



SPRING 2017

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

# EXCHANGE perspective

April 2017

## Unified effort increases in push to build Temperance Flat Dam

**F**our water agencies pledged their cooperation to boost valley water supplies by working together to build Temperance Flat Dam. The agencies made their proclamation during a March 31 press conference at Fresno City Hall.

Joining the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority in signing a letter detailing the unified front were the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority, Friant Water Authority and San Joaquin Valley Water Infrastructure Authority.

"If the supply of food and fiber that is produced in the Central Valley and enjoyed by millions around the world is to continue, then a dependable water supply must be developed," said Executive Director Steve Chedester of the Exchange Contractors Water Authority in a joint press release.

"California's forefathers provided a foundation in water that has benefited us through the years and construction of Temperance Flat Reservoir enables us to build on that valuable history and provide an essential portion of the needed water supply that will benefit cities, disadvantaged communities, farms, groundwater recharge and responsible environmental benefits," he continued.

Signing a letter to the California Water Commission, the four agencies agreed to

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## 9 maf in Shasta results in a 100% water delivery

**A** wet winter that California has not seen in years has resulted in more than 9 million-acre-feet of water in Lake Shasta and a 100 percent supply of water to the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Authority.

ESA regulations in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta could reduce export pumping in late April and May but flood flows from the San Joaquin and Kings Rivers are expected to offset any shortfall in deliveries from the Delta.

"Our deliveries at 100 percent are pretty assured," said Steve Chedester, Executive Director. "Export pumping

from the Delta could be reduced by the biological opinions in April and May. Fortunately for this year, the San Joaquin and Kings River flows will 'mask' the export reductions from the regulatory biological opinions."

The current use of flows from the rivers is reminiscent of 1983 when water was taken from the rivers for a total of 14 consecutive months, stretching into the following year.

"We expect to be utilizing river flows well into the summer," Chedester said.

"While it appears that the effects of

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# Los Banos Creek---

*First of three projects completed to increase water supply*

**T**he first of three projects that are expected to provide an additional 13,000 acre-feet to local farmers and increase groundwater storage has neared its completion.

Phase One, the diversion of flood flows from Los Banos Creek to the Delta Mendota Canal is all but completed, according to Chris White, General Manager of the Central California Irrigation District that has played a lead role in completing the project.

"The existing reservoir on the creek has been used for flood control," he explained. "Previously the flood waters would flow into the Grasslands Water District and all but destroy the creek channel. Now we can capture those flood flows and send them to the canal and the increased supply can be available within 30 days.

"This is a unique water supply project that required extensive environmental documentation to get us to the point we are today," White added.

The project is expected to yield 5,000 acre-feet per year.

In addition to the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority, partners in the building phase of the project include San Luis Water District and Grasslands Water District.

## Additional projects

White explained that there are two more projects on the drawing board. The first would construct a half-mile pipe-

## Water supply...

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the past years of drought have diminished, the regulations governing water deliveries are still threatening," added Chedester. "It will take action at the federal level to rewrite those regulations that are currently causing instability in allocations to CVP water contractors. We are looking for assistance from our elected lawmakers."



*Infrastructure projects to Phase One of diverting flood flows to the Delta Mendota Canal have been completed. Installation of a gate to the Delta Mendota Canal is maneuvered (left) as part of the delivery portion of the project.*

line to connect to an existing pipeline from the California Aqueduct to the Los Banos Creek detention dam. The existing facilities do not connect to the creek and the future pipeline would accomplish that task, resulting in more water becoming available for use.

"We could be looking at an extended time period to weave our way through environmental documentation in order to get to the permitting phase," White estimated. "Once it is completed the potential yield could be as high as 8,000 acre-feet on an annual basis."

The last project, increased groundwater banking along Los Banos Creek, could begin before the pipeline construction commences.

"Once we receive the green light for the groundwater banking, we will begin the process," said White. "There is a potential to store 25,000-30,000 acre-feet into the Los Banos Creek aquifer."



