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# SSJID Spring 2017 Irrigation Newsletter

April 18, 2017

## 2017 Water Season Dramatically Improved

**Heavy Winter Storms and Expected High Spring Runoff Key to Plentiful Supplies Available for Growers**

As we entered this past winter, we all turned our eyes skyward with hopes that the weather prediction of a possible La Nina would be wrong. After all, forecasters said they could not be certain and the prior year's prospect of an El Nino did not bring enough precipitation to get us out of the drought. Never have so many people—the entire state of California—been so relieved that this time they were off the mark. Storm after storm rolled through and the wet weather continues into this spring with the same force as those the winter brought. On April 7, Governor Brown announced the end of the drought after nearly five years of extremely dry conditions. Now nearly all of California's reservoirs are recovering and some have even come perilously close to overflowing.

The continuing storms have allowed the National Weather Service to declare this the wettest winter on record in Northern California. The previous record for the wettest winter was set in 1982-83. This year, winter storms have blanketed mountains in snow, flooded urban areas and taxed reservoirs and levees designed to control floods and capture runoff for agricultural and urban water users throughout the state.

The SSJID board started the 2017 water season on Tuesday, March 28, with the season getting off to a slow start due to cool temperatures and intermittent rainfall over the past few weeks. The good news is that there will be no allocation limits this year on the water supply for our growers and Tier II lands will have full allocations as well.

The District would like to remind you to keep your account current and pay your monthly bills during business hours prior to their due date to prevent any irrigation service interruptions. If your monthly bills are not paid within the 15-day grace period after your bill is due, irrigation service will be withheld and there will be no exceptions. Your division manager will not be able to release water to your operation until your bill is paid in

full. The District accepts multiple payment methods including in-person at the District Main Office, via mail, and through online accounts on our website.

"We are all happy to breathe a sigh of relief from this historic drought," said Peter Rietkerk, SSJID's general manager. "At the same time, we have all just recently experienced the extreme swings that California hydrology can produce. At SSJID, we have a responsibility to remember this time and plan strategically to build resiliency and reliability into SSJID's operations and prepare for these extremes, and every point in between. We appreciate our growers partnering with us as we review our long-term water management and operational strategies to protect our water rights and ensure our region's future success."

### NEW MELONES AND STANISLAUS RIVER WATER YEAR

A record wet winter has put us in excellent standing for water content in the Central Sierra snowpack. As we know, spring runoff is the key indicator of

how much water will be available for District growers and the cities that rely upon us for water from the Nick C. DeGroot Water Treatment Plant.

Central Sierra snowpack sensors indicate that the snowpack is currently over 180 percent of average for this time of year. The Stanislaus River average inflow into New Melones Reservoir is approximately 1.18 mil-

lion acre-feet annually. The Tri Dam Project April forecast for the 2016-17 water year is projecting a total inflow into New Melones of 2.5 million acre-feet. That is more than the last four years of inflow combined!

Of the 2.5 million acre-feet, approximately 1,467,000 acre-feet has already flowed into the reservoir. Approximately 1,170,000 acre-feet is still in the form of snowpack and is expected to flow into the reservoir as spring and summer temperatures begin to melt all that snow. With this inflow, SSJID and Oakdale Irrigation District are entitled to a full 600,000 AF for 2017 under our agreement between the districts and the Bureau of Reclamation.

With such a wet winter, New Melones has recovered significantly and is nearly 80 percent full as of April 17. The reservoir entered the winter season only 22 percent full. In anticipation of heavy spring runoff, the Bureau of Reclamation has in-



*New Melones Reservoir in recovery. Photo courtesy of FishBio.*

creased releases out of New Melones to manage storage and accommodate runoff flowing into the reservoir. These higher releases are expected to continue into June or July. At the same time, these releases are being coordinated with Tuolumne and Merced River releases in an effort to minimize stress on local levees in the South Delta.

## SSJID Collaborates with Cities of Escalon and Ripon to Comply with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

Local agencies are quickly approaching a critical deadline for the state's landmark groundwater management legislation. The 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) enacted by the State Water Resources Control Board requires the formation of groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs) in high- and medium-priority groundwater basins and subbasins by June 30, 2017. By January of 2020, Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) must be submitted to the Department of Water Resources (DWR).

