Tulare Irrigation District
6826 Avenue 240
Tulare, California 93274

LOOK INSIDE...

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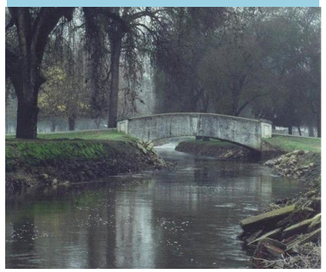
www.tulareid.org



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

January	1 - New Year's Day (Closed) 7 - On-Farm Recharge Meeting 12 - TID Board of Directors Meeting 13 - On-Farm Recharge Meeting
February	9 - TID Board of Directors Meeting 9 - World Ag Expo 10 - World Ag Expo 11 - World Ag Expo
March	8 - TID Board of Directors Meeting
April	12 - TID Board of Directors Meeting

The TID Tidings is published quarterly by the Tulare Irrigation District. Questions about the articles or items appearing in the TID Tidings can be answered by reaching the Tulare ID office at (559) 686-3425

TULARE IRRIGATION DISTRICT
FORMED IN 1889

TID TIDINGS

Newsletter of the Tulare Irrigation District

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

4th Qtr. 2015

In This Issue:

Groundbreaking Event

Pictured from let to right are Don Cordeniz, former basin property owner; and TID Board Members Scott Rogers, Mike Thomas, Dave Martin and Pres. David Bixler

December 17th marked a key milestone in the eyes of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. It was in recognition of TID's Cordeniz Basin getting underway, the first project to be officially sanctioned under USBR's San Joaquin River Restoration Program. USBR awarded $1.9 million in grant funds towards this basin construction and related groundwater conjunctive-use studies. Dignitaries from USBR's Mid-Pacific Region office in Sacramento, including Pablo Arroyave, one of its Deputy Regional Directors, spoke at the event. Remarks were made by locals too, including David Bixler, President of TID's Board of Directors. The Cordeniz Basin is planned to assist in capturing more wet-year surplus water for groundwater recharge, a practice that must be greatly expanded to aid in bringing our groundwater resources back into balance.

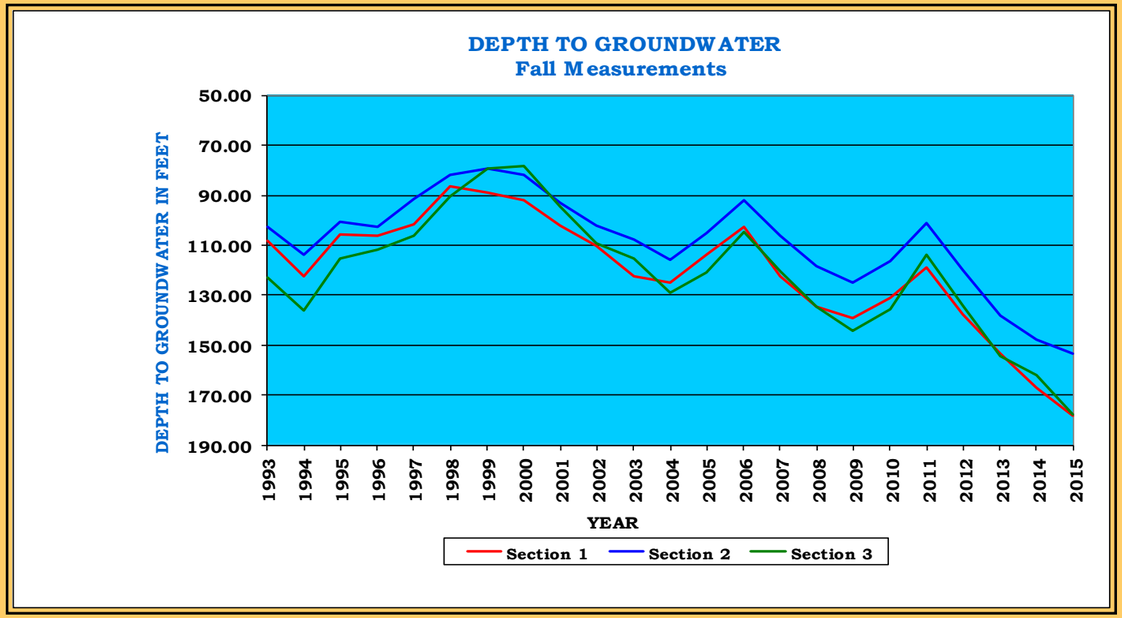
Basin excavation by scraper in tow

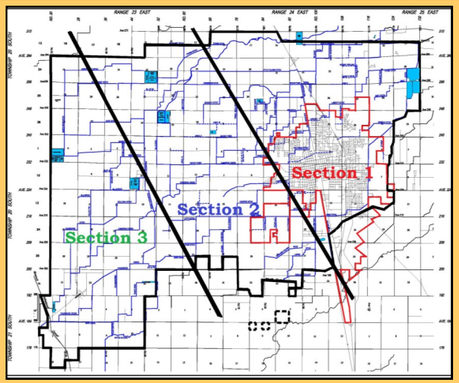
Free Water and On-Farm Recharge

If you haven't seen it in your mailbox yet, be looking for a TID announcement of a pilot program this winter to flood irrigate open ground with surplus ditch water. We will utilize parcels volunteered for the program in the event that surplus flows from the Kaweah River or the Friant Unit this winter exceed the District's normal recharge facility capacities. Contact Aaron Fukuda, District Engineer, for more information at 686-3425.

