



SSJID Spring 2014 Irrigation Newsletter

March 12, 2014

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Drought Concerns Take Front and Center in 2014 Irrigation Season

During the worst drought in California, the District's goal is to make enough water available for the irrigation season to assure growers have a successful crop and that the municipal water users receive enough high quality water from the Water Treatment Plant to protect the health and safety of the community.

After state and federal officials declared this multi-year drought an emergency, the Board took the following actions:

- Notify cities that take our domestic water that their annual allotment may be reduced by 20% during 2014, in keeping with reductions to deliveries to farmers.
- The start of water season is Monday, March 17, after being held back from March 3 and March 10 due to recent rain and snowfall.
- Notify Stanislaus County that

the level of Woodward Reservoir will be reduced for part or all of the irrigation season to conserve water. This will cause Woodward Reservoir Recreational Area to close for on-water recreation for this irrigation season, unless announced otherwise. By drawing down Woodward, the District believes it can save 9,000 AF.

- The initial length of irrigations runs will begin at 14/28 days, and could be changed later based on demand and supply. Your Division Manager will work with you if you have any questions or concerns about rotations.
- The District wells will run whenever possible in order to

boost surface water supply.

- There will be no restrictions on "Tier 2" customers during this irrigation season.
- SSJID will rely on 77,000 AF of its conservation water in New Melones.

"Our core business is irrigating crops and we need to deploy every possible step to conserve water for 2015. Our real concern is for next year. The shape of next years water shed is precarious" said General Manager Jeff Shields.

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Drought Conditions have resulted in the closure of water recreation on Woodward Reservoir for at least the nearby future.

SSJID Assists Tuolumne County with Humanitarian Transfer

SSJID and the Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians have agreed upon the terms of an emergency humanitarian water transfer that will assist the people of Tuolumne County to get through an unprecedented drought crisis. 2,400 acre-feet of water are being sold by the SSJID in a humanitarian effort to help the 44,000 people in Tuolumne County have enough water to get them through this extraordinarily dry year. The amount is about 1 percent of SSJID's expected supply from the Stanislaus River.

The Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians of California near Jamestown is acting as the counterparty, providing the payment for the water at a price of \$200 per acre-foot. The primary water retailer and wholesaler in Tuolumne County is the Tuolumne Utilities District. The TUD would be the party that the Tribe will re-sell the water to, at no profit to the Tribe.

The TUD's source of water is from Pinecrest Lake and Lyons Reservoir, which were severely depleted by drought conditions that were fur-

ther exacerbated during the month-long battle to suppress the 250,000 acre Rim Fire in the Tuolumne Watershed of the Stanislaus National Forest. This year's unusually low snowfall along with the loss of water used for the campaign against the fire last year created a dire water situation for the communities of Twain Harte, Sonora, Tuolumne, Jamestown, Columbia and surrounding areas. This condition threatened the reliability of supplies to the Regional Hospital, the Columbia Air-Attack Base, the County Seat as well as other critical local government services.

The County of Tuolumne contains both the Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers and is the source of large amounts of water used in the San Joaquin Valley and Bay Area. However, neither the TUD nor any other water agency in the County holds water rights. Fortunately, the transfer should go smoothly as many years ago the pumps, which will be used to withdraw the water from New Melones, were installed in anticipation of just such a crisis.

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Volumetric Pricing Now In Effect

Important Changes to How SSJID Charges for Irrigation Water

For nearly 24 years, SSJID has kept annual irrigation water rates at \$24 per acre, some of the lowest rates in California. Senate Bill X7-7 (SBX7-7) was adopted in 2009 containing provisions requiring that all California irrigation districts, including SSJID, take actions to measure, report and bill their customers for the delivery of actual volumes of water. The District has to measure the volume of water delivered to its customers and adopt a pricing structure based at least in part on the quantity of water delivered.

The SSJID Board of Directors adopted a new volumetric charge last July, but kept its flat rate charge at \$24 per acre with the minimum flat rate charge remaining at \$50. The volumetric charge was set at \$3 per acre-foot of water, however the Board voted to suspend collection of the volumetric charge until the 2014 irrigation season in order to perfect the volumetric billing process.

Customers received a sample volumetric bill monthly during the 2013 irrigation season in order to prepare them for the change in 2014. The volumetric charge is necessary for the following reasons:

1. Additional revenue from the volumetric charge will provide funding for the extra capital

costs to purchase and install new flow meters necessary to measure and bill customers for the amount of water delivered. 2. Costs to operate and maintain the District's irrigation system increase each year based on inflation and additional costs will be incurred to operate and maintain the necessary new flow measurement facilities and to bill customers for the amount of water delivered.

3. Existing revenue from the flat rate irrigation charges is less than the District's operating expenses for providing the service and will continue to be less even with increased revenue from the volumetric charge.