Any local public agency that has water supply, water management or land use responsibilities within a groundwater basin can decide to become a GSA. A single local agency or a combination of agencies may also decide to form a GSA by using a joint powers agreement (JPA), a memorandum

of agreement (MOA) or other legal agreement.

The goal of SGMA is to avoid the following undesirable results:

- Chronic lowering of groundwater levels
- Reductions in groundwater storage
- Seawater intrusion
- Degradation of groundwater quality
- Land subsidence
- Surface water depletions that impact beneficial uses.

SSJID is part of the Eastern San Joaquin Subbasin (ESJS) which is listed by DWR as critically over drafted. SSJID, along with the cities of Escalon and Ripon, wishes to maintain local control over governance, responsibilities and protections through the development of the South San Joaquin Groundwater Sustainability Agency

(SSJGSA), whose boundaries are the city limits for both Ripon and Escalon, along with SSJID's boundaries, including the Main Canal and Woodward Reservoir. Manteca has elected not to join the SSJGSA.

"SSJID's board decided that a collaborative approach was the best approach in taking its first steps toward SGMA compliance," said SSJID General Manager Peter Rietkerk. "SSJID, Escalon and Ripon have a shared interest in preserving the use of our local groundwater supplies and keeping this resource sustainable for years to come. We held a public hearing on March 21 and subsequently approved the resolution, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOA), the boundary map and other agreements that will allow us to fully comply with the law."

The collaborative GSA states that

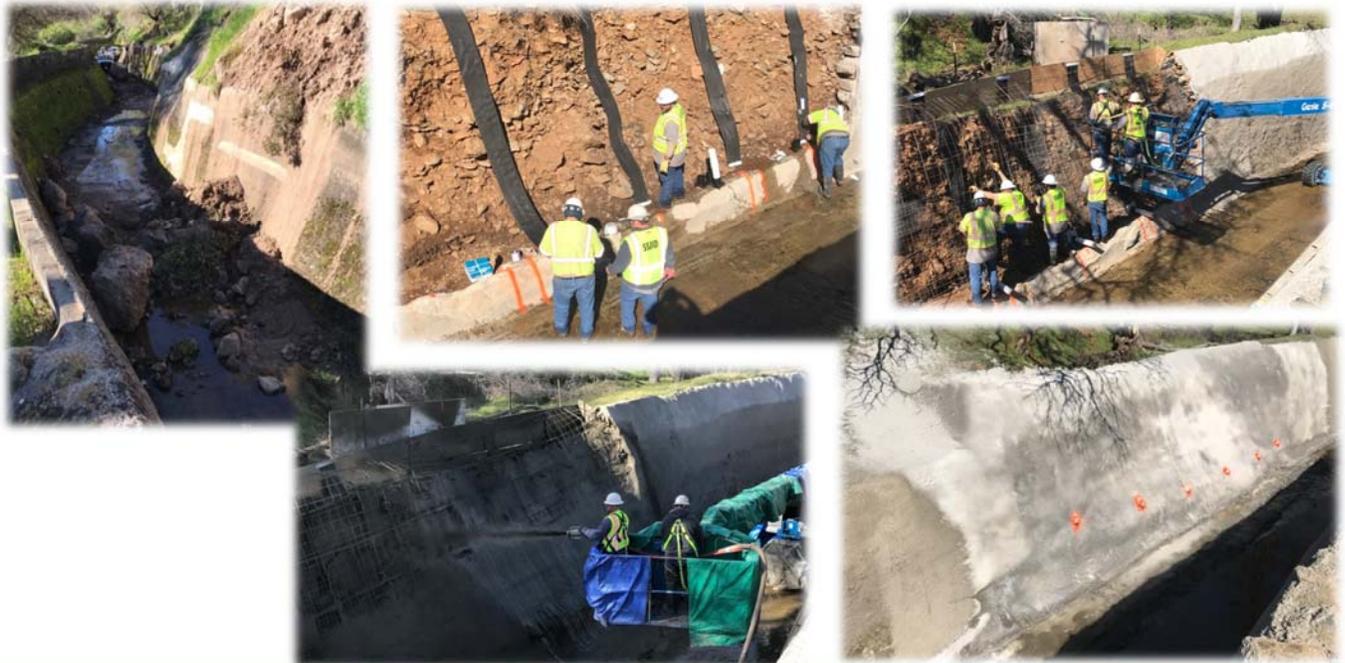
"the Parties shall endeavor to develop a GSP that shall not prohibit or impose conditions upon the drilling or construction of any new groundwater well or operation of the water system within the sphere of influence of any Party."