Groundwater Report

The District's fall survey numbers are in, and the drought-induced decline in groundwater depths across the region continue. The average across the District now stands at 170 feet, a drop of 11 feet from the fall of 2014. Not surprising since, like the last two summers, TID has had no irrigation supplies for its users, resulting in all crop demands being met from groundwater pumping.





	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Section 1	139	131	119	137	154	167	178
Section 2	125	116	101	120	138	148	153
Section 3	144	135	114	134	155	162	178
Averages	136	127	111	130	149	159	170

Looking back to the District's earliest records in the 1920's, and reflecting all of the big changes in cropping patterns and surface supply that have been experienced since that time, the rate of decline in groundwater levels has been just under a foot per year. The overdraft problem of the past here and elsewhere in the San Joaquin Valley had been squarely faced and dealt with, thanks to reservoir construction on the Sierra rivers draining into the Valley and the advent of the big federal and state water projects bringing water here from the northern state. In fact, up until the mid 1980's, the overdraft problems had been largely solved with all of the water brought into the south Valley from the north. The well-respected U.S. Geological Survey has said as much in several of their reports on Valley groundwater conditions, one of which stated "By the late 1960s, surface water was being diverted to agricultural interests from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and the San Joaquin River through federal reclamation projects and from the Delta through the newly completed, massive State (California) Water Project. Less-expensive water from the

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Continued from page 2— Groundwater Report

Delta-Mendota Canal, the Friant-Kern Canal, and the California Aqueduct largely supplanted ground water for crop irrigation. Ground-water levels began a dramatic period of recovery, and subsidence slowed or was arrested over a large part of the affected area."

Disheartening is the realization that, since the mid 1980's, we've seen a drop of over four feet per year, and double that during this recent drought. Why? Three factors come into play, those being increased urbanization relying exclusively on groundwater supplies, expansion of agriculture into previously undeveloped lands dependent on groundwater and, most significant to our region, a reallocation of imported surface supplies to environmental purposes. Reduced Delta supplies feeding the Valley's west side has been offset with increased pumping, and this has no doubt has pulled groundwater from our area out from under us at a more rapid pace than what occurred historically.

With the advent of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), we now have 25 years or so to get this groundwater decline under control and reach "sustainability." There's much talk about our baseline conditions today and what things will look like once we are sustainable. Will groundwater levels be lower looking out 25 years or will there be pressure to stay where we're at as of today? TID's stance has firmly been in the former camp, using the next 25 -year period to phase in solutions that slow down the *rate of overdraft*, yet allow for some degree of drawdown along the way. After all, there's as much as 15 to 20 million acre feet of water still beneath us, likely enough to last a long time and permit plans to be formulated and solutions to be implemented over time.

WELL-DRILLING WORKSHOP IN TULARE

Attendees Listen In At Workshop

On December 14th, TID helped sponsor a groundwater well & pump workshop at So. Calif. Edison's AgTAC Center in Tulare. The educational workshop was conducted by the American Groundwater Trust and featured a number of experts in the field of well-drilling technology and related topics. Perspectives were also given on the status of groundwater regulation by the state and the reactions to this by the agricultural finance industry. Over fifty of TID's growers were in attendance. The AGWT also conducted the well-attended seminar on groundwater overdraft held in November 2013 in Tulare.

The overall theme of the workshop was to emphasize ways to achieve the most efficient and durable well and pump construction and operation to assure reliable access to the region's groundwater resources while complying with the upcoming regulations being promulgated by the state's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

Mid-Kaweah Groundwater Sustainability Agency

The Mid-Kaweah GSA submitted its notice of formation to the state DWR in late September, thus establishing itself as the new agency to comply with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) for the Tulare-Visalia region. Its three member agencies are TID and cities of Tulare and Visalia. A governing board has been formed, and the members are David Bixler and Dave Martin of the TID board, council members Craig Vejvoda and Carlton Jones of the City of Tulare, and council members Steve Nelson and Greg Collins of the City of Visalia. Its early administrative and compliance activities are being handled by the staffs of each agency, and legal consultation is coming from the firm of Peltzer & Richardson in Visalia.

One of our early efforts is to establish a Mid-Kaweah Advisory Committee made up of stakeholders within TID's farming community as well as the urban environs around Tulare and Visalia. Announcements have been posted around the community seeking applications for this new committee. We are also actively reviewing proposals from engineering firms specializing in groundwater resources to assist us in compliance with SGMA mandates. Probably the most important matter in front of us is coordination with others within the Kaweah groundwater basin, since our collective efforts to slow down groundwater depletions are what will be needed to convince the state not to take control of our groundwater management operations.