



KRCD News

Summer 2012

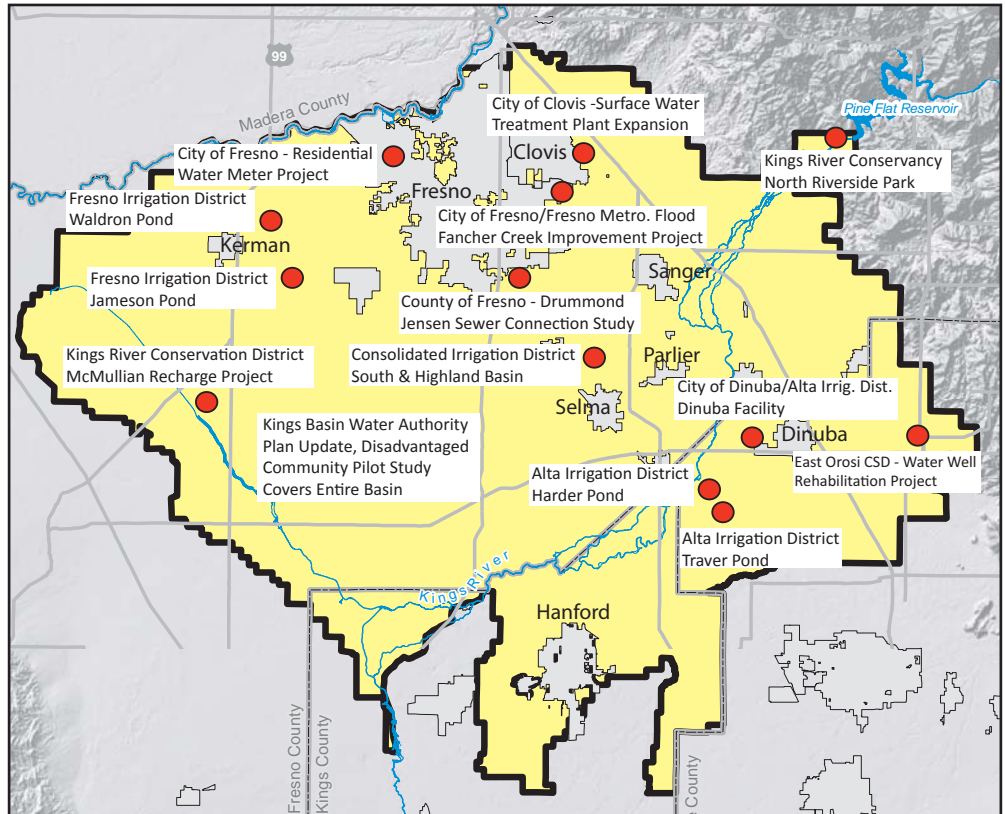
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Water Issues Addressed Through Regional Collaboration

Looking 20 years into the future, the Kings Basin Water Authority (Water Authority) is currently updating its regional water management plan.

The Integrated Regional Water Management Plan update will provide a comprehensive overview of the Kings Basin's water supply, demand and conditions. Water Authority members have identified goals, objectives and strategies to deal with regional water issues.

The update is a collaborative effort between 51 public, private and non-governmental agencies (see KBWA member list page 2) to manage water resources in the Kings Basin. This is one of the most broadly based efforts to address water issues in the region. It includes representatives of agriculture, urban and environmental stakeholders



Kings Basin Water Authority Funded Projects

Comment Period for Plan Update

The Kings Basin Water Authority has completed the draft Integrated Regional Water Management Plan Update and is seeking public comment. To view the draft Plan update go to www.kingsbasinauthority.org and click on the link *View IRWMP Update*. Comments are due by September 12.

Please submit comments in writing to the Kings Basin Water Authority, 4886 E. Jensen Ave., Fresno, CA 93725, attention Eric Osterling.

that have come together to engage in an integrated regional water management planning effort. The Water Authority's territory covers 610,000 acres and includes parts of Fresno, Kings and Tulare counties.

To date, the Water Authority has been awarded over \$35 million in state financial support for use toward planning activities and to construct projects that address groundwater, water conservation and efficiency, water quality, riparian habitat, flood corridors and disadvantaged communities.

The projects are located throughout the basin (see Funded Projects map above). Most of the projects funded

are partnerships between member water districts, cities, counties and environmental organizations.

"Solutions to water issues can happen, and it starts with collaboration. Instead of water discussions focused on the conflicts of the varying interests that are vying for water for cities, farms, and fish, and the resulting stalemate, the Kings Basin Water Authority is producing results in managing the region's water resources," stated David Orth, KRCD General Manager.

