

CCID OBSERVER

NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM THE CENTRAL CALIFORNIA IRRIGATION DISTRICT • WWW.CCIDWATER.ORG • ISSUE THREE • 2013

CONSERVATION PLAN

CCID Launches New Water Conservation Plan

■ BOARD APPROVES 10-YEAR PLAN TO IMPROVE CONSERVATION AND SERVICE TO NORTH AND SOUTH DIVISIONS.

The CCID Board of Directors has adopted a new 10-year Water Conservation Plan that will guide implementation of state-of-the-art conservation practices and facilities in both the North and South Divisions.

The Plan, which builds on the successfully completed previous 10-year plan, was developed over an 18-month period with input from Cal Poly's Irrigation Research and Training Center in San Luis Obispo.

"This plan identifies specific project areas in both the North and South Divisions, and lays out step-wise how the District will address those areas with an eye on completing all projects by 2022," said CCID General Manager Chris White.

Those projects include leveraging \$1 million in Bay-Delta Initiative grant funds

through the Bureau of Reclamation to construct regulating reservoirs in the South Division that will bring water savings and delivery flexibility to the area. In the North Division, matching grant funds will help finance upgrades to the Amaral Ditch system to eliminate or reduce operational spills and improve conservation and delivery to customers on that ditch.

The plan handles the North and South Divisions differently, noting the distinction that many of the facilities targeted for improvement in the South are District-owned, while many of the laterals off the Main and Outside Canals in the North are privately held community ditches.

In the South Division, regulating reservoirs on the Poso Canal and East Ditch are the first of nearly a dozen In-District Conservation projects as part of the

10-year modernization and conservation plan. Construction of those reservoirs is expected to begin this spring. These regulating reservoirs and installation of automated or long-crested weirs will stabilize the canal pool and accommodate increased adoption of drip and other on-farm irrigation efficiencies. Additional projects in the South Division focus on on-farm conservation projects such as micro-irrigation, tail-water return systems, concrete linings as well as In-District conservation projects that maximize tail-water return back into the canal.

In the North, the District has received matching dollars to help landowners upgrade the Amaral Ditch facility to improve service to customers on that ditch and eliminate or reduce operational spills.

Continued on next page

Got Old Photos?

CCID is working with an historian to develop a published account of the District's origin and development. The District is looking for historical photos for use in the publication. Please share your photos in developing our history. Photos can be brought to the Main Office where they will be scanned and returned immediately or they can be mailed to the attention of Tracey Rosin at P. O. Box 1231, Los Banos, 93635. All mailed photos will be cared for and returned by mail.



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VIPS TOUR CCID



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CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

State and Federal VIPs Tour CCID

■ RESOURCE AGENCIES AND LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVES LEARN OF INNOVATION AND CONSERVATION WITHIN THE DISTRICT.

CCID and the Exchange Contractors have hosted a number of VIP tours of the District and its facilities over the last few months to raise awareness of the improvements, conservation efforts and issues impacting landowners within the District.

“CCID has been inviting legislative, water agency and Bureau representatives, and local water district officials, in an aggressive



CCID GENERAL MANAGER CHRIS WHITE LEADS A SUBSIDENCE TOUR IN MARCH FOR REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE OFFICES OF SEN. DIANNE FEINSTEIN AND REPS. JIM COSTA AND DAVID VALADAO.

effort to showcase the good things we are doing,” said CCID General Manager Chris White. “At the same time we want to also raise awareness about subsidence, River Restoration and other issues that potentially impact effective water delivery to our consumers and neighbors.”

Officials from the State Water Board, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and State Assembly have visited in recent months, in addition to envoys from the offices of U.S. Senators and federal agencies.

CCID also hosted technical staff of the Turlock Irrigation District to share state-of-the-art improvements within the District related to modernization and controls in a reciprocal exchange of information.

Among other facilities, attendees toured: Los Banos Creek Detention Dam, on-farm and in-district conservation projects; regulating reservoirs; large groundwater recharge projects; and canal lining and drainage projects.

“The purpose of these tours is, number one to show that CCID and other members of the Exchange Contractors are doing very positive things in terms of water conservation and water resource planning,” he said. “It is important we portray a modern and accurate image of who the District is and what we are trying to accomplish.

“At the same time, we feel we have been successful in fashioning solutions to some really tough problems, including seepage and other consequences of San Joaquin River Restoration, drainage and subsidence, and we want to illuminate for state and federal representatives the benefits of letting local stakeholders fashion effective solutions to these and other challenges rather than a top-down, one-size-fits-all mandate.”

New Water Conservation Plan

Continued from previous page

The current Amaral System in the North Division is comprised of a buried pipeline conveying water to an unlined ditch that ultimately discharges into the San Joaquin River. Current deliveries and tail-water discharges into the Amaral System create wide fluctuations in flow rates and uncontrolled discharges into the San Joaquin River. Amaral System improvements include replacing a mile of unlined ditch downstream from Kilburn Road with concrete lined ditch and pipeline and building an adjacent quarter-mile long, 60 to 80-foot-wide linear reservoir with corresponding pump stations to increase storage volume and improve management. The Conservation Project will capture excess flows before they are discharged into the River and pump them into the regulating reservoir before returning the runoff to the irrigation system.

“We are going to have CCID Water Conservation Program grant funds for landowners of up to 25 percent, plus an additional 50 percent in outside matching funds, which means the cost to landowners could be 25 cents on the dollar,” White said. “If you do the math it’s a really good deal for landowners and it conserves water and provides better service on the ditch they own.”

The District recently completed components of the Water Conservation Plan developed in 1992 that included modernization and automation of the Main Canal and Outside Canal; an inter-connection at O’Banion bypass; and a program to regulate the reservoir in the Ingomar Area.