SSJID's Delivery Measurement Approach

SSJID's volumetric charges are based on acre-feet of water delivered as recorded for each irrigation event by division managers and ditchtenders, who record quantities of water used by each parcel of land. Water usage is determined by the flow rate multiplied by the duration of the water run.

Flow rate is determined on the basis of the predetermined capacities of gates, laterals, and turnouts throughout the distribution system, together with average head during each irrigation delivery. Electronic flow meters are being installed at strategic locations on the District's distribution laterals to

provide staff with an additional reference when determining flow rates. Doppler meters are used to compute flow rates for multiple valve and orifice gate situations. Magnetic meters are used to measure volumes where pumps are used. Downloads from the electronic meters to the District's computer system will be used to double check usage recorded by division managers and ditchtenders.

Charges for Division 9 Irrigation Enhancement Project

While the charges for water now consist of the longstanding fixed charge of \$24 per acre per year, plus the new volumetric charge of \$3 per acre foot, those parcels that receive pressurized water from the District's Division 9 Irrigation Enhancement Project will also continue to pay for pressurization at a rate of \$30 per acre foot for the first three acre feet used on each acre in a calendar year.

As of the 2014 Irrigation Season the growers receiving water from the pressurized system also pay a second tier at \$40 per acre foot for amounts in excess of the first three acre feet used on each acre in the same calendar year. These customers will continue to be billed monthly for the pressurization service and must pay the bills within 30 days of the "Bill Date" to continue receiving

pressurized water.

Additional Billing Rules

Those parcels that are not used to grow crops or do not utilize SSJID water service may be exempted from the flat rate water charge provided the owners of the parcels enter into an Irrigation Service Abandonment Agreement and that there are no outstanding amounts owed to the District on the land. **Your division manager is your first contact for questions regarding your bills. Customer Service Representative Luz Juarez is also available to confirm your account status at 209-249-4608.**

Pay Your Bill Online!

Not only does SSJID have a newly updated website, www.ssjid.com, but we have also added an online payment option. Just go online to our SSJID site, go to District Services, then Billing and Customer Services. Here you will find the "Pay Your Bill Online Here" button.

It's simple...click, and then follow the directions to create your account. You will receive an email verifying that we received the request. Your account will then be linked to your log-on password. Once this process is completed, you will receive another email verifying that you're now ready to utilize the online payment system. Another benefit is that you can log on anytime to view your account.

Our Finance Department can quickly complete this process in one business day after you request this service. Questions? Call (209) 249-4610.

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"All these actions, along with many more considerations, will help us meet the very minimum demands for crop production and drinking water," Shields continued. However, based on inflow to New Melones, we will continue to fall short of meeting our full allotment this year."

"We are counting on our growers to cooperate and assist each other with aggressive water conservation to get through what will be a very difficult year."

The District board emphasizes that our growers must do everything they can to conserve and plan their water deliveries carefully for their own benefit. This includes causing no spills and minimizing tailwater.

2014 Water Department Contact Information

Division 1	Joe Hasten Anthony Podesto	652-9793	Division 6	Jason Wirstlin David Pauley	652-2409
Division 2	Bob Anderson Greg Wallace	652-9784	Division 4-6 Relief	Jeff Hammond Mark Schneringer	
Division 3	Keith Obrochta Randy Sprinkle	652-9775	Operations/ Water Supervisor	Joe Catanzarite	495-8927
Division 1-3 Relief	Jim Schaad Charlie Couto		Assistant Water Supervisor	Nick Fereria	993-9213
Division 4	Rob Shipman Collin Hodge	652-7025	Field Maintenance Superintendent	Ron Strmiska Jr.	993-9769
Division 5	Joe Lourenco Tim Hagins	652-3427	24 Hour Emergency # (209)249-4632		

New Consolidated Divisions and Water Rotations

After much discussion, The Board decided at its February 11 meeting that it would reduce the number of operating divisions from eight to six. Driving this decision are several factors.

