



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

KRC D News

Upper Kings Basin Water Forum Progresses With Regional Planning For Projects

The Upper Kings Integrated Regional Water Management Plan process that has been undertaken by an unprecedented coalition of agricultural, municipal, state and environmental partners is beginning to bear fruit.

The Upper Kings Basin Water Forum has undertaken the extensive joint planning process to map plans for present and future

projects to meet water and environmental needs throughout the region.

The Water Forum was started in 2004 by the Alta, Consolidated and Fresno irrigation districts and Kings River Conservation District with the assistance of the California Department of Water Resources. Other participants are officials of cities served by those districts, as well as Fresno County and a number of environmental organizations.

The management plan now being framed has come about through a consensus-based process intended to plan for the future



The Fresno Irrigation District's Waldron Pond, part of a water banking project that is similar to some others being considered by the Upper Kings Basin Water Forum.

while reducing or avoiding conflicts related to water supply, groundwater management, ecosystem restoration and water quality.

"It is an excellent example of how a collaborative, multi-stakeholder effort can undertake crucial and much-needed planning on water needs and concerns we are all facing," said David Orth, KRC D General Manager.

Water Forum leaders are developing an integrated regional water management plan that will integrate projects under the major theme

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Recharge Basin Sites Selected For More Studies

Studies are continuing along the Kings River's North Fork system on the valley's West Side to investigate the potential of various groundwater recharge sites.

Preliminary investigations have been completed on 15 sites, and nine of those sites have been selected for more detailed studies. Those studies will include drilling an average of three holes at each site to a depth of 100 feet, using a hollow-stem auger. This will allow continuous assessment of soil

conditions throughout the full depth of the holes. Additionally, cone penetration tests will be conducted at each site that will provide subsurface stratigraphic and hydrogeologic information.

The work is being funded by a \$249,410 grant from the California Department of Water Resources. Kings River Conservation District is administering the grant. All work on the study is to be completed by April 2007.

End Of A Big Water Year

Kings River runoff turned out making the water year that ended September 30 one to remember.

The Kings River Water Association reports the 2005-06 water year resulted in natural runoff totaling 2,952,000 acre-feet.

That is 173 percent of the river's average annual runoff, 1,702,000 acre-feet, and ranks 14th in the Kings' 110 years of water records.

Although spring storms that led to the supply surge caused water management challenges, they also permitted Kings River water users to enjoy a full supply throughout the summer. The water delivery season is winding down and should be completed by November 1.

"It was really a remarkable water year," said Kings River Watermaster Steve Haugen. "Through March, it looked as if we were headed for slightly above average runoff."

Then, just as the peak April-through-July snowmelt runoff period was beginning, several huge Pacific storms stalled over the Kings and San Joaquin rivers' watersheds. They dropped up to 8 inches of rain to the low elevations and many feet of snow atop a high elevation pack that only a few days earlier had been assumed to be at its typical April 1 statistical peak.

The 600,000 acre-feet of water produced over the Kings River watershed by the early April storm accounted for a major portion of a significant flood release that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was compelled to undertake to evacuate storage space in Pine Flat Reservoir to make room for melting snow. Flood releases ended June 30.

Another challenge was created by official runoff forecasts that were significantly underestimated.

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*General Manager's Report
David Orth*

On The Home Stretch

It has been a long journey upon a largely uncharted path but the Kings River Conservation District, a dozen cities and one county are headed for a historic finish line to establish a new means of powering part of the valley.

Community Choice, providing a new source of electrical energy that aims to improve power reliability and increase economy to customers, is racing toward some important decisions. A great deal of preliminary, technical and organizational work has taken place over the past year.

Community Choice is aimed at creating an alternative and competitive source of power generation. A fairly recent state law made the program possible by permitting cities and counties to purchase power from a generation source other than firms such as Pacific Gas and Electric Company and Southern California Edison Company.

During October and early November, we will be meeting with the Board of Supervisors in Kings County and city councils in Fresno, Clovis, Corcoran, Dinuba, Hanford, Kerman, Kingsburg, Lemoore, Parlier, Reedley, Sanger and Selma. We will be asking policy makers to take the next step in the Community Choice feasibility investigation before we ask the California Public Utilities Commission for authorization to move ahead.

