

Tulare Irrigation District
6826 Avenue 240
Tulare, California 93274

LOOK INSIDE...

Mid-Kaweah Partnership
Water Supply Outlook
Friant in Fracture Mode
Look to the skies!

Visit us at...
www.tulareid.org



Founded in 1889, Tulare ID was one of the first irrigation districts in California. Its purpose is to serve the water supply needs of the greater Tulare area, a rich and agriculturally diverse region within the Southern San Joaquin Valley. The water provided comes locally from the Kaweah River and is also imported from the Federal Central Valley Project.

Important Dates to Remember

October	13 - TID Board of Directors Meeting
November	1 - 2015-16 Tax Assessments Mailed 3 - National Election Day 10 - TID Board of Directors Meeting 26 - Thanksgiving (closed)
December	8 - TID Board of Directors Meeting 20 - 1st Tax Assessment Delinquent (10% Penalty) 25 - Christmas (closed)
January	1 - New Year's Day (Closed) 12 - TID Board of Directors Meeting



TID TIDINGS
Newsletter of the Tulare Irrigation District

MID-KAWEAH PARTNERSHIP

A unique partnership has been made official which will enable the District to comply with the new Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), which was enacted last fall. SGMA essentially requires that public agencies in critically-overdrafted groundwater basins develop a plan to eliminate long-term overdraft (read steadily declining water levels) by 2040. We have joined forces with the cities of Tulare and Visalia, merging as a three-member joint powers authority to form a new agency and do the things necessary for SGMA compliance. We have identified ourselves as the “Mid-Kaweah Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA).” Countering the appearance of strange bedfellows, our close proximity in the middle of the Kaweah basin, economic dependence on groundwater, and mutual benefits gained from local recharge practices, made this partnership attractive and the idea quickly won the support of the two city councils and the TID board.

Mid-Kaweah GSA
Building Blocks

- Tulare-TID Assessment Agreement
- Tulare-TID Recharge Agreement
- Tulare-TID Joint Recharge Facilities Construction
- Visalia-TID Channel Use Agreements
- Visalia-TID Tertiary-Treated Water Exchange Agreement

All of the above in some part to advance regional groundwater recharge

Board of Directors

- David Bixler
President
- Richard Borges
Vice President
- Michael Thomas
- Scott Rogers
- Dave Martin



J. Paul Hendrix
General Manager

The Board of Directors holds regular public meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 9:00 am at the District office in Tulare

3rd Qtr. 2015

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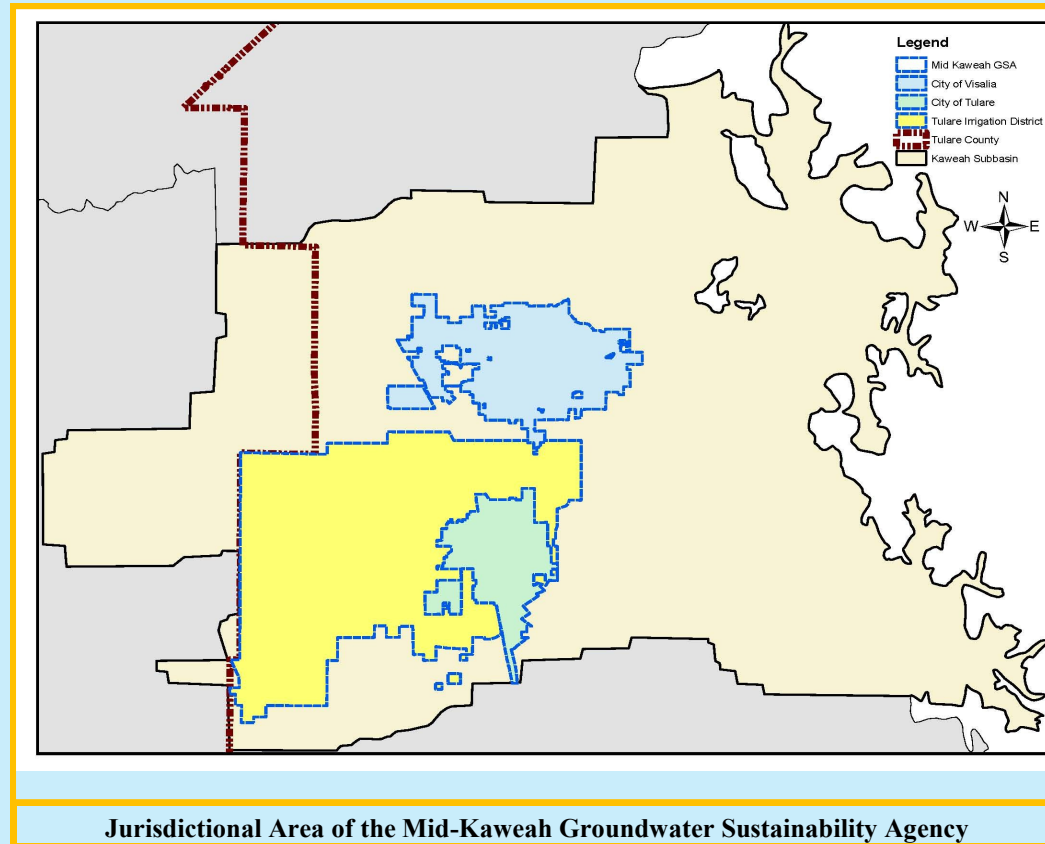
In actuality, the partnership builds upon a history of joint programs and projects to preserve and enhance the underlying groundwater resources that all three share. In many ways it seemed a natural to build upon these proven activities and use them in a way that assures compliance with SGMA. Now, under the newly-formed GSA, we can pursue new and creative groundwater recharge projects with an expanded range of suitable sites for them. Being the three largest water providers in the county, we can pursue a broader range of grant fund programs to fund new activities, and can tap into the political influences of all three governing bodies to garner support. Ultimately, our new GSA will prepare a Groundwater Sustainability Plan that will lay the path forward for a 50-year planning horizon as required under SGMA.