The MOA between SSJID and the cities includes a five-member governing board comprised of three representatives of SSJID, and one each from Escalon and Ripon. There will be a technical committee consisting of staff and consultants to provide regional coordination and assist in the development, planning, financial, environmental review, permitting and long-term monitoring of the GSP for the local region. Each party individually takes responsibility for implementation of GSP recommendations in their local service areas.

## Winter Maintenance Season Proved Challenging Weather Heavily Impacted SSJID Major Facilities

Late in SSJID's winter maintenance season, a major rock slide occurred on the Joint Supply Canal (JSC) downstream of Goodwin Dam and the weather also caused several lining failures in the Main Supply Canal below the JSC.

Rushing to assess the damage on the JSC, SSJID brought in Condor to survey the area and then district crews worked alongside crews from Ross Carroll to stabilize and secure the slope embankment and repair major damage in time for irrigation season to begin. The damage was largely caused by the very wet winter and unstable rock walls that finally gave way after being pounded by old man winter. Shown here are crews working feverishly to restore the JSC and prepare for service to our customers.



## 2017 Water Department Contact Information

<b>Division 1</b>	Shawn Ussery Ryan Thrasher	652-9793	<b>Division 6</b>	Michael Donahue Mark Schneringer	652-2409
<b>Division 2</b>	Andrew McDonald Bob Anderson	652-9784	<b>Division 4-6 Relief</b>	Jeff Hammond Kristopher Risso	
<b>Division 3</b>	Keith Obrochta Randy Sprinkle	652-9775	<b>Operations/ Water Supervisor</b>	Joe Catanzarite	495-8927
<b>Division 1-3 Relief</b>	Anthony Podesto Christopher Looney		<b>Assistant Water Supervisor</b>	Joe Hasten	652-9888
<b>Division 4</b>	Collin Hodge Rob Shipman	652-7025	<b>Field Maintenance Superintendent</b>	John Briggs	652-2857
<b>Division 5</b>	Joe Lourenco Jason Wirstlin	652-3427	<b>24 Hour Emergency # (209)249-4632</b>		

## Celebrating Retirements and Promotions

As always, they are bittersweet moments when we have to say goodbye to our devoted employees after many years of service and wish them well in retirement. We are certainly experiencing this in 2017 with two recently retired managers.

First is Ron Gee, our shop department supervisor, who worked for SSJID in various capacities for 18 years. Second is Nick Fereria, our assistant water superintendent, with 28 years at the District. We wish them both the best as they move on to another phase of life and hope that they thoroughly enjoy their retirement. Ron and Nick have been invaluable employees whom we are very grateful to have had at the helm of their departments.

Replacing them are James Ferguson, formerly an automotive/equipment mechanic for eight years in the shop department, and Joe Hasten, formerly a division manager for Division 1, who has been with the District since 2003. We are looking forward to their success in these new positions and their contributions to the SSJID management team in fulfilling the District's mission and vision. Please congratulate them if you see them in the community or at the office!



*Ron Gee, retired shop department supervisor*



*James Ferguson was recently promoted to shop department supervisor.*



*Nick Fereria, retired assistant water superintendent.*



*Joe Hasten is the district's newly promoted assistant water superintendent.*



**Providing Water Since 1909**

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Manteca, CA 95336

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P.O. Box 747  
Ripon, CA 95366

Phone: (209) 249-4600  
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## SSJID Leadership

Key staff and elected officials include:

President **Dale Kuil**

Vice President **Dave Kamper**

Director **John Holbrook**

Director **Robert Holmes**

Director **Ralph Roos**

General Manager:

**Peter Rietkerk**

Assistant General 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 Headquarters located at 11011 East Highway 120 in Manteca. If you would like more information, please visit our website at [www.ssjid.com](http://www.ssjid.com), where you can view upcoming agendas, approved Board minutes, and a map of District divisions.

## SSJID Mission and Vision

### OUR MISSION

SSJID provides the utmost value for its agricultural, urban and business community by protecting and delivering vital resources with exceptional service.

### OUR VISION

As a premier organization, South San Joaquin Irrigation District is passionately focused on delivering high quality water and power that are integral to the communities we serve, while leading in innovation and sustaining a deep respect for our history, our employees, and our environment.