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

EXCHANGE perspective

OCTOBER 2020

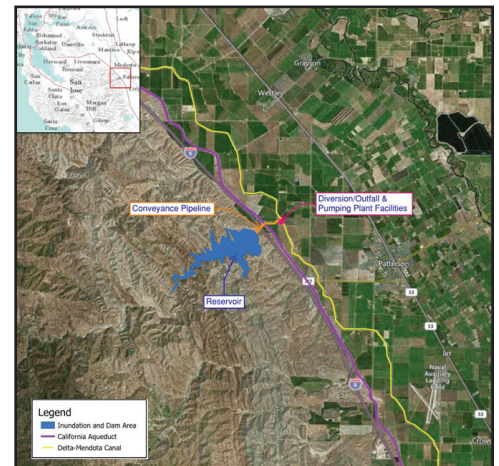
Report on the advancement of Del Puerto Canyon project

Several parallel efforts are being brought to conclusion in the development of the Feasibility Report and environmental documentation needed for the 82,000 acre-foot Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir project which will be presented to the Exchange Contractors Board of Directors and the U.S. Department of Interior in Washington, D.C.

"That focus has seen coordinated efforts at multiple levels going on at the same time in order to complete the Feasibility Report," explained Chris White, Executive Director of the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority.

Those efforts include:

- Geotechnical work to determine soil and groundwater conditions, and the location and depth of bedrock.



- Land surveying
- Seismic analysis of the site.
- The completion of 10-30 percent design level of:
 - The Delta Mendota Canal pumping

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\$800K grant secured for next phase of recharge project expansion

What started as a 20-acre project, the Orestimba Creek Groundwater Recharge and Recovery Project is being increased to 80 acres.

Central California Irrigation District and the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority are working with Del Puerto Water District to make the

recharge project expansion a reality.

"CCID and Del Puerto have achieved a \$800,000 grant from the Department of Water Resources to fund the next phase of the project," said Executive Director Chris White of the Exchange Contractors. "They are also working to obtain additional funds from DWR's Integrated

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Storage of water in Los Banos Creek Detention Dam expected by year's end

The cooperative work between the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority, Central California Irrigation District, San Luis Water District (SLWD), and Grassland Water District is expected to pay off with increased water flows into the Los Banos Creek Detention Dam that could eventually be used by farmers and refugees.

"Once a temporary permit was attained from the State Water Resources Control Board, construction bids for the project were obtained by the SLWD. The project was awarded to Rain for Rent and construction began on the project late September," said Executive Director Chris White.

"As of October 5, 2020, construction looks to be about three-fourths completed and if all goes as planned, we should have a quantity of water stored in the reservoir by the end of November 2020," White added. "This is another key element of our Water Resources Plan to provide for facilities to store water in a non-critical water year for use in a critical year; we are basically helping to protect 2021 if next year proves to be critical.

Plans call for water to be moved from the San Luis Canal (California Aqueduct) via a pipeline from SLWD's pumping plant #8.



Pipeline leading to Los Banos Creek Detention Dam.

Historically, SLWD, Central California Irrigation District and Grassland Water District have delivered surface water from Los Banos Creek to lands riparian to the Creek. This water has been used for crop production, maintenance of wetlands, waterfowl habitat and vegetation growth.

Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir...

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plant and the conveyance system leading to the reservoir.

- The main dam and two saddle dams.
- The Del Puerto Canyon Road realignment and relocation of the existing power transmission lines.
- Earthwork quantities and other related facilities.

Another major effort has been working toward the completion of the Environmental Impact Report that was presented and certified by both Boards of Directors of the Exchange Contractors and Del Puerto Water District on October 21.

"All of the above work is necessary to complete and submit the Feasibility Report to the Great Basin Region of the Bureau of Reclamation (formerly the Mid-Pacific Region)," added White.

The Exchange Contractors and Del Puerto Water District have also commissioned the Bureau of Reclamation to complete the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the required federal environmental document. The EIS is expected to be completed by February 2021.

"A final step in completing the Feasibility Report was the building and developing of a numeric operations model of the water supply benefits of the project and any potential impact to Central Valley Project operations," he said.

"Once the Feasibility Report is finalized at the Great Basin Region offices, the Report will be advanced to the Department of Interior in Washington, D.C.," said White. "We expect this step to be taken very soon."

The Exchange Contractors are working with Del Puerto Water District to design and possibly construct the 82,000 acre-feet reservoir. Construction of the reservoir could begin in 2021.

