

CCID OBSERVER

NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM THE CENTRAL CALIFORNIA IRRIGATION DISTRICT • WWW.CCIDWATER.ORG • ISSUE ONE • 2012

WATER SUPPLY UPDATE

CCID Working to Minimize Impact of Critical Year Designation

As CCID consumers head into the 2012 irrigation season with a critical year allocation, they should prepare for a reduced water supply of nearly one acre-foot per acre. This year marks only the fifth time the District has been declared critical since the Delta-Mendota Canal became operational in 1952.

The Bureau of Reclamation in mid-February made its first official forecast for Shasta Reservoir inflow and water allocation and declared a critical year for CCID and the Exchange Contractors. That declaration, if it stands, means the District will receive only 75 percent of its 532,000 acre-feet normal year allocation.

Extremely dry conditions through the end of February led to projected Shasta inflows of less than 2.8 million acre-feet based on a dry forecast projection. The Bureau will review projections monthly, based on Department of Water Resources snow surveys and precipitation models, and adjust its forecast as conditions

warrant. Projected Shasta inflows must reach 3.2 million acre-feet for the Bureau to declare a normal year and reinstate a full water allocation to the Exchange Contractors.

“The Bureau may start us with a critical year forecast and if in 30 days we get more rainfall and projections change they will convert us back to a

normal year supply,” said CCID General Manager Chris White. “Until then, we are going with what we have in hand, and that is a critical year forecast, so we are setting everything

in motion as if we are going to have a critical year.”

In a critical year, CCID can deliver 2.0 acre-feet (Tier 1) of its water rights water to consumers during the seven-month period from April to October. Tier 2, up to 6 inches, will be developed from the District owned wells. There will be some Tier 3 water available, but the District will need to buy well water from District landowners. White urged landowners to ensure deep well resources are operational and available and to minimize spring water use to make

“We are setting everything in motion as if we are going to have a critical year.”

— Chris White

2012 Tiered Water Rate Schedule

In response to the Bureau of Reclamation’s February announcement declaring 2012 a critical supply year for CCID, the CCID Board of Directors has approved the following 3-tiered water rate schedule for the 7-month summer block from April 1 through Oct. 31, 2012:

Tier 1 = 0 to 2.0 a.f./acre @ \$7/a.f.

Tier 2 = 2.0 to 2.5 a.f./acre @ \$31/a.f.

Tier 3 = Over 2.5 a.f./acre @ \$61/a.f. (if and when available)

There will be no developed water available for Class 2 lands. The District will, however, transport private well water for those who have access to wells that can be pumped into CCID canals for a \$2 per acre-foot transportation charge and a small loss factor based on distance to the well source.

more water available during the summer months.

“Growers should be focused on making sure their wells are in good working order,” White said. “This summer it will be necessary to supplement surface water with their own well water.”

He also asked growers to work with the District as it manages its limited supply by providing 48-hour notice on all orders and 24-hour notice for shutoffs and cancellations. White said canal

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ANNUAL MEETINGS
MARCH 27-29



3
CONSERVING WATER WHILE
IMPROVING PROFITS

Annual Meetings to Cover Important Topics

CCID has scheduled its annual public meetings in late March to discuss important issues with its landowners and consumers. All meetings include a catered dinner and will be held from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the following locations:

Tuesday, March 27 at the Veterans Hall in Firebaugh

Wednesday, March 28 at the Germino Building, Los Banos Fairgrounds

Thursday, March 29 at the Al Goman Center in Gustine

Among the important topics for discussion at this year's meetings:

- Water supply allocations and pricing for the 2012 Critical Year
- Water supply issues in California
- Water quality monitoring issues
- Irrigation deliveries and new online services
- CCID District and On-Farm Water Conservation projects
- San Joaquin River and drainage issues

Please call the CCID Main Office at (209) 826-1421 to reserve your space.

Critical Year Designation

Continued from page 1

workers will notify consumers when a waiting list is required on a specific delivery system.

Due to the reduction in water supply, CCID this year will suspend its usual transfer of 35,000 acre feet of conserved water to neighboring federal irrigation districts and wildlife refuges. While those annual transfers

CCID Supports Water Awareness Scholarships

The CCID Board of Directors is again calling on the CCID community to help provide Water Awareness Scholarships to deserving high school seniors.

For nearly 20 years the CCID Board has sponsored scholarships for graduating high school students. Scholarships are open to all students who attend school in one of the five school districts within the CCID service area or whose parents or grandparents farm or own land in CCID or other Exchange Contractors member agencies.

The number and amounts of the scholarships awarded each year vary

depending on the donations received. In 2011, five scholarships were awarded for a total of \$5,275. Minimum scholarships are \$500.

Applicants must have a minimum 3.0 grade point average and submit a 300-word essay as part of the application packet. Applications are due by April 19. Winners will be selected by a Scholarship Committee designated by the CCID Board and announced in time for CCID's Water Awareness Month celebration in May. For details call the CCID Main Office at (209) 826-1421.

