

DISTRICT POLICY ON USE OF RECHARGE FACILITIES

Background

One of the purposes of the Lower Tule River Irrigation District is to enhance the groundwater resources that underlie the District through the importation of surface water. The District overlies the Tule Subbasin Groundwater Basin, which has been defined by the State of California as being in a state of critical overdraft. Since its formation in 1950, the District has imported as much surface water as possible to offset the use of groundwater for irrigation purposes and to replenish the aquifer through direct recharge via sinking basins, river channels and unlined canals. The District's efforts are funded through assessments and water charges paid by landowners in the District.

In 2014, the State of California passed the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), which regulates the use of groundwater in the State of California. Groundwater Sustainability Plans, under SGMA, are to be implemented by January 1, 2020. As part of the SGMA process the District GSA has determined that in addition to the District recharging groundwater on behalf of all landowners, it will also be important for the landowners to be able to recharge groundwater and create groundwater pumping credits.

The Board of Directors of Lower Tule Irrigation District therefore adopts the following Policy:

LANDOWNER USE OF DISTRICT OWNED RECHARGE FACILITIES

In the event that a Landowner has water **purchased from the District** in excess of irrigation needs available for recharge, and the District has available capacity in recharge facilities, upon approval of the District, the landowner can recharge water in the District facilities and the groundwater credits generated from this recharge activity will be shared as follows: 25% of the credits allocated to the District on behalf of all landowners and 75% of the credits allocated to the landowner owning the recharge water. Landowner use of District Recharge facilities cannot interrupt or interfere with District recharge activities.

DISTRICT USE OF LANDOWNER OWNED RECHARGE FACILITIES

In the event that the District General Manager determines there is a benefit to the District because of location or other factors, and a landowner wants to make their property or facilities available for District use, the following terms shall apply to the District Use of Landowner Facilities:

1. For recharge on behalf of all District lands, the groundwater credits generated from this recharge activity will be shared as follows: 75% of the credits allocated to the District on behalf of all landowners and 25% of the credits allocated to the landowner owning the recharge facility.
2. For any infrastructure improvements needed for use of the facility, the following shall apply:
 - a. For infrastructure to be used solely for District purposes, such as a turnout, shall be paid for by the District.
 - b. For Infrastructure to be used by both the District and the Landowner, such as turnouts, berms and pipelines, the cost shall be shared by the District and the landowner on a basis agreed upon by the Landowner and the General Manager of the District.
3. The District may use the facility during a normal surface water allocation period, or any other time that the Landowner is not using it.
4. General maintenance of the property is the responsibility of the landowner.

5. For any landowner who wants to take advantage of this policy, the District General Manager shall develop and provide a memo outlining the terms of use, consistent with this policy, specific to their parcel.

The District Board will update this policy as conditions warrant, based on operational and policy issues identified as the policy is implemented.