All signs continue to point favorably to establishing Community Choice. Concrete steps have also been taken beyond studies that we feel confident will soon result in creating savings for customers, establishing long-term power reliability and adding value to the central San Joaquin Valley's crucial energy grid.

A joint powers agreement has been drafted by the cities and county that, once enacted, would create what is to be known as the San Joaquin Valley Power Authority. Its board will oversee and make policy decisions for Community Choice. The new Authority board would also contract with the Kings River Conservation District to manage not only the Community Choice operation, but more importantly to the entire region, develop a new base-load power generating plant to provide electricity. Costs would be lower because KRCD is a public agency, does not have to satisfy profit-demanding shareholders and can finance the project with tax-exempt tools.

The San Joaquin Valley Power Authority will not be replacing the existing power utilities when Community Choice becomes reality. The utilities, which have publicly supported Community Choice, will still own the transmission lines, deliver energy for the Authority, handle service and take care of billing. Customers will have opportunities to opt out of Community Choice in favor of buying power from the utilities in the traditional manner. That means we must work diligently to achieve our goals of lower energy costs and greater power reliability, and we know it.

If all goes well, and we believe it will, Community Choice will be phased in beginning next year. By 2010, we plan to have the power plant constructed and online.

It is another way that KRCD is clearing the valley's path to a better and brighter future.

Legislative Update by Governmental Affairs Officer Melissa Goliti

The State Legislature adjourned the 2004-2006 legislative session on August 31, 2006. The Governor had thirty (30) days upon adjournment to act on those bills sent to him. Here is an end-of-session report on key issues the District has actively monitored.

GROUNDWATER

SB 1640 (Kuehl) Water

SB 1640 (Kuehl) is a reintroduction of last year's SB 820 (Kuehl), which was vetoed by the Governor. The District actively participated in discussions throughout the year with the Senator's staff, to ensure important amendments previously negotiated in SB 820 remained in SB 1640. These amendments provided for areas like the District, where groundwater management plans or integrated regional water management planning are already taking place, periodic depth-to-groundwater reports must be filed. With those amendments kept intact, the District remained neutral on the bill.

Status: Vetoed

FLOOD CONTROL AND LEVEE MAINTENANCE

SB 1796 (Florez) Flood Protection

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the Legislature introduced more than a dozen flood control and levee maintenance bills to address perceived risks to the California Delta system. In the end, the only bill to move to the Governor was SB 1796 (Florez). SB 1796 sought to rename the Reclamation Board to the Central Valley Flood Protection Board (Board) and required the Board to act independently of the Department of Water Resources (Department). The bill also prohibited the Department from overturning any action or decision by the Board.

Status: Vetoed

FISCAL

AB 2951 (Goldberg) Capital Facilities Fees

The District worked to support AB 2951 (Goldberg), which preserves the authority of local public agency utilities to charge commodity rates to other local government agencies that include a capital component to pay for the costs of on-going capital improvements needed to serve all customers. The bill protects the ability of public agency utilities to equitably apportion the costs of operating, maintaining, repairing and replacing their system facilities among all customers, public and private.

Status: Chaptered

SB 1317 (Torlakson) Property Tax Revenue Allocations; Public Utilities; Qualified Property

The District actively opposed SB 1317 (Torlakson) and any other efforts to shift property tax revenues. As a multi-county special district, the District relies on property tax revenues to fund flood control and levee maintenance activities on the Kings River. SB 1317 sets out for the 2007-2008 fiscal year, and for each fiscal year thereafter, the assessed value of qualified property placed in service by a public utility on or after January 1, 2007, be allocated entirely to the county in which the property is located.

Status: Chaptered

NOVEMBER 2006 BALLOT MEASURES

The November 7, 2006 General Election Ballot will have numerous initiatives to go before the California voters. Included in the list is Proposition 1E, the *Disaster Preparedness and Flood Prevention Act of 2006* and Proposition 84, the *Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006*.

Proposition 1 E: Disaster Preparedness and Flood Prevention Bond Act of 2006

Proposition 1E, a piece of the Governor's overall infrastructure package, authorizes \$4.1 billion in general obligation bonds for various flood management programs to address recent flood events in the California Central Valley. These events highlighted the need for rehabilitation and strengthening of the levees that are a part of the Sacramento River Flood Control System. Proposition 1E would provide funding for critically needed improvements to certain portions of California's levee system and better protects the state from future flooding. The District Board will be asked to consider adoption of a Resolution in support of this measure, which could provide critical funds to agencies within the Kings River service area for flood control projects and facilities to help protect local communities and infrastructure from destructive floods.

