

# CCID OBSERVER

NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM THE CENTRAL CALIFORNIA IRRIGATION DISTRICT • WWW.CCIDWATER.ORG • ISSUE FOUR • 2014

## Outlook for 2015

### ■ WATER SUPPLY AND GROUNDWATER TOP ISSUES FOR COMING YEAR

Water supply for the coming water year continues to remain front and center for CCID staff and leadership to ensure as much certainty as possible going into next season.

CCID General Manager Chris White said that while it was still too early to tell what the supply might look like for 2015, considerable effort is being invested in monitoring how the Bureau of Reclamation plans to make water supply available to members of the Exchange Contractors, particularly if dry conditions persist. While welcome rains in December provided some hope for improved conditions, White said CCID will stay involved in seeing that sound plans are made to distribute available water.

Due to last year's dry hydrology, deficit provisions of the Exchange Contract have kicked in, which raise the bar for inflow into Shasta for a non-critical year allocation designation. Instead of the usual 3.2 million acre-feet of inflow, 4 million acre-feet will be required to avoid a critical year designation. The average inflow into Shasta is about 5.8 million acre-feet.

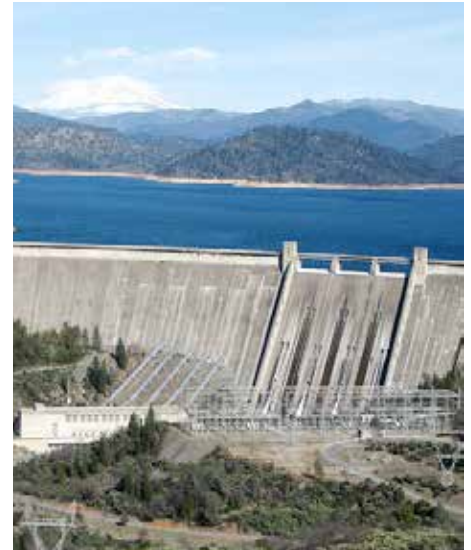
While the chance still exists inflows will

meet that level, White said CCID is planning on another critical year until and unless hydrology improves sufficiently.

"There will be more inflow into Shasta required before we get declared a normal water year," White said. "As a result, we will submit a critical year water budget for next year and proceed under a critical year frame of mind until the weather or hydrology proves otherwise."

"I think it is advantageous for CCID and its landowners to go into the year thinking about possible dryer hydrologies," he added. "We have been in a dry weather pattern for some time."

Groundwater will also be at the front of the new year's agenda for CCID, White said. CCID will be instrumental in compliance with groundwater monitoring requirements within the CCID service area under new state groundwater regulations scheduled to come into effect January 1. In addition, the District will continue to be involved in the development of groundwater ordinances by Merced and Stanislaus Counties in order to minimize impacts to CCID landowners on the west side of the Valley.



DEFICIT PROVISIONS OF THE EXCHANGE CONTRACT THIS YEAR WILL REQUIRE A HIGHER STANDARD OF 4 MILLION ACRE-FEET OF INFLOW INTO SHASTA FOR A NORMAL-YEAR DECLARATION FROM THE BUREAU.

"CCID will continue to be proactive in this area. We have managed and monitored groundwater for many years. Our role is to take a lead in forming a local groundwater sustainability agency under state law and proactively manage our groundwater locally rather than allow it to default to state control in 2017," White said. "We are in a position to be a lead local agency for managing groundwater because we have a sustainable groundwater basin in place and we have most of the elements in place already to manage it effectively."

*Happy New Year*  
from the Staff and Landowners of CCID



2

WESTSIDE COALITION  
REGULATING RESERVOIRS

3

CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

# New Irrigated Lands Program Requirements Underway for Westside Coalition

CCID has mailed Notice of Confirmation and Farm Evaluation Plan forms to 1,800 of its landowners in the Westside Coalition in the first round of requirements under the Revised Irrigated Lands Program.

All landowners within the Westside Coalition boundaries were to sign the Notice of Confirmation (NOC) to be part of the coalition and all growers who irrigate farmland were to complete a Farm Evaluation Plan (FEP) by Dec. 15. Those who do not state their intention to meet requirements as part of a coalition must file individual waste discharge permits with the State Water Board.

About 95 percent of CCID landowners had elected to be part of the Westside Coalition under the revised program. Members last year passed a Prop. 218 vote that allowed for the assessment of 88 cents per acre in 2013 to meet increased costs associated with the program. That amount was increased to 90 cents per acre for 2014 and as monitoring and additional requirements kick in this year, CCID General Manager Chris White said he expects that there will be additional costs, which will be passed onto landowners under next year's assessment.

The two-page NOC must be completed, stating every landowner's intention to be part of a coalition. The FEP asks growers questions about irrigation, fertilization, chemical application practices, cropping patterns and other details of their farming operation.

Westside Coalition members sometime around February can also expect to receive the first Nitrogen Management Plan forms, which are to be completed by April 15 and filed at their farming location. These forms require more in-depth information on fertilizer management practices and risk of off-site movement of applied nitrogen.

A Nitrogen Management Plan Summary Report and additional Farm Evaluation Plan must be completed and submitted to the Coalition starting March 1, 2016 and the first certified Nitrogen Management Plan completed by April 15, 2016. There are extensions on these dates for small farming operations with less than 60 acres and for operations deemed to be in low vulnerability areas for off-site movement of nitrogen.

In addition, farmers in high vulnerability areas for sediment discharge must complete Sediment Plans and file those on their farming operation by September 2015.

If you have questions about these new requirements feel free to contact Orvil McKinnis with the Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition at (559) 582-9237 or Darlene O'Brien at CCID's District Office at (209) 826-1421.

