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An informational newsletter for
water users and landowners in
the San Joaquin River Exchange
Contractors' service area.

EXCHANGE perspective

JUNE 2020

Water Supply Allocations upgraded to 100% - Non-Critical for the Exchange Contractors

On June 8, 2020, the United States Bureau of Reclamation notified Sacramento River Settlement Contractors, San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors, San Joaquin Settlement Contractors and the refuge contractors that the forecasted inflow to Shasta Lake is currently projected at greater than 3.2 million acre-feet, and we are in a "Shasta Non-Critical" year.

Since about 1994, Reclamation has used the California Department of Water Resources' Bulletin 120 - 90% (dry year) forecast for water supply allocations and operations. Prior to 1994, they used the Bulletin 120 - 50% (median - most likely) forecast for those allocations.

In 2020, from March 1 until the June 6th forecast, we were seeing the unusual circumstance that while the 90% (dry year) forecast was indicating a critical year under the

Forecast updated June 4

Exchange Contract, the 50% (median - most likely) forecast has consistently indicated a non-critical (100%) year.

In their notification, Reclamation said that the "forecast was updated on June 4, showing a large increase in Shasta Lake inflow since the May 1

forecast. The forecasted inflow to Shasta Lake is currently greater than 3.2 million acre-feet, changing the previous determination of a "Shasta Critical" to "Shasta Non-Critical" water year as defined in certain Central Valley Project contracts."



Inflows to Shasta Lake have been updated to greater than 3.2 million acre-feet, creating a Non-Critical year for deliveries to San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors.

"This is good news for our Districts and their consumers, full non-critical deliveries for 2020." said Chris White, Executive Director of the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors. He then cautioned, "We continue to track CVP operations and inflow into Lake Shasta. Inflow for this water year is likely to be about a half million acre-feet less than 4.0 million. According to the Exchange Contract, the deficit gets added to the Shasta criteria for next year. This situation makes a critical year in 2021 somewhat more likely."

Mendota Pool Fish Screen and Control Structure design work delayed

The design work for the Mendota Pool Control Structure and Fish Screen ran into an unexpected delay as United States Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) engineers conducted a “value engineering study” and recommended a proposed fish screen be relocated from the channel of the San Joaquin River to outside of the channel. These facility designs are being accomplished by CCID and funded by Reclamation on behalf of the San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP).

“We’ve spent the last 18 months working against the clock to get the project designed in order to have facilities constructed by the 2025 deadline,” said Executive Director Chris White of the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority.

Reclamation had turned the design work over to CCID and provided \$5.5 million for the work as part of the SJRRP.

“Our design would send 2,000 cubic feet per second of water through a V-shaped fish screen and into the Mendota Pool,” White explained. “Part of Reclamation’s review process is to have their engineers conduct a ‘value engineering study’ to determine whether there are any areas in which to be more efficient, reduce risk and save money.”

“Their engineers concluded that moving the fish screen north and outside the main channel to an area next to the river had the potential to save money,” he added. “In response to this suggestion, we spent an additional three months looking at the potential advantages from the relocation and concluded that there really wasn’t any money or time to be saved.”

We are continuing to confer with Reclamation on the location of the facility. They see advantages of moving the structure north to expedite the overall schedule of the construction of other facilities needed by the SJRRP, such as a syphon under the river to maintain service to the Columbia Canal Company. We will re-

solve this issue this month (June) but it will cost us anywhere from a 3 to 9 month delay in the schedule.”

“We are looking at the construction beginning now in 2022 and the completion of the facility will take two years,” White said.



CCID’s design of the Mendota Pool Control Structure as part of the San Joaquin River Restoration Program runs into delay over positioning.

It has yet to be determined whether Reclamation will oversee the construction or authorize the Exchange Contractors to fill that role.

Sack Dam

Another portion of the River Restoration Program is the design and construction of a fish screen and fish passageway at Sack Dam. The project has had its “stop’s and go’s.”

“Subsidence in the area has created an additional challenge to our design work,” said White. “We are working through it and trying to determine how subsidence will affect the fish screen.”

White noted that there are several options to the design of the fish screen and communications continue with all parties involved, including SJRRP.

Despite virus delays, Del Puerto Reservoir construction expected to begin next year

Due to Covid-19 concerns, a YouTube video presentation replaced a public meeting scheduled in Patterson to review details and progress-to-date on the proposed Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir. For those who are interested in seeing the video and learning more about the project they can visit the project website at www.delpuertocanyonreservoir.com.

"It was unfortunate that the public meeting was canceled due to Covid-19 concerns," commented Executive Director Chris White of the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority. The Authority, along with Del Puerto Water District, are leading the efforts to develop south of the Delta water storage in western Stanislaus County.

"We are still committed to providing information to the public and took the extra steps in developing the YouTube video," White added.

*"Reclamation is pleased to partner
with Del Puerto Water District
and the Exchange Contractors
on this beneficial water supply project"*

Ernest Conant, USBR

According to White, the initial public comment period for the project's Environmental Impact Report closed in January. After a review of the submitted comments, the targeted release of the final version of the EIR is in the July time frame.

"Reclamation is pleased to partner with Del Puerto Water District and the Exchange Contractors on this beneficial water supply project," said Ernest Conant, Bureau of Reclamation regional director. "The project would bring much needed water supply reliability to south-of-delta agriculture and wildlife refuges. It is a win-win for the region."

"Our target is to complete the environmental process and finalize the feasibility report to submit it through Reclamation to the Department of Interior in July," White explained. "We are hopeful that the Interior Secretary will make a finding of consistency on the feasibility report by November of this year."



Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir is located west of the City of Patterson.

The finding is a vital step in achieving funding for potential federal benefits under the Water Improvements Infrastructure for the Nation (WIIN) Act.

"Covid-19 presented some challenges to us during the process but everyone worked together to keep the project moving forward," he added. "Once the feasibility report is approved, we will qualify for up to 25 percent funding for the project."

The timetable moving forward for the 82,000 acre-foot reservoir calls for the design work to be completed in early 2021 and construction to begin by the end of 2021. White estimates that construction will take six to eight years.

"The value in the reservoir is the reliability it provides to our farmers in a water-short year," White emphasized. "To be able to conserve water during non-critical years for later use during critical years is immeasurable."

White indicated that a "completed-Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir will also provide benefits to our consumers as we comply with California's new groundwater law, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014, helping us to rely on groundwater less in critical years."

Gov. Newsom wrote in a March 13 letter of support to Interior Secretary David Bernhardt that the proposed reservoir is "an important component of the state's innovative efforts to build a more resilient, sustainable water system for the future. I respectfully ask you to consider this project for WIIN Act funding."



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Patty retires after 25 years with Exchange Contractors

After more than 25 years of dedication and service to the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority, Patty Baldini retired as Office Assistant on May 31, 2020.

“Patty did a tremendous job for the Exchange Contractors,” noted Executive Director Chris White. “Most often when our members or the public would call our office, Patty would be the one who answered the phone and greeted the caller with a warmth of pleasantness and professionalism.”

Patty developed a fondness in working with local schools as part of the Ag In the Classroom program. She frequently found herself in the classroom and informing the students about where the water comes from for our farmers to grow the crops that they eat and the importance of water in growing those crops.



Patty Baldini shares with children in the classroom.

Not only did Patty speak with the students, she also secured ag education material for teachers looking for information to teach the lessons in the classroom.

Patty's retirement plans include moving to Idaho with her husband, John, and spending more time with their grandchildren.