



LOWER TULE LEGEND

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DISTRICT RECEIVES GRANT

\$700,000 GRANT WILL COMPLETE WESTSIDE INTER-TIE

The District has received a \$700,000 grant from the Department of Water Resources to complete the construction of the Westside Inter-tie. The funds were made available through Proposition 13, passed by the voters in March of 2000. Also known as the Safe Drinking, Clean Water, Watershed Protection and Flood Protection Act, the bond allocated nearly two-billion dollars to projects throughout California. To date, the grant money has been used for projects ranging from environmental restoration to desalinization to groundwater storage.



scored 6th overall beating out irrigation powerhouses like Westlands Water District and many southern California municipalities including Metropolitan Water District. The scores were achieved through a variety of criteria including cost to benefit ratio along with environmental balance.

Strategic Partnerships

Over the past five years the District has worked hard to form strategic partnerships with a broad variety of groups. The District has entered into water supply agreements with the City of Orange Cove and the County of

Former State Senator Jim Costa was the co-author of the Bond measure which ensured that not less than 40% of the money targeted for water supply reliability projects (630 million) was required to be spent in the Central Valley. The grant money for the District comes from the third and final round of funding available under Prop 13.

High Score

Of the 43 applicants state-wide the Lower Tule River Irrigation District

Fresno whereby the District provides water management services to those entities. Lower Tule has also fostered relationships with the environmental community by making some of its facilities safe havens for various species. These partnerships played a major role in the Prop 13 funding process. The Districts ability to provide water for irrigation and recharge to its landowners was linked to being able to support the programs formed with Orange Cove and others. In doing so the District received scoring points that it would have not otherwise been eligible for.

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2003 WATER RUN

BETTER THAN LAST TWO, STILL NOT GREAT

A wild summer ride came to an end in late August after more than 125 days of consecutive water in the District's delivery system. 2003 started off wet, then went dry, then wet again only to end up below average.

Deliveries to growers began on April 22nd when the Bureau of Reclamation announced that late spring storms dumped more water than expected and water in Millerton Lake needed to be re-

leased. For more than a month the District took water from Millerton on a "take it or lose it basis." In order to maximize the summer water run no water was taken from the Tule River system during the one month period. Lake Success at the Tule River, while reaching its highest level in three years, was never in any danger of spilling. The table below compares the last three years, which were considered below normal, to a "wet year run in 1998."

Under the Heading of Ambivalent Weatherman:

"Expect a 50-50 chance of average rainfall in California says the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration"

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Total Days</u> | <u>Acre-feet Brought In</u> | <u>Acre-feet Sold</u> |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2003 | 120 | 190,000 | 120,000 |
| 2002 | 60 | 103,000 | 73,000 |
| 2001 | 65 | 102,000 | 72,000 |
| 1998 | 345 | 343,000 | 160,000 |

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Inter-tie Project

The Inter-tie project has been featured in detail in other editions of the *Legend*. The Inter-tie is designed to take water from the District's Lateral #4 Canal and deliver it south, intersecting with the District's other three east to west laterals. Lateral #4 was the last major canal constructed by the District and was sized large enough to carry surplus water for the Inter-tie canal. The north to south delivery of water to the other three main laterals will free-up capacity west of the Road 88 alignment, thereby making more water available to those users east

of Road 88. The design capacity of the Inter-tie canal calls for 250 cfs at the head of the canal with the ability to deliver 75 cfs into all three of the other main laterals. Purchase of right-of-way was completed in late 1999 and after reviewing several design and size options final design preparation began in 2001. The first phase of construction was a canal from Lateral #4 to Lateral #3 which was completed in June of 2002. It is estimated the final phase will begin by the fall of 2004 and will take 4-6 months to complete. District men and equipment will be doing most of the work.

Source: Fresno Bee

AG DISCHARGE ISSUES

Regulations controlling irrigation, storm runoff and surface discharges have undergone extraordinary revision over the last several months. **The scope of the new laws are much broader than most people realize and as farmers in the Lower Tule River Irrigation District, your operations may be subject to the new regulations.** While permits for discharge have been required since 1969, agriculture has been exempt through waivers approved by the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

In 1999 the Legislature passed SB 390 which required the waivers "sunset" by 2003. In July of 2003 a

conditional waiver was adopted by the Regional Board which is much more stringent requiring all dischargers to be identified, registered with a watershed coalition and provide regular monitoring.

What is a discharger?

Anyone who discharges water, irrigation, storm water or otherwise into "waters of the State" is considered a discharger. Since most of the Districts canals are tied to natural waterways any drains which go into the canals

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Track the issues



www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb5/

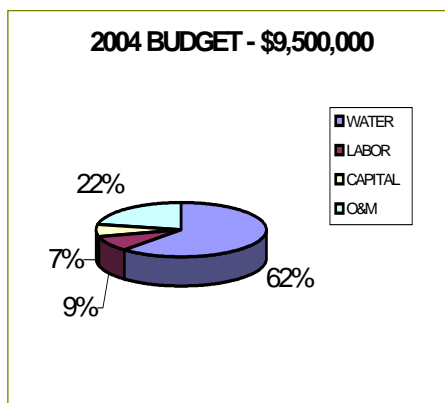
2004 BUDGET APPROVED

Unlike the State of California, the Lower Tule River Irrigation District was able to deliver a 2004 budget balanced and on time. At the October meeting the Board of Directors approved a 2004 budget of 9.5 million dollars. Budget highlights include:

Water—Of the total budget 6.4 million was allocated for water related expenditures. The budget is drafted assuming average supplies with estimated revenues to offset expenses. Of the \$6.4 million \$1.3 million are fixed costs that the District must pay every year regardless of the water supply.

Labor—\$940,000 was allocated for payroll expenses. A ten year analysis of labor costs shows the District is paying less in labor expenses today than it was 5 years ago. The Board attributes the cost savings to increased efficiencies and the joint operations with the Pixley Irrigation District. While costs continue to increase the

overall Budget has decreased the last three years as the District has sharpened the pencil trying to "do more with less."



"When the well's
dry we will know
the worth of water"

- Ben Franklin

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Working together to meet your water needs now and into our future

*The Board of
Directors and staff
of the Lower Tule
River Irrigation
District wish you
and your family a
blessed and
enjoyable holiday
season.*



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are considered a discharge. Liberal interpretations of the rules suggest that even rain falling on your property which eventually runs off to a neighbors land is considered water that is discharged.

The bottom line is you must be informed on this issue. To date all the

landowners in Lower Tule are covered through our membership in the Tule River Association which has participated in a watershed coalition. Developments over the next several months will be key to the future of this issue. Look for more information from the District or through the Tulare County Farm Bureau. Please stay engaged and informed.



On August 8th the District held a groundbreaking ceremony at Lake Success to commemorate the construction start of the enlargement project. The photo shows R.L. Schafer at the ceremonial plunger flanked by numerous dignitaries including Cal Dooley, Nicole Parra, Jim Maples and John Rachford. Construction on the project will commence in 2004.

The *Legend* is published by the Lower Tule River Irrigation District. Questions about articles and items appearing in The *Legend* are encouraged. Readers are welcome to submit information they feel should be included. Both may be submitted to Lower Tule River Irrigation District. 559-686-4716