For more information about the Kings Basin Water Authority, go to www.kingsbasinauthority.org.

KBWA Member List

Alta Irrigation District
City of Clovis
City of Dinuba
City of Fresno
City of Kerman
City of Kingsburg
City of Parlier
City of Reedley
City of Sanger
City of Selma
County of Fresno
County of Tulare
Consolidated Irrigation District
Fresno County Metro. Flood Control Dist.
Fresno Irrigation District
Kings County Water District
Kings River Conservation District
Raisin City Water District

KBWA Interested Parties

Bakman Water Company
Biola Community Services District
CA Native Plant Society, Sequoia Chapter
City of San Joaquin
Community Water Center
County of Kings
Crescent Canal Company
Cutler Public Utilities District
Easton Community Services District
East Orsi Community Services District
El Rio Reyes Conservation Trust
Fresno County Farm Bureau
Hardwick Water Company
James Irrigation District
Kings River Conservancy
Kings River Water Association
Laguna Irrigation District
Laton Community Service District
Liberty Canal Company
Liberty Water District
London Community Services District
Mid-Valley Water District
Orange Cove Irrigation District
Orsi Public Utilities District
Reed Ditch Company
Riverdale Irrigation District
Riverdale Public Utility District
Sanger Environmental Fund
Self-Help Enterprises
Sierra Club, Tehipite Chapter
Sierra Resource Conservation District
Sultana Community Services District
Terranova Ranch, Inc.
Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners
UC Cooperative Extension - Fresno



General Manager's Report David Orth

Coalitions: To Be or Not to Be

Implementation of the State's Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program has reached a tipping point for KRCD and others in the Central Valley. The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) is currently developing a long-term Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (Irrigated Lands Program) that will include changes to the current surface water monitoring program. The most significant change is to include regulation of potential discharges to groundwater. The Regional Board starts with the assumption that every irrigator is a discharger to groundwater and therefore falls under the Irrigated Lands Program.

If the Regional Board's approach to groundwater monitoring requirements were similar to the current surface water monitoring requirements, KRCD could build on the monitoring program of the last several years. In the Kings sub-watershed, ten years of monitoring has shown that ag pollutants are minimal and geographically based. There have not been significant exceedances, and when there was an issue identified, KRCD immediately worked with the grower(s) involved. This approach has been successful in monitoring and maintaining water quality.

However, there is concern that the Regional Board will reach so deep with new groundwater monitoring requirements that KRCD and other Coalitions will not be able to represent farmers. The new requirements may cause KRCD and others to discontinue their role as administrators as costs for implementation rise exponentially.

The Regional Board's programmatic document estimated that the cost of administration, monitoring and reporting ranges from more than \$4 million to \$80 million per year for the Tulare Lake Basin and that total cost to the grower ranges from \$30 to \$189 per acre. The Coalitions have had numerous meetings over the last several months with the Regional Board to negotiate an effective monitoring program.

One of the drivers toward more extensive groundwater monitoring is the recent attention given to a long-time issue in the valley, nitrate pollution. A recently released UC Davis report on nitrates points to irrigated agriculture as the main reason for nitrate exceedance in the drinking water supply. This has folks clamoring for immediate and overreaching solutions to what, even the UC Davis report says, in many cases is a legacy issue.

The good news is there is already a great deal of knowledge on nitrates in groundwater. We can use this data to determine the effect of current practices and enact reasonable solutions for agriculture and communities.

Along these lines, the Governor's office has formed a Drinking Water Stakeholder Group to develop recommendations for inclusion in a report to the Legislature on actions regarding nitrates in drinking water. The focus of the group is to address certain barriers preventing implementation of solutions for disadvantaged communities and to address lack of operation and maintenance funding for community water systems. Final recommendations to the Governor are expected by mid-August. I have been asked to co-chair this group.

KRCD is committed to assisting growers in complying with water quality regulations. KRCD will continue to collaboratively work with the Regional Board on monitoring programs that support irrigated agriculture.

Reversing Groundwater Overdraft



One of Consolidated Irrigation District's 46 basins covering 1,300 acres sink an average of 50,000 acre feet of water per year. In addition, Consolidated canal systems alone have the potential to recharge over 2,000 acre feet per day.

Groundwater remains the foundation for agriculture, business and life in the Kings River service area. Almost all water used for domestic, municipal and industrial purposes and portions of agricultural water is pumped from the underground aquifer.

There are many landowners, municipalities, and local irrigation dis-

tricts that overlie the Kings groundwater basin (basin), a large aquifer covering an area of 1,530 square miles, located within the KRCD service area.

