

LOWER TULE LEGEND

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Division 5

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Division 2

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Division 3

Tony Simonich

Division 1

Gary Fernandes

Division 4

The Board of Directors meets on the second Tuesday of every month at 9:00 a.m. at the District office in Woodville. The public is invited to attend.

2000 WATER SUPPLY

UNDERSTANDING THE SPORADIC NATURE OF WATER OPERATIONS

This year's water supply situation can best be described as an H2O roller coaster ride. What started out as one of the driest years on record turned into a normal precipitation year with most of the rain and snow coming during a six week span in February and March. The unpredictable nature of the rain and snowfall led to equally unpredictable runoff and storage conditions.

Part of the reason for this years unpredictable water deliveries was a result of the change in the way the Bureau of Reclamation and the Friant Irrigation Districts have managed the available water supply. In past years when Millerton Reservoir would be encroached into flood space the Bureau would declare what was called an "obligation period." Under obligation Friant Irrigation Districts were required to take a certain percentage of their contract water supply out of Millerton Lake, typically at a time when they could not fully utilize the water. Another negative aspect of obligation was that the Districts were responsible for paying for that percentage whether they actually took delivery of the water or not. The net effect of obligation was to move water out of the Reservoir in big blocks thereby reducing the threat of spill later in the year. While that worked well for flood control it was often times contrary to sound water and financial management.

In 1998 operational changes did away with the obligation periods and instead the water users implemented the "uncontrolled season" concept. Now when conditions dictate the need for flood control releases an uncontrolled season is declared and any Friant contractor is eligible to take as much water as they want until Millerton Lake is determined to be back under control. When a contractor takes water during an uncontrolled season, that water is not counted against what ultimately becomes the final declaration on the Friant system. As an example, the final declaration for 2000 was set June 1st at 100% Class 1 and 15% Class 2. Under our contract that would entitle Lower Tule to

61,200 acre-feet of Class 1 and 35,700 acre-feet of Class 2. However, during the uncontrolled season months of March through May the District took in 75,000 acre-feet of Class 2 supply as uncontrolled season water. By virtue of our ability to take and make use of that water during those months Lower Tule was able to bring in almost 50% of its total Class 2 contact supply, far more than the 15% that was ultimately declared by the Bureau of Reclamation. Another advantage of uncontrolled versus obligation is the fact that with uncontrolled the District is only required to pay for the water that it actually takes delivery of and not the entire block that would have been allocated to the District under the obligation operations.

In summary, while the uncontrolled season concept does make for more unpredictable operations, it is far better from a water supply and financial standpoint. While it is to early to assess, it should be noted that the District has not needed to implement the \$5 per acre monthly charge since the change from the days of obligation when we were required to pay for water we could not take. As General Manager of the District I can assure you that the Board of Directors and District staff work hard to make the water supply available to you as predictable and easy to work with as possible. To that end we appreciate the willingness of the landowners and water users in the District in cooperating with the unusual nature of this year's on-again water supply.

Water Supply Update

As the *Legend* goes to print is appears that we will have enough water to continue the irrigation run to the 20th of August. We will re-evaluate conditions during the second week of August and confirm or adjust that date as necessary. As always, please call the District office if you have any questions.

DEER CREEK & TULE RIVER AUTHORITY

NEW BASINS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Did you know?

29% of the State's total average annual natural runoff is used by agriculture

The Lower Tule River Irrigation District in conjunction with the Deer Creek and Tule River Authority, has begun construction and re-development of 260 acres of sinking basins. The site is located at the intersection of Deer Creek and the Friant Kern Canal (Road 208 and Avenue 104). The Deer Creek & Tule River Authority is a joint power authority formed in 1994. The Authority members include Porterville, Saucelito, Terra-Bella, Stone Corral and Pixley Irrigation Districts. The Authority began work on the property in 1995 converting 80 acres of land owned by the Terra-Bella Irrigation District into recharge basins to capture some of the abundant Sierra runoff from that year. In 1997 the Authority purchased an additional 100 acres adjacent to the Terra Bella property and began negotiations to acquire another 80 acres of Terra Bella property to complete the complex.

"It is important for the future of our Districts that these groups work together to promote sound water management through these types of projects."

Ben Serafin
President
Deer Creek and Tule River Authority

eration and service. Once completed, the project will involve the excavation of over 100,000 yards of material along with the installation of new turnouts from the Friant-Kern Canal and new inter basin turnouts.

Land Use Agreement

The Authority is in the final stages of an agreement with the Terra Bella Irrigation District to acquire a total of 160 acres of Terra Bella property. The agreement provides for long term right of use of the Terra Bella property by the Authority. In exchange, the Authority members will provide insurance to Terra Bella that would cover the dry year water needs for its citrus farmers. Once completed, the agreement will allow the Authority to develop the entire 260 acres of ground for recharge purposes.

Work Begins with Grant Money

In conjunction with the Friant Water Users Authority, the Deer Creek & Tule River Authority applied for and received \$164,000 in grant money from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). The money is intended to help fund the new construction as well as provide for revegetation and educational opportunities designed to promote the use of the property for habitat and wildlife purposes. It is estimated that the grant money will cover over half of the total construction expenses. In addition to the NFWF grant money, the Authority has in the past received \$80,000 from the Bureau of Reclamation to purchase water for fall and winter brooding and bird migration.