# Legislation sought for groundwater efforts continues path toward Governor's desk

**T**he path to complying with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014 has taken a slight twist for local interests. Part of the legislative requirements is the formation of a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA), which has been accomplished. But in response to concerns expressed by the State Water Resources Control Board, legislation is now being sought to form a local district for groundwater purposes.

"Our GSA was approved by DWR in March 2016 and several months later the Water Board told us that our effort could be challenged," explained Steve Chedester, Execu-

tive Director of the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority.

"Senate Bill 372 has been introduced in the State Legislature by Senator Anthony Canella to establish a groundwater sustainability agency to withstand potential challenges," he added. "Assemblyman Adam Gray is expected to usher the legislation through the Assembly."

"SB 372 has already begun its movement through the Legislature in what we expect to reach the governor's desk for his signature."

## Temperance Flat Dam...

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work with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and "contribute equally on staff, funding, and other resources to support the Temperance Flat project."

The proposed dam would have a capacity of 1.3 million acre feet of water in a reservoir several miles upstream of Friant Dam.

"This is a significant step in moving forward to develop reliable water supplies for water users in the San Joaquin Valley," added Chedester.

The San Joaquin Valley Water Infrastructure Authority has formed a Joint Powers Agreement to move forward an application for funding for completing the study and planning portion of the proposed dam. Joining the Authority in the JPA effort are the counties of Fresno, Madera, Tulare, Kings and Merced. Several cities on both the east and west side of the valley are also on board, as well as the Table Mountain Rancheria. The Exchange Contractors are also a part of the JPA.

"Proposition 1 was passed by the voters in 2014 to provide funding for water quality, supply, treatment and storage projects," JPA Executive Director Mario Santoyo explained. "The measure sets aside \$7.12 billion in general obligation bonds for state water supply infrastructure projects, which we have identified for partial funding for Temperance Flat."



***High flows along the San Joaquin River below Friant Dam are pictured with submerged picnic tables. The proposed Temperance Flat Dam would enhance management of the high water flows and provide supply benefits to water users in the San Joaquin Valley.***

The deadline for submitting a funding application to the Water Commission is August 2017.

"Part of the application challenge was to coordinate Temperance operations with Millerton Reservoir and San Luis Reservoir," said Chris White, Central California Irrigation District General Manager, who serves as chairman of the JPA's technical advisory committee. "We looked at various operational opportunities from a lot of different directions to determine a final plan proposal."

In addition to water supply benefits to the four authorities, the committee has also worked to develop public benefits such as recreation, power, enhanced flood protection and environmental benefits.



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## ***Water allocations prove water system broken***

*By Steve Chedester  
Executive Director*

It has been a “yo-yo” year for farmers and their water districts in projecting how much water would be delivered through the federal Central Valley Project. An April 11 announcement by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation finally included a 100 percent delivery for water in 2017 to ag contractors south of the Delta and along the west side of the San Joaquin Valley. The reaction by these water users was mixed after an agonizing process that saw farmers debate whether they would be able to plant all their fields or decide to leave some fields fallow because of the uncertainty of how much water they would receive.

Reclamation announced on February 28 that its contractors in the Sacramento Valley and the east side of the San Joaquin Valley would receive 100 percent of planned deliveries. West side contractors were not included in the initial announcement and it was not until March 22 that west side contractors were told to expect 65 percent of their scheduled deliveries. That number finally climbed to 100 percent in April.

In a year of water abundance that we are now experiencing, the failure to improve delivery systems and increase water storage in our state is clearly revealed. The result is that farmers who depend on water to grow the crops sought by consumers were left with a bag full of unknowns. All California water users should insist that action be taken to fix a broken water system that fails to adequately serve our state, which is one reason we have joined and supported the efforts of the San Joaquin Valley Water Infrastructure Authority JPA. Construction of Temperance Flat Dam should enhance deliveries to all water users in our valley and send us on the way to fix a broken water system.

We will also need assistance on the federal side of our water system through new legislation and even a change in how some regulations are enforced in order to improve the water supply that we all need.