

LANDOWNER GROUNDWATER RECHARGE & BANKING INTERIM POLICY

Background

The Irrigation district, is the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for the lands within the District boundaries and is working with the district Groundwater Planning Commission on developing the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). The GSP is required to be implemented by January 31, 2020 in order to comply with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The Irrigation District recognizes there are water management tools, which may be part of the GSP, that would be helpful to the landowners in the interim period prior to January 2020. This policy addresses recharging water at a landowner level.

Irrigation District Recharge

The Irrigation District oversees and manages the surface water for the district landowners. This action is separate from the requirements of SGMA and the District's role in SGMA as the GSA. 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 District 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 Recharge & Banking Credits

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 into a specific

- groundwater recharge basin that meets District requirements, has a dedicated, metered turnout, and, is isolated from the landowner's irrigation system. The District will provide the landowner with a notice that specifies the acreage and location of the facility and that it meets all the requirements of this policy.
2. All costs of establishing and constructing a dedicated groundwater recharge basin are at the sole expense of the landowner.
 3. All surface water diverted to the landowner recharge facility must follow the same ordering and run protocols as irrigation water orders and deliveries from the District, (i.e. 24 hour advance order request, minimum 24 hour run, on and off times, etc.). Refer to the District water policy.
 4. Surface water diverted into dedicated recharge basins will be credited to the landowner at 50% of the surface water diverted.
 5. The groundwater credits will be tracked and accounted for and ***may be available for groundwater extraction by the landowner when the GSP is adopted and implemented, subject to the rules and regulations of the GSP and the Tule River Sub Basin SGMA policies. This policy does not imply any assurance the credits will be available*** and landowners will assume any risk of future decisions under SGMA or determinations of the GSA Board that affect the status of credits accrued under this policy.
 6. All water purchased for groundwater recharge will be purchased at the then applicable District irrigation water rate.
 7. Water supplies available to the District and landowners are subject to the following order of priority: 1) deliveries for irrigation demands 2) District recharge and water banking for the benefit of all landowners, and 3) landowner recharge.
 8. Water purchased for use on lands not identified as a dedicated groundwater recharge basin will not qualify for groundwater pumping credits.

The Board may also decide to apply these provisions for recharge on open ground that will not be farmed in that year but that has not been designated as a groundwater recharge basin. That determination will be made by separate action and on a yearly basis. Those deliveries will also be eligible for the 50% credit.

This policy will remain in place until January 1st 2020 or unless terminated or amended by action of the Irrigation District Board of Directors.