It is primarily an agricultural area, which uses both surface and groundwater for irrigation purposes. The basin is managed conjunctively, which is the combined use of surface

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Kings County Farmer Paul Stanfield Named to KRCD Board of Directors

Kings County farmer Paul Stanfield has been appointed to the KRCD Board of Directors.

Stanfield was appointed to represent KRCD's Division 5, which includes much of northern Kings County. Stanfield succeeds Brent Graham who retired from the KRCD Board at the end of 2011. Stanfield was appointed at KRCD's Board meeting in February 2012.



Paul Stanfield

Stanfield has expressed his priorities as a KRCD director are to preserve and maintain a balanced groundwater supply for growers, provide support for efficient water conservation practices by farmers and maintain efficient flood protections along the Kings River.

Stanfield is president of Summerfield Farms, a walnut and pecan operation in Kings County. Prior to starting Summerfield Farms, Stanfield was ranch manager for Joseph B. Summers. Stanfield is also a director for the California Pecan Growers Board.



Graham Retires from Board

A long career of service to Kings County and Kings River water users came to a conclusion as KRCD Board President Brent Graham retired from the District's Board of Directors at the end of 2011.

Graham had represented KRCD's Division 5 (which includes much of northern Kings County) for the previous five and a half years and managed the Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District for nearly four decades.

Graham became a KRCD Director in May 2006 and was named Board President in 2010. Graham began his career with the Kings River Water Association as a hydrographer and managed the Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District from 1969 until his retirement in 2008. For most of his career, Graham chaired the Lower (Kings) River Board of Directors and was active in many Kings River Water Association activities and issues.

He was a long-time member and Chairman of the Kings County Water Commission, and Secretary of the San Joaquin Valley Agricultural Water Committee. Graham also served as Secretary-Treasurer of the Valley Ag Water Coalition as well as Vice Chair of both the California Farm Water Coalition and the State Project Water Contractors Authority. He has also headed the Tule River Improvement Joint Powers Authority.

Director Mark McKean of Riverdale was elected to take over as Board President starting January 1, 2012.

Reversing Overdraft, *continued*

water and groundwater supplies and storage.

KRCD is currently involved in a variety of cooperative efforts to preserve our valley's groundwater resources. One of these efforts is an extensive groundwater monitoring network. KRCD obtains water levels from approximately 1,100 wells in the region based on monitoring records from nineteen local agencies.

The KRCD initiated its groundwater studies in 1987 to monitor trends within the basin. Over this time period, the groundwater basin has seen a steady decline in groundwater elevations, operating under overdraft conditions for many years. Overdraft means that, on an average basis, more water is removed from the basin than is replaced, resulting in declines in groundwater levels.

In the greater Fresno area, which overlays the Kings groundwater basin, there is an average overdraft of approximately 150,000 acre feet per year; however, to put this in perspective, there is 93 million acre feet of groundwater storage to a depth of 1,000 feet or less.

One of the ways to slow or reverse overdraft in the basin is through recharging the groundwater. Within the Kings River region, there are over 3,800 acres of recharge ponds with the capacity of recharging 87,000 acre feet of water annually, along with several thousands of miles of unlined canals that have direct recharge benefits.

"Still, there is a need to improve groundwater recharge capacity throughout the basin," stated KRCD General Manager David Orth. During last year's 184 percent of average April through July runoff for the Kings River, over 500,000 acre feet of water left the service area via flood releases. That is half of the capacity



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of Pine Flat Reservoir, a facility with a million acre feet of storage.

This year, the April through July runoff is 43 percent of average. To make up for the shortfall, more groundwater will be used, worsening the overdraft. This feast or famine scenario emphasizes that additional structures need to be built to contain and distribute flood releases from the Kings when available, promoting recharge of the basin.

There are over fifty local agencies working together on this and other pressing water issues in the region. Over the last ten years, the Kings Basin Water Authority has brought funding in the region to construct numerous banking and recharge facilities with 20,000 acre feet of average annual recharge benefits and water metering and surface water treatment projects with 62,000 acre feet in annual conservation.

These projects total 82,000 acre feet of water, putting a good sized dent in the overdraft. There are more projects on the books. More than 100,000 acre feet of projects are planned. "The collaboration by all of these agencies is an unprecedented success for this region," stated Orth.

Fisheries Program has New Website

The Kings River Fisheries Management Program launched its website, www.krfmp.org in May 2012.

The website includes a photo gallery of the program's many projects and activities along with studies and reports published by the technical steering committee. You can also learn about the fishery enhancement projects and monitoring that are being conducted in the river including river habitat and population surveys. There is even a page that highlights ways you can get involved and volunteer.

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