking" power. We quickly agreed, very pleased that the state sees KRCD as an agency that can address the Fresno service area's energy needs

On December 30, KRCD and DWR signed a power purchase agreement for the two gas-fired plants, being provided by DWR at no cost to KRCD, which are to have a combined output of 90 megawatts. That is enough energy to serve some 90,000 homes. All of this new generation will be used to provide energy to meet peak demands, helping implement what KRCD has always desired to do - improving energy reliability and stability to the customer and the system. KRCD is locating sites, obtaining permits and financing to construct and operate the new generation plants. Power will be bought by DWR, but after 10 years KRCD will own the plants free and clear. We hope to have the plant's operating and benefiting the Valley by the end of 2004.

In the longer term, KRCD Power is looking at various ways to help our Valley address power shortages. We are looking for projects and activities that will make electrical energy more reliable and stable. The possibilities seem endless. Whatever path KRCD Power chooses to take, the Valley will be the winner. 

Watermaster O'Halloran Takes Yolo District Post

Kings River Watermaster Tim O'Halloran has resigned to accept a position managing a Sacramento Valley water agency.

O'Halloran, who has worked for the Kings River Water Association for just over five years, will become Yolo Flood Control and Conservation District General Manager on July 1.

"This is obviously a loss to the Kings River," said John Howe of Stratford, KRWA Chairman. "Tim is a good guy and achieved a great deal."

Howe said the KRWA Executive Committee has made no decision on a successor. The KRWA administers water rights, entitlements and deliveries for 28 water districts served by the Kings River in portions of Fresno, Tulare and Kings counties.

"I very much appreciate my time with the Association," O'Halloran said. "The issues have been great to work with, and the Kings River water rights and entitlement schedule are among the most interesting in California water."

O'Halloran became Kings River Watermaster on March 20, 2001, just over three years after joining the Association as Assistant Watermaster.

He has been deeply involved in some major Central California water issues, including establishment and implementation of the Kings River Fisheries Management Program, for which he has served as the program's Executive Officer since its inception. His efforts were honored this past spring by a San Joaquin Valley fly

fishing group that named O'Halloran its "Conservationist of the Year."

"Everyone on the Kings River is grateful for the outstanding relationship Tim built up with our area's fishermen," KRWA Chairman Howe said. "The trust that has grown between the Fisheries Management Program's Public Advisory Group and the river interests has helped immeasurably in getting the program off to such a good start."

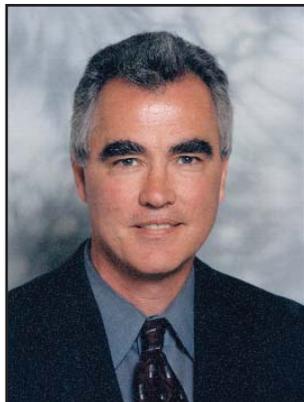
O'Halloran was instrumental last year in helping to establish the Southern San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition among a number of valley water agencies. He has served as the group's Coordinator.

O'Halloran also has been active in KRWA studies aimed at better utilizing floodwater for beneficial uses locally and regionally.

He is the fifth to have served as Kings River Watermaster since the office was established at the time the KRWA was formed in 1927.

Prior to joining the KRWA, O'Halloran for 10 years was a staff member of the Imperial Irrigation District in Southern California.

The agency he will manage is involved in a variety of water resource related issues, including the oversight of water deliveries from two storage sources, Clear Lake and Indian Valley Dam in portions of Yolo County, around (but not including) the cities of Davis, Winters and Woodland. 🌊



Tim O'Halloran

Groundwater Remains A Key KRCD Effort

It is little noticed or heralded but the Kings River Conservation District continues to pursue work, studies and activities of critical importance to the region's aquifer.

"Groundwater reliability is important to everyone," said David Orth, KRCD General Manager. "It is vital that KRCD participate in activities that could have positive or negative impacts on our groundwater supplies."

KRCD directors on May 13 approved the filing of an application for a groundwater storage project construction grant.

Funding is being sought under the next round of grants to be made from Proposition 13, a state bond measure approved in 2000.

KRCD prepared the application on behalf of the Alta and Consolidated irri-

gation districts in which the contemplated projects would be developed at a cost of \$2.7 million.

The state is requiring local cost sharing under the grant program. Considerable environmental benefit must be demonstrated in the application.

A similar KRCD application a year ago narrowly missed being funded.

KRCD has worked closely in recent years with both the Consolidated and Alta districts, as well as the Fresno Irrigation District, on groundwater and surface delivery studies.

Meanwhile, KRCD is working with Fresno Irrigation District officials and other water agencies on possible groundwater related projects in western Fresno County as well as continuing a number of

efforts related to KRCD's three groundwater management areas.

Last October, KRCD submitted a grant application requesting \$250,000 to enhance the District's existing groundwater management plans to meet requirements of a new state law enacted under SB 1938.

"It looks like we have a good opportunity to get that grant," said Lynden Garver, Assistant Manager. A decision is expected June 30.

If the grant were to be awarded, a regional concept would be implemented. Other water agencies would be contacted to determine if they would be interested in having the District enhance their plans. 🌊

Bypass Dedication, *continued*

sharing sponsor "because it has been broadly supported by local, state and federal agencies."

Among those was the Kings River Water Association. Watermaster Tim O'Halloran said the Turbine Bypass "should be viewed within the context of being another step in an ongoing comprehensive process." That is implementation of the Kings River Fisheries Management Program.

Assembly Member Sarah Reyes (D-Fresno) said that working together "allows us to do what we have to do."

Rep. Cal Dooley (D-Visalia) said the Turbine Bypass was special personally because it "is the only water project conceived and completed during my 12 years in office."

He lauded the fact that "people from the environmental community came together with those on the supply side" to make the Turbine Bypass a reality.

Colonel Michael J. Conrad of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the agency that administered the project, said the Turbine Bypass is the latest evidence of how "the Corps has really embraced its environmental mission." Conrad said one-fifth of the agency's budget is now directed toward the environment.

The Corps, Conrad said, "is now able and go back and modify these projects" such as Pine Flat Dam, which the Corps completed nearly 50 years ago.

Teamwork was a key ingredient in the project, said Conrad, who commands the Corps' Sacramento District. He praised the Corps' partnership with KRCD and the general contractor, TNT Industrial Contractors Inc.

The Corps identified the Turbine Bypass as a potential environmental enhancement project several years ago during a reconnaissance-level study on possible Kings River and Pine Flat environmental enhancements.

With support and legislative backing by Congress, the Corps pursued Turbine Bypass design and development



KRCD General Manager David Orth and the Turbine Bypass dedication plaque.

as a modification of the original Pine Flat Project.

Water can now be released through the Power Plant penstocks but bypass the plant's turbines. The new system was used to make releases in early April before the irrigation release season began.

The power plant's penstock intakes are at a reservoir elevation midway between Pine Flat Dam's mid- and low-level sluice gates. Thus, the turbine bypass permits releases of water through the penstock to better manage temperatures in the river fishery below the dam.

KRCD Manager Orth said the Turbine Bypass is the latest in a long list of Kings River milestone accomplishments that have included canal and water rights development, formation of the KRWA and KRCD, the dam's construction and development of the Pine Flat Power Plant.

The Turbine Bypass is different because it is an environmental achievement, said Orth. 🌊



Discussing the Turbine Bypass are (from left) Robert Hight, Department of Fish and Game Director; Colonel Michael J. Conrad of the Corps of Engineers; and KRCD President Ceil W. Howe, Jr.

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