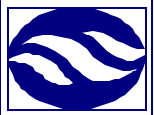
Environmental Partnerships

Following a trend throughout the water community the Deer Creek and Tule River Authority has worked closely with a variety of environmental groups in an effort to foster a relationship of cooperation rather than conflict. *(Continued on page 3)*

- Lower Tule River ID
- Pixley I.D.
- Porterville I.D.
- Saucelito I.D.
- Stone Corral I.D.
- Terra Bella I.D.

DEER CREEK & TULE RIVER AUTHORITY

Working together to sustain our environment and our way of life EST. 1994



Lower Tule Heads Construction Efforts

Most of the equipment and all of the manpower needed to complete construction of the complex is being provided by the Lower Tule River and Pixley Irrigation Districts. The District is renting two earth-movers that are being operated by District employees. The work provided by Lower Tule includes survey, equipment op-



Lower Tule employee Steve Patterson surveys the work done at the Deer Creek Complex

MEET THE LOWER TULE STAFF

The last edition of the *Legend* featured the Districts Water Systems Operators. This edition focuses on the administrative staff that make up the other part of the Districts water department. When you call to order water, check a bill, or simply have a water related question, chances are it will be one of the following employees that you work with:

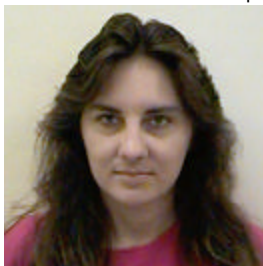
Gary Perez: Gary has been with the District since 1973 serving as the District Watermaster since 1982. As Watermaster, Gary oversees the water department including the supervision of the Districts Water Systems Operators. Gary also handles most of the Districts survey and drafting work as well as the day to day operations of the Success Power Plant. Gary and his wife Becky have three children and are actively involved in Porterville area soccer programs.



grapher but he serves the District in a variety of ways. Wayne spends his mornings in the Water Department taking water orders and assisting Gary. Wayne is also responsible for monitoring the Tule River measurements and flows as well as assisting in survey work and the Success Power Plant operations. Wayne lives in Porterville and spends most of his spare time bowling and restoring old cars.



Rena Norton: The third part of the water department is Rena Norton. Rena has been with the District since 1987. Rena handles all the water billing and data processing as well as assisting with water orders. Rena also handles the Districts human resources and Reclamation Law forms. Rena lives in Porterville and enjoys raising and riding horses.



Wayne Miner: Wayne has worked for Lower Tule since 1974. Wayne's official title is Hydro-

Deer Creek Complex has received state and national recognition as a way to promote both sound water management through groundwater



Moving dirt and applying water

recharge while at the same time providing habitat for a variety of native and migratory birds and land species. In 1999 The Authority received a Certificate of Environmental Achievement from the National Awards Council for Environmental Sustainability for the work done with the National

Audubon Society on the design phase of the Deer Creek Complex. Along with the Audubon Society, the Authority has partnered with Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Waterfowl Association and the Soil Conservation Service for further development of the Authority property and the enhancement of Southern San Joaquin Valley wildlife programs.

In addition to the Deer Creek complex the Authority members work closely together on water management, contract renewal and district operations. The Authority sponsors a variety of programs including the installation of a CIMIS station, training programs for staff and bi-monthly Board meetings between representatives of the member Districts.

Through grant money from the Department of Water Resources, the Deer Creek and Tule River Authority has installed a CIMIS station on the east side of Lower Tule River Irrigation District. water users can access the data via the DWR-CIMIS website at:

www.dwr.water.ca.gov

During the month of June 81% of the water brought into the District was delivered for sale compared to a historical average of 68%

Factoid: More than two-thirds of Californians get their drinking water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay Delta

Lower Tule River
Irrigation District

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

District Fact:

**Lower Tule River
Irrigation District
covers over 100,000
acres and has over
150 miles of canals
and rivers.**

Address

The District's Water Systems Department works hard to monitor short and long term power outages. Power outages of any nature can cause significant disruption to both the District and landowners. Growers are reminded to call the District in the event of a power outage, especially when pumps cannot immediately be turned back on. A reminder that automatic electric restarts are available through your local pump company.

**IMPORTANT DATES TO
REMEMBER**

- AUGUST 8 —BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
- SEPT 4—LABOR DAY (OFFICE CLOSED)
- SEPT 12—BOARD OF EQUALIZATION MEETING

CONTRACT RENEWAL UPDATE:

The Central Valley Project Contractors continue to work toward the completion of long term water service contracts with the Bureau of Reclamation. Since the last edition of the *Legend* the Bureau has responded to the Contractors draft contract with their counter proposal. Though both sides remain far apart on many of the key issues, there has been some movement on a number of points. The timeline for renewing the contracts is growing short with deadlines looming large during the next two months. While it is still the desire of the Bureau to renew the contracts by November, that possibility looks less likely by the week. Both sides will continue to work diligently to avoid another round of interim contracts. The next edition of the *Legend* will contain more definitive information on the contract renewal process.

DISTRICT NOTES

BOARDS TO MEET TO DISCUSS DISTRICT OPERATIONS

At their respective July meetings both the Lower Tule and Pixley Irrigation District Board of Directors concurred that the Boards should meet to explore the feasibility of joint District Operations. The discussions are still in the beginning stages with nothing concrete discussed or established. Given the commonality in systems, equipment and landowners the Boards decided to meet and discuss potential ways to make the services provided to the landowners and water users more efficient and cost-effective. It is premature to speculate on the outcome of these discussions. It was the position of both Boards that if any changes are made it would not be done without feedback and participation from the people that make up both the respective Districts.

The *Legend* is published quarterly 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 Daniel G. Vink, General Manager. 559-686-4716