

CCID OBSERVER

NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM THE CENTRAL CALIFORNIA IRRIGATION DISTRICT • WWW.CCIDWATER.ORG • ISSUE THREE • 2009

SJR Restoration Program in Full Swing

The Resource Management Coalition (RMC) is in the midst of a major effort to protect third-party landowners within CCID that will be affected by the recent adoption of the San Joaquin River Restoration Settlement Act.

"With restoration activities underway, the Bureau of Reclamation is releasing environmental documents at a breakneck speed and the RMC is working hard to review these documents and represent landowners with comments," said CCID General Manager Chris White.

As part of the Coalition, CCID is reviewing all environmental documents to ensure that third-party District landowners likely to be affected by the Restoration Program are represented on water rights issues and protected against seepage, flooding and other potential concerns on adjacent San Joaquin River lands.

The RMC hired the California Water Institute at California State University, Fresno, to provide technical assistance to third-party landowners. Program Director Sarge Green is consulting with individual landowners and serves as the RMC's technical coordinator to direct, review and lead

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Groundwater Under Pressure

■ CCID RAMPS UP EFFORTS TO PROTECT UNDERGROUND AQUIFERS IN AND AROUND THE DISTRICT.

The ongoing regulatory drought is putting unprecedented pressure on groundwater pumping to irrigate crops in the Central Valley. Experts are concerned that over-pumping could have long-term impacts on the state's underground aquifers and water conveyance systems.

Central California Irrigation District is making extra effort in light of this new reality to study the health of underground aquifers in and around the District and ensure its policies do not negatively impact the long-term health and viability of its aquifers and conveyance system.

The District is also proactively tracking subsidence along the Delta-Mendota Canal and Outside Canal to monitor the potential impact increased pumping in nearby federal districts might be having on the District's conveyance system.

Each fall as part of its Groundwater Management Plan, the District conducts an annual groundwater study and reports on the condition of groundwater to help guide CCID Board policies. The District has implemented additional groundwater studies this year.



CCID HAS STEPPED UP GROUNDWATER MONITORING AND STUDIES IN LIGHT OF INCREASED PUMPING IN AND AROUND THE DISTRICT.

Water transfer policies within the District are also being monitored closely to ensure there are no negative impacts on underground aquifers as a result of those or other Board policies, said CCID General Manager Chris White.

"When the water transfer program was put in place, we never envisioned federal districts would be at 10 percent of normal supply," White said. "The program has come under more use than historic levels as a result of the current man-made drought, and the District has had to be more cautious about its water transfer program as a result."

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CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT:
DRIP IN OLIVES



3
CCID GOLF
TOURNAMENT

Drip Irrigation in Olives

■ CCID CONSERVATION PROGRAM HELPS NEWMAN POULTRY FARMER TRANSITION TO NEW OPPORTUNITY.

David Freitas took a chance in the 1970s when he moved from the Azores to the Central San Joaquin Valley and became one of the first in the area to farm layer chickens. Nearly 40 years later, the Newman, Calif., grower is taking a chance again.

New realities for California poultry have pressed Freitas and other members of his long-time poultry farming family to look for other farming opportunities. He and his brother Joseph this year planted olives for olive oil on 55 acres of formerly leased cropland at Freitas Fresh Eggs Inc., where the Freitas brothers still tend 240,000 layer hens.



helped mentor him along. Both have relied on Carl Nelson for guidance. Nelson recently opened a state-of-the-art olive oil processing mill called Cullen Creek Olive Oil in Fresno and has been actively recruiting and training new growers, including Freitas and Medeiros.

Both Freitas and Medeiros made significant investment in the super-intensive olive production system. Newly planted olive trees are guided along poles to a trellis system, which will allow for machine harvesting similar to winegrapes for maximum cost-efficiency and production.

THE DRIP SYSTEM—INSTALLED WITH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM CCID'S WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM—IRRIGATES AT THE BASE AND BETWEEN EACH TREE WITH INLINE EMITTERS THAT DELIVER WATER AND NUTRIENTS DIRECTLY TO THE ROOT ZONE.

The Arbosana and Arbequina pollinator trees are planted on high-density 5-foot spacing along 12-foot rows. A new drip irrigation system has inline drip emitters spaced every 30 inches, placing one emitter at the base and between each of the 726 trees per acre.

Freitas until this year leased most of the land on his 110-acre property in CCID for corn and other annual crops. The 55-acre olive block marks his first foray into crop production, and he says he is getting a lot of help.

Cousin David Medeiros also transitioned from chicken farming this year to plant 45 acres of olives under drip. Medeiros planted his orchard three weeks before Freitas and has since

The drip fine-tunes water and nutrient applications to better fuel the high-density production system, which Freitas expects to yield 200 gallons of oil per acre by 5th leaf. Drip irrigation was a major expense in the new orchard but still only a fraction of the \$5,000-per-acre investment.

Cost-share assistance from CCID's Water Conservation Program to help support installation of the drip irrigation system provided a big incentive in making the investment, Freitas said.



DAVID FREITAS STANDS IN THE NEWLY PLANTED HIGH-DENSITY OLIVE ORCHARD ON HIS NEWMAN PROPERTY. THE ORCHARD IS PLANTED UNDER DRIP IRRIGATION ON TRELLISES FOR MACHINE HARVEST.

CCID's Conservation Program provides 25-percent cost-share grants for up to \$400 per acre benefitted to help finance on-farm water conservation projects, including micro-irrigation and tailwater return systems. The program also makes available low-interest loans to cover the farmer's remaining portion of the cost, up to \$1,000 per acre benefitted. The application deadline for the next round of project approvals is Sept. 15.