Proposition 84: Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006

Proposition 84 provides for \$5.4 billion in general obligation bonds for safe drinking water, water quality, and water supply; flood control; natural resource protection; and park improvements. Proposition 84 includes \$1.5 billion for water quality projects, including Integrated Regional Water Management Programs (IRWMP). However, it does not provide funding for the construction of much needed new surface water storage. While the District may benefit from potential funding for IRWMPs, it remains neutral on this measure due to the lack of funding for surface storage projects.

KRCD Forges GIS Work Pact With Irrigation District

Another area cooperative partnership has been framed by the Kings River Conservation District.

KRCD directors have approved an agreement with Consolidated Irrigation District (CID) under which KRCD will conduct Geographical

Information System (GIS) services for CID.

The District has had a similar agreement with Alta Irrigation District since 2003. KRCD's primary work will include Global Positioning System (GPS) services, digitalizing

CID's water delivery system and developing a GIS data base.

Ditch tenders will ultimately be provided with new digital and paper maps and accessibility of the database by computer. KRCD will maintain and update the data.

Big Water, *cont.*

The season's final Department of Water Resources (DWR) prediction, issued June 13, called for a "most likely" Kings River runoff during the peak April-July period of 171 percent of average. The "wettest" scenario predicted by the DWR forecast the possibility of runoff reaching 178 percent of average.

In fact, the April-July natural runoff amounted to more than 190 percent of average and added up to 2,352,817 acre-feet, or some 240,000 acre-feet - nearly one-fourth the capacity of Pine Flat Lake - above the "most probable" mid-June forecasts.

Haugen said the DWR is examining this year's operations.

The water year's greatest full natural flow in the river was 25,646 cubic feet per second on April 4, and the least flow was 246 c.f.s. on November 28, 2005.

Releases from Pine Flat Dam to the river ranged from a maximum of 13,322 c.f.s. on May 19 to 260 c.f.s. on November 29, 2005.

Pine Flat Reservoir storage topped out at 989,480 acre-feet (98 percent of capacity) on June 27. The low point of 444,182 acre-feet (44 percent full) came in the reservoir on November 4, 2005.

Water Forum Progresses, *continued*

of groundwater management and conjunctive use, including programs related to water quality, ecosystem management, flood control and land use/recreation.

Water Forum representatives are coordinating the overall planning process while developing and implementing a public affairs strategy to provide outreach and educate the public and decision makers.

The Water Forum will evaluate and compare project alternatives, identify and prioritize solutions, and pursue funding. Environmental and economic impact reviews will be conducted on the final alternative projects and programs.

Anticipated key benefits of this regional approach include:

- Establishment of goals and policies for the most economical and best use of available water resources in the region;
- Effective management of groundwater overdraft;

- Reduced potential for conflicting goals and projects;
- Improved local and regional water supply reliability;
- Reduced cost of developing one regional plan versus multiple plans by individual agencies;
- Increased operational flexibility of the water infrastructures;
- Reduced potential for conflicts and litigation;
- Protection and improvement of groundwater quality; and
- Increased chance of obtaining state grant funds as a regional partnership, rather than as a local agency.

"We believe this regional planning process will serve to preserve the agricultural economy while accommodating planned urban growth," Orth said. "And by working together, the region stands to increase its political influence and be more capable of leveraging local funding with state and federal grants."

Learn About KRCD's Power Program

Kings River Conservation District has established a speaker's service to discuss the innovative energy solutions that KRCD has been pursuing to address the critical issue of reliability of electrical service for the central San Joaquin Valley.

This half-hour program highlights KRCD's activities to increase energy re-

liability by building a local power plant, as well as Community Choice.

There is no charge for the program and we would be happy to schedule a presentation.

If interested, please phone Anna Miller at 559-237-5567, ext. 116 or request via e-mail to amiller@krcd.org.

KRCD News

Published quarterly by the Kings River Conservation District, a political subdivision of the State of California serving 1.2 million acres in Fresno, Kings and Tulare counties. Prepared by KRCD's Public Relations Consultant and Staff.

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Vol. 31, No. 3

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