

Chapter Two

GROUNDWATER BANKING AT THE LANDOWNER LEVEL

Irrigation District Recharge

The irrigation district oversees and manages the surface water for the district, separate and apart for the Groundwater Sustainability Agency. The irrigation district recognizes the surface water supplied is very important to achieve groundwater sustainability and needed for the landowners to continue operations of their farms and that landowners need to be able to balance all of these resources to achieve sustainability under SGMA.

When surface water beyond what is needed to meet irrigation demands are available, particularly during above average water years when those waters cannot be stored and are released from local reservoirs, the irrigation district will maximize the use of these surface waters and divert these waters into the natural waterways, open channel canals, and district owned recharge basins. The surface water diverted and recharged into groundwater into district owned facilities is done to benefit all the landowners within the district without regard for specific credits under SGMA. Additionally, the irrigation districts will continue to optimize the distribution systems to maximize the recharge of surface water while supplying surface water to landowners as efficiently as possible.

Landowner Groundwater Banking

During periods where surplus surface waters are available, landowners within the irrigation district can also purchase and divert this available surface water into landowner owned designated recharge facilities for future groundwater pumping credit. When this occurs, the landowner is allowed to bank this surface water that is recharged to groundwater under the following conditions:

1. The surface water purchased must be applied directly to a specific groundwater recharge basin that meets the minimum GSA requirements for a groundwater recharge basin (see definitions),
2. All surface water diverted to the landowner is required to be metered per GSA metering requirements.
3. Surface water diverted will be credited to the landowner at 90% of the surface water diverted. The remaining 10% credit will remain with the GSA.
4. The groundwater credits can be transferred, sold, or leased to other landowners based upon the GSA groundwater transfer criteria.

Landowner Groundwater Banking from Over Application of Irrigation from Surface Water Delivery during Recharge Periods:

During above average water years, particularly during flood release periods where surface water is available, landowners will be encouraged to utilize this surface water to over apply during pre-irrigations, or during winter periods on their crops. The

Chapter 2: Groundwater Banking at the Landowner Level

benefits of over application of irrigation water will help flush salts below the root zone and maintain healthy soils for the crops to keep agriculture productive. During these periods, any additional surface water beyond the evapotranspiration needs of the crop will be credited 75% for future groundwater pumping to the landowner and 25% returned to the GSA.

For all groundwater credits issued to the landowners from over application of irrigation water, the credits will be available and carried over to subsequent years. The term of the credits will be perpetual. The groundwater credits can also be transferred, sold, or leased to other landowners based upon the GSA groundwater transfer criteria.