Conservation Program Funds Available

The deadline for funding requests under this year's CCID Water Conservation Program is Aug. 10. The Program provides 50 percent cost-share grants for concrete lining or pipelining. Cost-share grants for irrigation enhancements such as tailwater return systems, micro-irrigation, dairy related projects and other efficiency improvements are available to cover 25 percent of the cost. Both types of grants are capped at up to \$400 per acre benefited. Additional low-interest loans are available to help cover the farmer's portion of the cost up to \$1,000 per acre benefitted.

All applications must include a project design and cost estimate to be considered for preliminary approval. Funding levels may be pro-rated based on the number of applications received. Applications will be processed and reviewed collectively in time for October construction.

Applications and guidelines can be found on the CCID website at www.ccidwater.org.



Conserving Water While Improving Profits

■ DEL MAR FARMS SEES BENEFITS OF DRIP IN VERTICAL FARMING OPERATION.

Del Mar Farms is a vertical operation created by partners Lee Del Don and Jon Maring that spans from fertilizer inputs to fresh growing, shipping and marketing. The families have been affiliated for more than half a century and formed a formal partnership in 1983.

Jon Maring says the company grows “everything from apricots to zucchini” in its farm operations along the Westside of the San Joaquin Valley, but within CCID, the diverse crop base is largely centered on almonds and processing tomatoes.

Del Mar was an early adopter of drip on processing tomatoes and Maring says the company endured a steep learning curve to overcome the early challenges associated with drip in canning tomatoes.



JON MARING AND SON ZACH MARING SAID ULTIMATELY DEL MAR FARMS WOULD LIKE TO GROW 100 PERCENT OF ITS ACREAGE ON PERMANENT DRIP IRRIGATION.

“We have been in and out of drip since 1985 but when we first started the technology just wasn’t there,” Maring said. “When we first did drip everything was a challenge. We knew drip could increase yield but it was very challenging to utilize. The filters were a challenge, the emitters were a challenge and to work around the tape was a challenge.”

Recently, thanks in large part to advances in education, technology and variety development, Del Mar has overcome many of those challenges, and

has been working toward converting its processing tomato acreage to drip irrigation.



THIS NEWLY INSTALLED 10-FILTER SAND MEDIA FILTRATION STATION WILL SERVE SEVERAL DEL MAR OWNED OR LEASED FIELDS IN CCID UNDER DRIP IRRIGATION.

The company is involved with several projects with assistance from the CCID Water Conservation Program to facilitate the conversion to micro irrigation and now has about 1,200 acres of tomatoes under drip in CCID.

Much of that conversion is now overseen by Jon’s son Zach Maring, a 2008 graduate of Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, who sees drip as the only way to farm processing tomatoes profitably. Drip has helped the farm improve its yields by 10 to 15 tons per acre while still maintaining quality and also improve water use efficiency while simplifying inputs and ground management.

The latest project in Crows Landing includes 800-acres of processing tomatoes. The drip system is designed to apply as much as 3 inches per week to allow Maring to stay ahead of the developing crop and will save an estimated 48.5 acre-feet of water per year.

Aside from a preplant fertilizer, all other fertilizers, along with systemic insecticides as needed, are applied through the drip lines, which means Maring does not have to work around tractor access to manage his inputs.

Del Mar received a CCID 25-percent cost share grant. An additional Clean Water Act cost-share grant through

the Coalition for Urban/Rural Environmental Stewardship helped defray some of the remaining cost.

In addition to improving water use efficiency, Jon Maring said the drip irrigation also helps eliminate runoff in environmental sensitive areas, such as Orestimba Creek.

“CCID has been so responsive to work with and without these programs, it would be very hard to encourage growers to pull the trigger and make the investment to get the system down,” he said.

Maring estimated the latest installation cost at about \$1,800 per acre.

Tomatoes are planted in a double line on 80-inch beds with a single drip line buried 13 inches below ground. Zach Maring says that modern GPS technology has been the key to success for Del Mar’s drip operations.

“Initially people did minimum till groundwork, but with the precision of GPS minimum till is giving way to conventional tillage,” Zach said.

The accuracy of GPS allows Maring to till, relift and shape with such accuracy that there is no damage to tape. The thick 13-mil tape stays in place, even when beds are replanted in rotation to corn, beans or other annual crops.

“Our ultimate goal is to have every acre we grow under permanent drip irrigation,” Maring said.



JON MARING CREDITS ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY, TECHNIQUE AND VARIETY DEVELOPMENT FOR THE INDUSTRY’S MOVE TOWARD DRIP IN PROCESSING TOMATOES.



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A look back...



50 Years Ago – Winter 1962

Sealed bids for gasoline supplies for the year were opened at a February Board meeting. The Board accepted the low bid, submitted by Standard Oil Company of California, for 19 cents per gallon for Regular, and 21 cents for Supreme. At the subsequent meeting, the Board accepted bids from four local auto dealers and authorized the purchase of 14 new vehicles, and trade-in of 13 old vehicles. The total net cost was \$23,000.

25 Years Ago – Winter 1987

The District reached agreement with the owners of Stockton Pit to purchase the property south of Los Banos for \$27,500. A newly designed water safety coloring book, featuring Muskrat Wally, was published for the first time.

10 Years Ago – Winter 2002

McElvany, Inc., of Los Banos, submitted the low bid of \$518,594 and was awarded the contract to construct the Colony Reservoir, the final component of the Colony System Spill Reduction Project.