REGULATING RESERVOIRS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN CONSTRUCTION THIS SPRING WILL HELP BRING WATER SAVINGS AND DELIVERY FLEXIBILITY TO THE DISTRICT’S SOUTH DIVISION.

Redfern Ranches Improves Tomato Yield and Quality While Saving Water With Drip

■ GRANTS FROM CCID AND BAY-DELTA INITIATIVE COVER MOST COSTS FOR SYSTEM INSTALLATION.

Redfern Ranches is taking advantage of leveraged Bay-Delta Initiative and US Bureau of Reclamation grant funds through CCID's partnership with NRCS to cover most of the installation costs for a newly installed 217-acre drip installation on processing tomatoes.

The grant funds, which covered 70 percent of the cost of the project (excluding the drip tape) make the drip system an excellent investment for the farm, not only saving an estimated 108 acre-feet of water per year, but providing significant yield and quality benefits compared to furrow irrigation.



JOE MUNOZ JR. INJECTS ALGAEICIDES TO KEEP LINES AND EMITTERS FREE OF DEBRIS DIRECTLY THROUGH THE AUTOMATED DRIP SYSTEM.

Redfern Ranches, which operates in two Exchange Contract and four federal districts, started growing tomatoes in 2000 and made its first conversion to drip in 2008, said Joe Munoz Jr., who manages irrigation systems at Redfern. Initially, he said, the abundant water within the Exchange Contractors moderated conversions to drip irrigation on tomatoes, but today, with undeniable yield and quality benefits and a number of incentive programs in place, CCID growers are moving rapidly toward producing tomatoes under drip.

"Because of the water situation here people at first weren't pushed as hard to go to drip, but the yield and water conservation benefits over time have more than justified the cost," Munoz said.

Steve Fausone, who manages the multi-generation family farming operation, said nearly 25 percent of Redfern's acreage is currently under drip irrigation, and he expects that proportion to increase in coming years.

Redfern owns 13,300 acres in the Dos Palos area, including 8,800 acres in CCID, on crops including alfalfa, barley, wheat, cotton, garlic and permanent crops. Tomatoes make up about 10 percent of the total acreage and virtually all of that 1,300 tomato acres is grown on drip irrigation. An additional drip installation is planned this year on another 200 tomato acres, bringing the total to about 1,500 acres.



FAUSONE AND MUNOZ, WHO MANAGES IRRIGATION SYSTEMS AT REDFERN, SAID DRIP ALLOWS THEM TO FINE-TUNE WATER AND NUTRIENT APPLICATIONS TO OPTIMIZE WATER USE, YIELD AND QUALITY.

Over the last five years Redfern has converted an annual average of 200 acres of furrow irrigated field crop ground to tomatoes on drip. Yields increased consistently an average of 30 to 40 percent compared to furrow irrigation, he said.

"We are actually taking ground that wouldn't traditionally be known as good tomato ground and converting it with drip to good quality, high-yielding tomato crops," Munoz said.

Redfern has participated in CCID's Water Conservation Program for a number of years, utilizing matching grant funds to finance 25 percent of the cost (up to \$400 per acre) for on-farm water conservation projects, including micro-irrigation and tail-water return systems. This year funding for the project installation on the River Ranch, which runs along the San Joaquin River in the District's South Division near Dos Palos, was largely funded by additional funds the District received from the Bureau and NRCS. The \$750 per acre grant covered all the costs except for the tape.

Tomatoes at Redfern are grown on 80-inch beds, with a single line of 15-mil tape buried 12 to 14 inches below the surface in the center of double rows of tomatoes on each bed. Inline .25 gallon-per-hour emitters run along the tape in 1-foot spacing. The drip system is filtered with an 8-tank sand gravel filtration system that runs in two sets to irrigate the 200-acre field.

For next year, Redfern is considering a plan to convert 1,000 acres in the Camp 13 area to drip irrigation with help from the Water Conservation Program and outside funds as part of a larger project to address subsurface drainage problems in the region. The land is currently rotated to alfalfa, wheat and cotton under furrow irrigation.

"We are doing soil samples to determine what crops to grow, whether it will be tomatoes, grapes, almonds or alfalfa, to see if we can make it work on drip," Fausone said. "It looks like that will be viable, although rodent control is going to be an issue."



FAUSONE SAID DRIP NOT ONLY SAVES WATER BUT ALSO IMPROVES YIELD AND QUALITY IN THE FARM'S PROCESSING TOMATOES.



STEVE FAUSONE OF REDFERN RANCHES CHECKS OVER A PROCESSING TOMATO FIELD, NEWLY PLANTED TO DRIP WITH HELP FROM CCID'S WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM, JUST PRIOR TO HARVEST.



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A look back...



50 Years Ago – Fall 1963

A Federal court judge in Fresno dismissed the first legal attempt by the Four Entities to compel the federal government to provide a drainage system for the lands to be served by the new San Luis Unit of the Central Valley Project. The CCID Board of Directors decided not to appeal “inasmuch as the Bureau of Reclamation had indicated that definite plans for the drain would be forthcoming around January 1, 1964.”

25 Years Ago – Fall 1988

The Dos Palos City Council voted to construct a pipeline directly from the California Aqueduct to the City’s water treatment plant. With the completion of the pipeline in 1989, the City would no longer divert its water from the CCID canal system.

10 Years Ago – Fall 2003

CCID’s management and Board of Directors devoted much time and effort in deciding how best to comply with new rules adopted by the Regional Water Quality Control Board for the conditional ag discharge waiver program. It was ultimately agreed that the District would assist its landowners and consumers in joining in the newly formed West San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition, which would perform the required monitoring and reporting services.