



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.

Speakers' Bureau Programs Available

Kings River Conservation District has available speakers' service presentations to discuss issues relating to the valley's environmental, energy, and water needs.

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

If interested, please e-mail or phone Toni Munoz at 559-237-5567, ext. 105 or tmunoz@krcd.org.

Winter 2006-2007

KRC D News

Big Trout Prove Popular With Kings River Anglers

Anglers are quick to talk about the big ones that get away but for a second straight year they watched in big numbers as trophy-sized trout arrived before testing their skills in the Kings River downstream from Pine Flat Dam.

"The event gained a great deal of attention among the angling public," Kings River Watermaster Steve Haugen, Kings River Fisheries Management Program Executive Officer, said.

The river's banks were lined with eager anglers at each location where the trout of up to 10 pounds were planted in early December. There were large numbers of people fishing on weekends following the plantings.

It is part of a three-year program sponsored by the California Department of Fish and Game to increase awareness and interest in fishing. License sales nearly doubled around the area a year ago when jumbo trout were first planted and a similar spike in license sales was reported in December.

Some 3,800 jumbo trout are being released into the river through March, supplementing CDFG's regular plantings and ongoing Kings River Fisheries Management Program activities aimed at improving the river's habitat and trout reproduction.



A California Department of Fish and Game staff member introduces a pair of trophy-sized trout to their new Kings River home at Winton Park near Piedra December 1, 2006.

The big trout are being planted every other week in batches of 475 fish distributed at five locations below Pine Flat Dam.

The limit is five fish per day from Pine Flat Dam downstream to Cobbles Weir. The reach between Cobbles Weir and Highway 180 is a designated catch-and-release zone that requires barbless hooks.

Water Forum Looking For Grant Funding

Upper Kings Basin Water Forum leaders are increasingly on the lookout for grant funding to finance an ambitious set of programs and projects identified through a joint planning process aimed at meeting future water and environmental needs.

Begun 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, the Water Forum has forged important working partnerships with cities served by those districts, as well as Fresno County and environmental groups.

The Forum's Integrated Regional Water Management Plan process is not only developing a management plan but is

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New Water Year's Start Falls Short Of Wet Hopes

It was the Kings River region's first storm of 2007 and like others that had taken aim on Central California since the new water year began October 1 this one appeared impressive on weather maps and satellite photos.

Advanced looks, unfortunately, again turned out to be too good to be true.

The January 4 storm did produce some rain on the valley floor and a moderate coating of snow across the Sierra Nevada's watershed, just as other events have modestly generated.

But despite optimistic earlier long-range weather forecasts, the 2006-07 water year's first few months had a definite dry tinge. Precipitation totals as of mid-January were tracking below average across Central California and the Kings River watershed.

Automated snow sensing devices indicate the snowpack's water content is well below average and snow depths are generally only between 19-26 inches.

"Future weather is the key," said Kings River Watermaster Steve Haugen. "There is still plenty of time for some big storms that could turn things around quickly."

National Weather Service forecasts, at least for the short term, have changed to below-average outlooks.

Kings River water and storage conditions have remained relatively constant.

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*General Manager's Report
David Orth*

A Big Power And Water Agenda

There never seems to be a shortage of developing water news in California and the new year promises more of the same - plus lots of good, exciting and productive pending power developments.

For KRCD, the main events are revolving around establishment, in cooperation with our municipal partnership, of Community Choice, California's entirely new means of generating lower costs and reliable electricity, as well as development of a much-needed San Joaquin Valley base-load power plant.

It is with great pride that KRCD, a dozen area cities and at least one county have been preparing for the January 25 launching of the San Joaquin Valley Power Authority .

The new power plant is crucial to Community Choice's parallel objectives of increasing valley power supplies at a lower cost made possible because KRCD is a public agency lacking a profit motive.

Adding to the excitement is the fact that Community Choice, approved by the California Legislature a few years ago as an alternate means of supplying energy, is starting right here. Our Community Choice program will be the state's first to operate. For more information about Community Choice and the proposed power plant go to our website, www.krcd.org.

KRCD also continues to be involved directly in a number of important developing activities and programs. One of those involves all the water quality questions and grower concerns that have sprung up the past few years as the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board has established its conditional ag discharge waiver program.

The new year began with a flurry of signups to meet a December 31 Regional Board deadline to sign up irrigated farmland with potential to discharge to "waters of the United States" with our new Kings River subwatershed coalition. There are now about 500,000 acres represented in the Kings River coalition.

This program's regulatory stance has tended at times to be a moving target for KRCD and its partners in the Southern San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition (including the Kings River Water Association) but KRCD is staying on top of developments. The District also is gathering important water quality data through Regional Board-mandated Kings River monitoring. Not surprisingly, we're finding Kings River water to be extraordinarily clean.

KRCD is also working with the Alta, Consolidated and Fresno irrigation districts, and nine municipal agencies, environmental groups and KRWA on historic long-range integrated water management planning through the Upper Kings Basin Water Forum. Great progress is being made. The Water Forum is examining the potential of major new groundwater banking facilities to help conserve and store Kings River floodwater.

There's more. KRCD's environmental staff is hard at work helping further the Kings River Fisheries Management Program. Our Jeff L. Taylor-Pine Flat Power Plant and new Malaga Peaking Power Plant are ready to hum into action. KRCD's flood fighters stand at full readiness along the lower river.