Freitas said the cost-share program available through CCID helped him implement a production system that will more quickly return his investment, while also saving the District upwards of 28 acre-feet of surface water per year compared to the previous flood irrigation system.

Both Freitas and Medeiros acknowledge it's a big investment, but are betting on the long-term potential for olive oil from California.

"We originally took a chance in the egg business 40 years ago and that worked out alright, so we are willing to take another chance now," Medeiros said.

"California produces less than 3 percent of the olive oil consumed in the U.S. so we figured there is a good market opportunity for it," added Freitas. "With Prop. 2 we don't know what the future of egg farming will be and so we started looking for something else. This came along and it sounded like a good idea."

FREITAS (LEFT), WITH COUSIN DAVID MEDEIROS (RIGHT) AND HIS FATHER JOSEPH, ARE GAMBLING ON THE LONG-TERM POTENTIAL OF OLIVES FOR OIL IN THE CENTRAL VALLEY.





19th Annual
CCID Golf Tournament
Saturday, September 26, 9:30am

CCID will hold its 19th Annual Golf Tournament September 26 at 9:30am at the Stevinson Ranch Golf Club.

Cost for registration is \$90 for CCID employees, directors and immediate family and \$100 for all others. Price includes green fees, cart, range balls, BBQ dinner and prizes.

Sign-up deadline for the tournament is Friday, Sept. 18. For details or to register call Gregg at the CCID office at (209) 826-1421.

SJR Restoration Program in Full Swing *Continued from page 1*

the group's response as government agencies release environmental documents related to restoration flows and mitigation.

White said that recent biological opinions for salmon and steelhead have changed the water delivery landscape along the River, and the RMC is working to ensure the Bureau of Reclamation and other agencies take that shifting landscape into account as it decides on interim and long-term flows and mitigation measures.

Delays in the passage of the legislation created a backlog of work for the Bureau, which is now scrambling to meet a pre-established Oct. 2009 deadline for interim flows along the River to support fish populations. As a result,

White said things are happening very quickly and the RMC is racing to keep up with a slew of activity. He urged third-party landowners to get personally involved in the process to be sure their interests are not overlooked.

"It is critical landowners get personally involved through the RMC as the Bureau makes decisions over the next 18 to 24 months on the long-term direction of the program," White said. "There is so much activity going on, direct participation is absolutely vital at this point."

He encouraged growers to attend RMC meetings and visit the Coalition's web site at www.sjrmc.info to stay informed and find out more about how to get involved.

Groundwater Under Pressure *Continued from page 1*

CCID studies did find negative impacts in and around Los Banos this year and was forced to curtail pumping in the area. White said the Board is establishing all of its decisions and policies with an eye toward long-term sustainability of groundwater, based on hard data from District-funded studies.

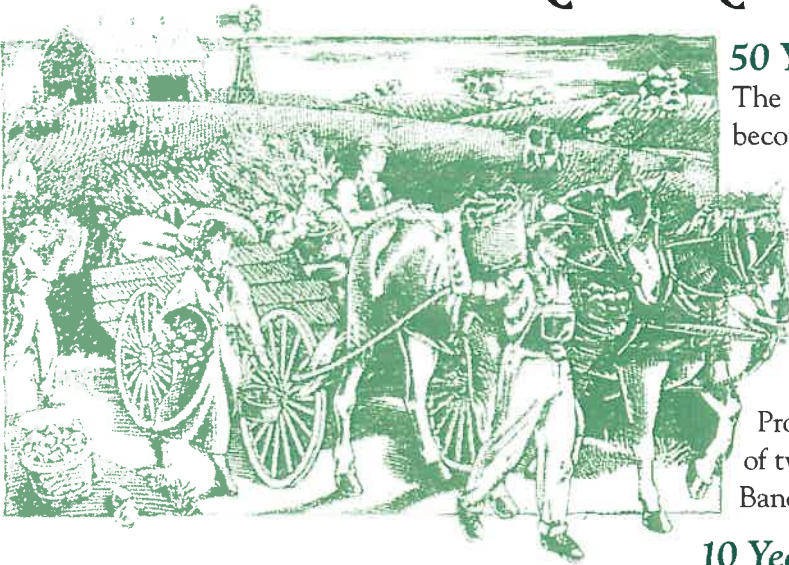
"We are being very proactive in making sure the aquifer system under CCID is preserved for the future," White said. "With the recent Biological Opinions there will be long-term impacts on Delta exports, which will create more stress on groundwater surrounding the District. So we are stepping up our surveillance efforts to identify impacts of this increased pressure before they become a problem."



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A look back...



50 Years Ago – Summer 1959

The Manager reported to the Board that it had “again become necessary to undertake a bank-building program along the Outside Canal near Panoche in the land subsidence area, in order to retain sufficient capacity to carry water through this area.”

25 Years Ago – Summer 1984

The District entered into a long-term Ground Lease and Water Release agreement with Sverdrup Hydro Projects, Inc. for the design, construction and operation of two small hydroelectric power plants to the west of Los Banos.

10 Years Ago – Summer 1999

The Exchange Contractors and several Eastside irrigation districts executed the San Joaquin River Agreement, effectively avoiding additional years of State Board hearings on Bay-Delta flow issues, and establishing the Vernalis Adaptive Management Plan for releases to the San Joaquin River.