The Mid-Kaweah GSA’s next, and most urgent, task is to reach out to the balance of the Kaweah basin and develop a coordinated plan such that we collectively can demonstrate the goal of groundwater sustainability within the

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SGMA-mandated time-frame. This is what the state expects to see – a collection of water agencies that can show that they are, over time, arresting overdraft, and the ill effects they can cause, within the entire basin. To get there will require a variety of stakeholder outreach efforts, technical discussions and negotiations, and joint agency meetings with Tulare County, Kaweah Delta WCD and other entities to ensure that this coordinated planning will happen with the least amount of confrontation and minimal delay.



Water Supply Outlook



Experts Warn of “Godzilla El Nino” Storm That Could Rock West Coast - ABC News

It’s no news now that the full water supplies developed within the Friant Division are being devoted to the Exchange Contractors at the lower end of the San Joaquin River, a USBR decision consistent with the one they made last year. As of last spring the entire 50,000 AF amassed in Millerton Lake was to be set aside for subscribing Friant districts, but this came with a hefty financial commitment (about \$800 for every AF left behind) to find an alternative supply for the lower river group. With this deal, no releases down the river were to occur, save for historical riparian needs. Late spring and summer rains added another 60,000 AF of water to Millerton storage, and Friant districts anticipated that this water windfall would add to the deal bargained with the Exchange Contractors.

To our surprise that was not the case and, beginning in early July, this water was sent downstream as USBR determined that it belonged to the Exchange Contractors for their exclusive use.

So closes the 2015 water season. With news of USBR and state determinations to forestall Delta pumping into the San Joaquin Valley due to environmental concerns, USBR decisions to leave the Friant Division with a zero Class 1 allocation, and nominal Kaweah River flows, TID farmers have, for the third year in a row, had to depend solely on deep wells to irrigate their crops. We can now only hope for a better 2016 water season, as long-range weather forecasts, embellished somewhat by media reports, herald the arrival of an El Niño winter in which much-needed precipitation could well descend upon the state’s parched watersheds.

FRIANT IN FRACTURE MODE

The Friant Water Authority, once comprised of some 22 water agencies, is now down to 11. The reduction in members comes amidst enormous change in the Valley’s east side, as Friant Division districts cope with the complete loss of water deliveries from Millerton Lake and continued doubts as to the viability of the salmon fishery restoration program for the San Joaquin River. Last fall the Friant WA put themselves through a strategic planning process with the thought of regrouping to better react to the rapidly changing circumstances regarding its water supply security. What emerged was unanticipated, with a number of members withdrawing from the organization. Some left due to perceived threats to their ability to offer staff-level input to the Friant governing board, some because of concerns that the expense budget would weigh heavy on the remaining members, and some just because they saw too much confusion with little clarity for the future.

TID has stayed the course and has remained a member of this long-standing organization. Leadership is as important now as it ever was, and TID’s Vice President Rick Borges remains active within Friant’s board and executive committee. The Friant WA speaks for virtually all of the south Valley’s east side, and defends the water-delivery benefits of the CVP’s cornerstone project, the Friant Unit.

The departing Friant contractors have joined either a “southern” group (South Valley Water Association) or “northern” group (Friant North Alliance), each with the thought that their brand of political strategies and interaction with federal officials will bring hoped-for results in the water arena. One underlying and positive theme amongst all three groups is that they must strive to remain engaged with each other, communicating decisions and activities so that all of the Friant Division might remain unified in regard to future legislative positions and representations before the USBR and other governmental agencies.

We can now report that progress is being made and a forward path is becoming clear for the original Friant WA. With the departure of its former general manager, the search is on for a new chief executive officer to lead the organization, one who will exhibit the political and institutional acumen to aggressively represent Friant’s needs. Friant WA’s budget has undergone some adjustments, and the projected cost increases are acceptable to its remaining members and seen as necessary in light of the enormous challenges ahead. Further, trial memberships to former members have been extended with the hope that Friant’s new level of confidence in its mission will eventually bring back all of the Friant Division water-contracting agencies into the fold. Unless we all head in the same direction, little will likely be achieved for the Valley’s east side and its productive agricultural empire and vibrant population centers.



Look to the Skies!

One of the early challenges in complying with SGMA is collecting information about our sub-surface aquifer and its characteristics. Knowing more about our groundwater system will greatly assist in determining SGMA compliance measures, to and including the implementation of new and innovative recharge methods to take better advantage of future wet years. We feel that better data will lead to better decisions, and a better SGMA compliance plan to be submitted to the state as well. With regard to overdraft, subsidence, and other groundwater concerns, credible data sources will make our locally-developed plan stand the test of time.

We have a unique opportunity to take advantage of research efforts at Stanford University to collect subsurface data in the Tulare region. The data may also be of use to local well drillers in identifying locations and depths for new supplemental deep wells. See the insert in this issue describing this state-of-the-art data collection effort, all to occur right over our heads!