## Construction to Begin on Regulating Reservoirs

Two regulating reservoir projects in the District's South Division are scheduled to begin construction after January 1 with the East Ditch Reservoir construction starting first and the Poso Canal Reservoir slated for later in the year.

Construction on the reservoirs, which leverage \$1 million in Bay-Delta Initiative grant funds through the Bureau of Reclamation, should take all season with the facilities expected to be operational in 2016.

The regulating reservoirs and installation of automated or long-crested weirs will bring water savings and delivery

flexibility to the area and accommodate increased installation of drip and other on-farm irrigation efficiencies.

"Landowners are investing heavily in installing high-tech irrigation systems and we are helping to fund those, this year providing cost share grants and loans to support \$13 million in on-farm conservation projects," General Manager Chris White said. "These reservoirs will help facilitate those conversions by providing more efficient and flexible operation and delivery to allow landowners to order water for shorter or longer durations as it fits with their systems."

# CCID Dairyman Invests in Almonds

■ MATCHING CONSERVATION PROGRAM FUNDS HELP FINANCE CUTTING-EDGE DRIP INSTALLATION

CCID grower and dairyman Dennis Nunes is making his first jump into almonds on the cutting edge of innovation, planting self-fertile Independent almonds on double-line drip irrigation. With help from CCID’s Water Conservation Program, which provides matching grants for on-farm water conservation projects up to \$400 per acre, Nunes has planted his first almond block on 100 acres on a former alfalfa field.



CCID GROWER DENNIS NUNES STANDS IN FRONT OF THE LOG HOUSE WHERE HE FIRST LIVED WHEN HE IMMIGRATED TO AMERICA IN 1969 AND MILKED COWS ON THE LOS BANOS DAIRY. HE PURCHASED THE PROPERTY IN THE 1990S AND LAST YEAR PLANTED HIS FIRST ALMONDS ON THE PROPERTY WITH THE HELP OF CCID’S WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM.

He hopes to plant another 200 acres of almonds on drip at the site in coming years. The five-filter sand media filtration station was built to expand to 10 filters and 15-inch mainlines have already been installed for future conversion. The drip lines have pressure-compensating inline emitters spaced every 24 inches to improve distribution uniformity of applied water. Nunes can run three sets independently on the 100 acres or he can run them all at once as needed, giving him more flexibility to optimize irrigation timing.



THE FIVE-FILTER STATION CAN BE EXPANDED WITH ANOTHER FIVE FILTERS AS NUNES INCREASES HIS ALMOND ACREAGE UNDER DRIP.

He also opted to take a chance on the newer Independent variety, with the hopes of eliminating the need for outside bees during pollination and unifying operation timing, compared to managing pollinator varieties.

Nunes said he and son Dennis Jr., who manages the farming operations, made the decision to “do everything right” when they planted their first almonds. They ripped the soil down to six feet to give trees the best start and invested in state-of-the-art equipment when designing the

The orchard sits on the property Nunes first worked at more than 45 years ago when he immigrated to the Central Valley from the island of Terceira in the Azores of Portugal as a young man and got his first job milking cows. The little log house where Nunes first lived after immigrating to the country still sits on the property, a reminder of where he came from.

After learning the ropes as a herdsman, Nunes in the mid-1980s purchased his first dairy on Ingomar Grade in Los Banos and now milks 1,000 cows of his own. He purchased the property where he got his start in the 1990s and says the secret to his survival has been slow and steady growth and leveraging against tough years by building equity and producing his own feed.

“That’s really what helped us in the tough times from 2008 until now,” he says. “We’ve been in it long enough to know we’ve got to ride it out, invest in our operation when we can and diversify.”

In addition to a 200-head Black Angus cow/calf operation, the almond planting is another step toward that diversification, and Nunes says the CCID program helped him make the considerable investment. He expects to conserve about half the surface water on that ground compared to growing furrow irrigated corn and alfalfa, and says the water savings will help cover shortages on nearby CCID acreage amid uncertain water deliveries in the near future. He also dug a new well on the property as a backup. Nunes has used the CCID Water Conservation Program in the past to help cover the cost of converting open irrigation ditches to buried pipelines and said the staff at CCID work to make the planning and execution of the projects painless and seamless. “[CCID Program Coordinator] Tracey helped us map out the whole thing, get together per acre costs and connected us with the right people,” he said. “It is very easy to get things done.”



NUNES SAID WATER SAVED THROUGH DRIP IRRIGATION WILL HELP COVER SHORTAGES ON OTHER CCID PROPERTY HE OWNS AND OPERATES FOR DAIRY COWS AND FEED PRODUCTION.



THE DOUBLE LINE DRIP WAS DESIGNED WITH PRESSURE-COMPENSATING INLINE EMITTERS FOR OPTIMUM UNIFORMITY OF APPLIED WATER THROUGH THE ORCHARD.





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## *A look back...*



### ***50 Years Ago – Winter 1964***

Miller & Lux, Inc. announced its intention to cease operations in Los Banos, and offered to sell the Miller & Lux Building on Sixth Street to CCID for \$40,000. The Board of Directors declined the offer, and directed staff to investigate construction of its own building on District right-of-way south of the Main Canal, across from the Los Banos Maintenance Shop on Center Avenue.

### ***25 Years Ago – Winter 1989***

After interviewing three applicants, the Board appointed Ann Wieser to fill the remainder of the unexpired term of J.P. “Jack” Bunker to represent the Gustine area of the District. Mr. Bunker, who was highly instrumental in the formation of CCID in 1951, was the last of the original Board members when he passed away in November.

### ***10 Years Ago – Winter 2004***

The District embarked on the third and final phase of the Upper Main Canal Modernization Project, with the Board authorizing its staff and consultants to proceed to secure a contract for the installation and implementation of electronic control equipment and software to automate the canal structures.