Plus, KRCD is monitoring all the activities surrounding potential water development in California. We're seeing genuine growing interest around the state, including from the Schwarzenegger administration, in new surface water storage opportunities. Even the Delta's old Peripheral Canal plans are being dusted off.

Stand by. It looks as if 2007 could be a mighty interesting year.

KRCD Has River, Levees Set For Any Flood Flows

Whether or not the Kings River's channels and levees will be called upon to handle flood releases was not yet known in mid-January.

What is certain is that the flood-carrying and protection system is ready. KRCD's 11-member, Riverdale-based flood management staff spent the past several months doing maintenance and repair work following last spring's extensive, but safely conducted, flood releases.

"Our staff has the channel and levees in tip-top condition and ready to handle any flood release

flows that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deems necessary," said David Orth, the District's General Manager.

The Corps makes all decisions to Kings River flood management once its flood control storage criteria in Pine Flat Reservoir is exceeded. That level, as of early January, had not been reached.

The District has found from its long experience in operating much of the lower Kings River flood management system that good channel maintenance and

sediment removal increases velocity of floodwater and helps lower flood release surface levels, thus decreasing pressure on levees.

Last spring's flood releases amounted to 810,500 acre-feet, the equivalent of 81 percent of Pine Flat Reservoir's capacity. There was 728,000 acre-feet directed over Crescent Weir near Riverdale into the North Fork system while 82,500 acre-feet were discharged into the Tulare Lake bed.

Mark McKean Is Named New KRCD Board Leader

Mark McKean of Riverdale, a member of the Kings River Conservation District's board for more than 11 years, has been elected president by fellow directors.



Mark McKean, President

McKean, who represents Division 4 on the District's west side, was named at KRCD's December session to succeed Ceil

Howe Jr. of Stratford, who served four years as president.

Named as vice president was the board's newest member, Brent Graham of Hanford.

McKean was KRCD's vice president from 2002-06.

He has been a KRCD director since 1995, representing the Laton, Riverdale, Burrel, San Joaquin, Raisin City and Tranquillity areas. McKean

has also served on KRCD's Budget and Audit, Labor and Personnel, Public Power, and the Accounts Payable committees.

McKean is a member of the Kings River Water Association, Crescent Canal Company, Reed Ditch Company and the Murphy Slough Association boards.

He owns and manages McKean Farms, farming cotton sugar beets, onions, grains, alfalfa and tomatoes as well as providing custom farming services. He is a graduate of the California Agricultural Leadership Program and is a graduate of Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo.

McKean earned a masters degree from Colorado State University. He is also a West Hills Community College director and has served on many other boards.

Graham joined KRCD's board in May 2006, representing Division 5, which includes much of northern Kings County. Graham serves on KRCD's Public Power Committee.

He has managed the Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District since 1969 and previously was a hydrographer for the Kings River Water Association.



Brent Graham, Vice President

Graham is the long-time chairman of the Lower (Kings) River Board of Directors and the Kings County Water Commission, and is secretary

of the San Joaquin Valley Agricultural Water Committee. He is also secretary-treasurer of the newly formed Valley Ag Water Coalition as well as vice chair of both the California Farm Water Coalition and the State Project Water Contractors Authority.

Graham heads the Tule River Improvement Joint Powers Authority, which is currently working with the Army Corps of Engineers for the replacement of Success Dam.

New Water Year's Start Falls Short Of Wet Hopes, *cont.*

Pine Flat Reservoir storage is higher than might typically be expected at this time of year at 52 percent of capacity but the lake's level remains well under the Corps of Engineers criteria that would trigger a flood release to protect flood management storage space.

Inflow to Pine Flat remains at a few hundred cubic feet per second while releases have been around 250 c.f.s., this year's expanded minimum fishery flows downstream from Pine Flat Dam as a result of last year's above average runoff. It is the second consecutive year of such higher releases.

KRWA, Pacific Gas and Electric Company and National Park Service staff members are to make the season's first Kings River snow survey during the week of January 22. The California Department of Water Resources' first runoff prediction will be released soon after February 1.

KRCD's Malaga Power Plant Meets Off-Season Peaking Needs

Summer may be the time of year in which a power plant supplying electricity to meet peak demands and needs is busiest but the Kings River Conservation District's new Malaga facility was kept humming during the fall and winter months.

KRCD's Malaga Peaking Power Plant was ordered into service on a regular basis during November and December, long after the usual peak demand season was over.

Jim Richards, KRCD's Manager of Power Resources, said the peaking plant was operated 4-5 times weekly in November. In the month of December, the plant was dispatched 11 days.

KRCD's \$43 million peaking power plant was completed in the spring of 2005.

The new plant can provide enough electricity to meet needs of 97,000 homes.

Grant Funding, *continued*

investigating approximately \$50 million in new groundwater banking and recharge facilities and related projects.

KRCD General Manager David Orth told District directors in December that expanded discussion is taking place at the state level increased San Joaquin Valley water planning, supply development and funding.

He noted that grant money distributed from a 2004 bond measure, Proposition 50, "completely ignored the San Joaquin Valley," even though the Upper Kings Forum's proposed projects scored very high in review.

The Forum's consensus-based process is intended to frame future

supply and management plans in ways that reduce or avoid differences over water-related issues.

The effort has been undertaken to bring agricultural, urban and environmental interests together in dealing with future water needs while increasing political influence, and opportunities of obtaining state and federal grant funds as a region, rather than as individual local agencies.

Forum member agencies and individuals believe the new regional planning process will help conserve the valley's historic agricultural economy while supporting planned urban growth.

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