Farm use of nitrogen likely to be affected by new regulations

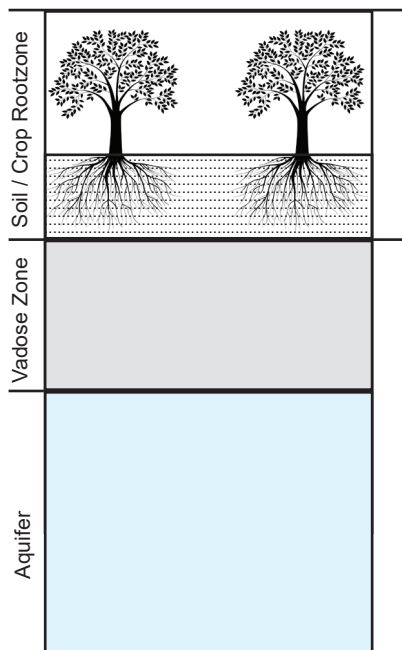
The development of a Groundwater Protection Formula and its associated Values and Targets may not have an immediate effect on farmers applying nitrogen in the Exchange Contractors service area, but those impacts could be felt as soon as two years.

David Cory, consultant to the Exchange Contractors for drainage related activities, explained at the Aug. 7 Exchange Contractors Board meeting that Irrigated Lands Coalitions throughout the Central Valley recently submitted a “jointly developed groundwater protection formula” to the Regional Water Quality Control Board. The formula will be used in developing Groundwater Protection Values for nitrogen management as part of the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program.

“This process has the potential to dramatically impact farmers and their use of nitrogen,” he said.

“After the GWP Values are computed, Coalitions will develop Groundwater Protection Targets for each township in high vulnerability areas,” he added. “Developing the methodology for arriving at the Targets is a key to how this new regulation will affect farmers.”

The GWP value will be compared to the GWP Target on a township scale to determine if growers must reduce nitrogen discharges in any given township, according to Cory. If the Value is higher than the Target, Coalitions will incorporate new strategies in their Groundwater Quality Management Plan to reduce nitrogen loading in the township.



GWP Values

1. Calculated using the approved GWP Formula
2. Results in Township Leaching Estimates

GWP Targets

1. To be developed based upon township specific conditions
2. Designed to help protect groundwater quality

He further explained that the purpose of the new regulation is to identify and prevent applied nitrogen from moving below the root zone through the vadose zone and into the aquifer.

“It will probably be another six months before the Values are identified and another year before the Targets are developed,” Cory concluded.

Orestimba Creek Recovery and Recharge ---\$800K grant secured

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Regional Water Management (IRWM) grant program.”

White explained that Steve Chedester, Director of Policy and Programs for the Exchange Contractors, will

Project goal is to provide growers with increased surface water supply

assist in obtaining the necessary environmental work and

proposals relating to the project’s engineering for the next phase.

Again, a major goal of this water resources project is to provide growers with increased surface water supply during critical years that is stored during wet or normal water years. Dedicated wells would return the water into the Delta-Mendota Canal or the Outside Canal during dry years.

The project is located in western Stanislaus County, about 3 miles west of the community of Newman.



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Efforts focus on dry year reliability

*By Chris White
Executive Director*

We are using the lessons learned from the 2014 and 2015 climate and regulatory drought to develop policies, programs and projects designed to provide dry year reliability for our farmers.

The four member entities have continued, if not accelerated, their commitment through low interest loans and grants for on-farm water conservation. In addition, they have redoubled their efforts to modernize distribution systems, line canals, and install regulatory reservoirs and return systems; becoming ever more efficient in overall water efficiency with the net benefit of, among other things, reducing the need for the use of groundwater during non-critical years and preserving that supply for future critical years as we experienced in 2014 and 2015.

We are also working hard to develop projects, programs and exchanges to enable the entities to store conserved water in non-critical years for use in critical

years to supplement water supplies. This is especially important today because of the less than average inflows this year into Lake Shasta. The Exchange Contract criteria in 2021 to receive a 100% allocation has been elevated, increasing the likelihood of a critical year for us. Due to the diligence of our four member entities, many of the needed programs are in place, or are being tested.

Excitingly, this fall, we are bringing on Los Banos Creek Detention Dam project and have developed exchange and banking partners which will help next year if the Exchange Contractors are declared critical. In addition, we are pressing hard on future projects such as the Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir Project and recharge and recovery projects to further provide dry year water supply reliability for our growers and the region.

Thank you and we will continue to provide updates as these projects develop.