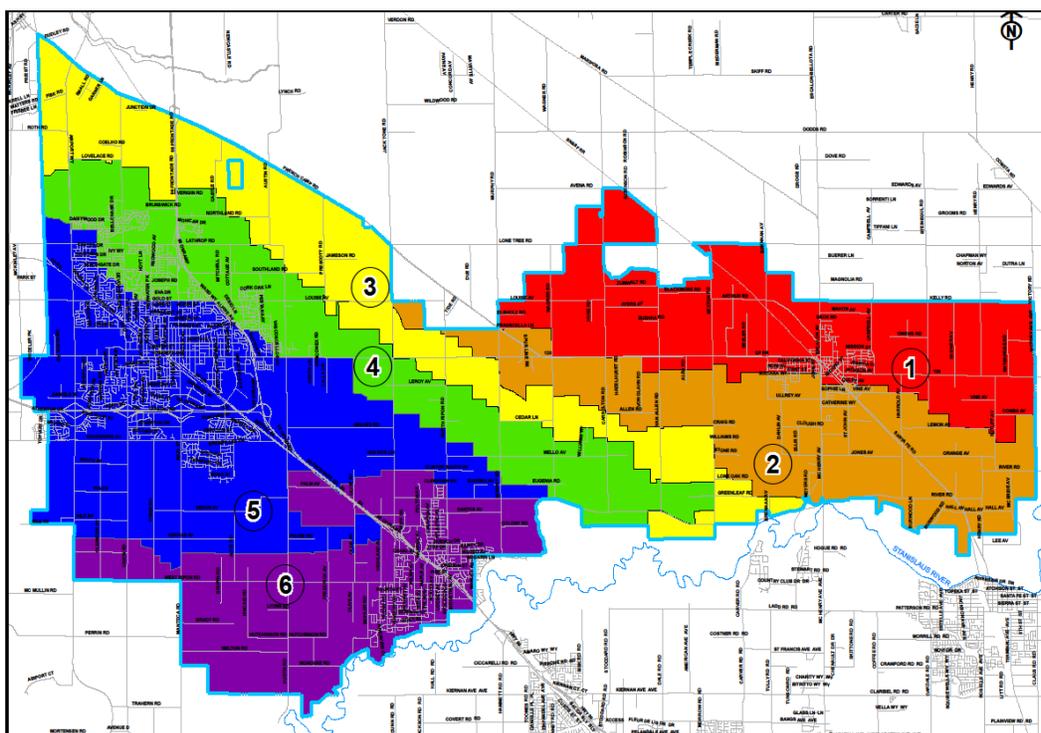
1. The District services fewer acres of farmland due to urbanization.
2. As growers have transitioned to drip, micro and sprinklers, less labor is needed from our staff.
3. Modern technology has enabled the District to automate the gates on the Main Canal. The Main will not be counted as a division.
4. Studies showed that there was an imbalance of staffing and amount of work in some divisions.

No staff reductions have resulted in this consolidation, however

it has allowed the District to keep several positions in the Water Department unfilled. Our contact information for the Water Department is shown above. These staff will do everything they can to make the change seamless, and they

are there to assist you in any way.

The Board also voted for a 14/28 day rotation, until further notice. The Board may consider changing back to more frequent rotations if the water supply significantly improves.





Street Address:
11011 East Highway 120
Manteca, CA 95336

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 747
Ripon, CA 95366

Go to
www.ssjid.com
for drought and
water year
updates

To learn more about SSJID's
plan to provide you with
cheaper electricity, go to
www.savewithssjid.com

SSJID Leadership

Key staff and elected officials
include:

President **Ralph Roos**

Vice President **Robert Holmes**

Director **John Holbrook**

Director **Dave Kamper**

Director **Dale Kuil**

General Manager **Jeff Shields**

Finance & Administration

Manager **Bere Lindley**

General Counsel **Steve Emrick**

The SSJID Board meets at
9:00 AM every second and
fourth Tuesday of the month.
Meetings are open to the public
and are held at the SSJID Head-
quarters located at 11011 East
Highway 120 in Manteca.

If you would like more infor-
mation, please visit our website
at www.ssjid.com, where you
can view upcoming agendas,
approved Board minutes, and a
map of District divisions.

South San Joaquin Irrigation District
P.O. Box 747
Ripon, CA 95366-0747
Return Service Requested

Humanitarian Water Transfer Continued

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SSJID General Manager Jeff Shields pointed out that SSJID and Oakdale Irrigation District jointly own the Tri-Dam Project, which has 22 employees and their families that live in Tuolumne County. The local hospital is where these employees go if there is an emergency and the employee's families have children that attend the local schools and rely on public facilities such as local fire protection.

"This drought is serious. We've been blessed with securing and adjudicating water rights and being able to invest in facilities and conservation projects needed over the years to secure a good source of water, said Shields. "That's not the case for the upper end of our watershed. Our board believes helping the people of Tuolumne County is a moral obligation."

"I understand that this is not a good time to be proposing a water sale while we are at the same time calling on our growers and citizens to curtail and conserve water," continued

Shields. "However, SSJID will have water to assure every grower will have sufficient water to produce a healthy crop and our citizens will have sufficient high quality water to meet their needs."

While the prevailing price for water is currently between \$400 - \$1,350 an acre foot, SSJID officials do not believe it would be appropriate to seek market prices for water that is going to support and protect its own watershed. Me-Wuk officials expressed their appreciation for the water transfer, saying "SSJID has been unbelievably gracious and understanding of our situation. We very much appreciate their assistance during this crisis."

Tuolumne Utilities District has already imposed a mandatory 50 percent water use reduction, and despite existing conservation efforts, predict they would only have approximately a 120-day supply remaining absent the water transfer.