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

# EXCHANGE perspective

MAY 2021

## 2021 water supply outlook

**T**he 2020 water year experienced a "roller coaster" as projected deliveries went from a non-critical year allocation to a critical designation and eventually back to a non-critical 100 percent allocation.

As of February 12, 2021, the United States Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) notified the Exchange Contractors that our current allocation is Critical (75%) as defined under our contract.

Expectations for the current year, after a dry start to the water year which began in October 2020, continue on the dry side. A series of late January storms that swept through Northern California helped to increase the snow depths and reservoir inflow levels but more would be needed to provide for a non-critical year allocation this year.

The January storm was "cold" and deposited significant amounts of snow in the reservoir's watershed but not much water runoff into Shasta Lake. Subsequent storms were warmer and of less intensity providing for only modest inflow increases in February.



**Water from Shasta Reservoir will flow to local orchards.**

"This year, 3.9 million-acre-feet accumulated full natural flow into Shasta Lake is needed to ensure a Non-Critical Year for the Exchange Contractors in 2021," said Executive Director Chris White of the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority, and as of early

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### *Water Resources Plan projects moving forward*

Several water resources plan projects are posed for further development as the 2021 calendar year moves forward.

The feasibility study for Del Puerto Canyon Reservoir, a proposed 82,000-acre-foot reservoir west of

Patterson, received a Finding of Feasibility from the Secretary of Interior on December 31, 2020, which clears a major hurdle for the project. "The finding by the Secretary is a requirement to qualify for up to 25% matching funds from the WIIN Act, said Executive Director Chris White of the

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# River Restoration Program continues on major projects

**T**he San Joaquin River Restoration Program has been a major effort of involvement by the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority since it was first approved by Congress in March 2009. Currently, the Authority is working in partnership with two of its member units in developing the Mendota Pool Control Structure and Fish Screen and work on Sack Dam Fish Screen and Passage.

"The Authority is assisting its member agencies in the design and permitting portions for these two important projects," said Authority Executive Director Chris White. "Our members have undertaken these efforts as all of us work toward protecting the integrity of the San Joaquin River and protecting adjacent landowners from seepage damage."

After a series of back and forth discussions with agencies involved in the Restoration Program, Central California Irrigation District has completed 30 percent of the design work for the Mendota Pool Control Structure and its fish screen.

Current plans call for the Control Structure to be located next to the Mendota Pool.

"Meanwhile, the San Luis Canal Company has advanced the design efforts for the V-screen at Sack Dam to a 30 percent level," reported White. "Other screen design alternatives for Fish Passage are being suggest-

ed by the Bureau of Reclamation and several alternatives being developed will be made available for review in April."

The alternatives include "flat-plate" and "drum" screens to be compared to a V-screen.

"I expect there will be more discussions around the eventual design of the fish screen and the Authority will support the collaborative process between the SJRRP and San Luis Canal Company as it moves forward," added White.

"The next step will be bringing all the design components up to 30 percent before proceeding to the 60 percent level for the project," he said.

## 2021 CCID REDFERN RANCHES SCHOLARSHIP FOR AG LEADERSHIP

For 2021, the Central California Irrigation District (CCID) along with Redfern Ranches is sponsoring a scholarship, which will be available to any student that is a continuing college student who has completed at least two years of coursework at the time of the award of the scholarship; and is a relative of one of the following: 1) Landowner or consumer in CCID or in any of the other agencies of the Exchange Contractors, 2) Employee of a landowner or consumer in CCID or in any of the other agencies of the Exchange Contractors, 3) Employee or former employee of any of the above water agencies.

The scholarship will consist of at least \$2,500.00. Applications must be received by the District no later than 5:00 p.m., Friday, June 11, 2021. More information can be found on the District's website – [www.ccidwater.org](http://www.ccidwater.org)



*The Mendota Pool is a significant location for construction projects as part of the San Joaquin River Restoration Project.*

## 2021 water supply...

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April, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) reservoir inflow forecasts indicate significantly less inflow into Lake Shasta. Therefore, Reclamation currently has our water allocation set at the Critical level.

The Exchange Contractors Water Authority staff will continue to monitor the water supply situation as the water year continues to develop. Major updates are provided by DWR based on the 1st of the month physical snow depth measurements for each month through June. We will keep our growers informed if the situation improves.

# GSA's annual report completed for groundwater efforts

**T**he second annual report due April 1, 2021 was submitted by the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) to the Department of Water Resources as a requirement of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

"The Central California Irrigation District, on behalf of the Exchange Contractors GSA, compiled the data into the data management system for the subbasin," explained CCID General Manager Jarrett Martin during the Authority's March 5th GSA board meeting.

The GSA Board of Directors reviewed at its March board meeting the annual groundwater pumpage report prepared for each of the entities, in addition to an analysis by consultant Dr. Kenneth Schmidt.

A Groundwater Sustainability Plan was submitted to DWR in January 2020 that describes the efforts the GSA plans to

undertake to bring its basin into groundwater sustainability. DWR has two years from the date of submission before responding.

## *SGMA compliance aids in protecting groundwater supply*

White pointed out that the Authority has been "proactively managing our groundwater resources since the late 1980s." When SGMA was approved in 2014, the Authority had documented history groundwater resources to begin its efforts after forming the GSA.

"We were already at a point of being in balance between groundwater extraction and the water that our farmers are putting back into the ground," said White. "Efforts by our GSA to comply with SGMA will assist us in safeguarding our groundwater."

## *Water Resources Plan projects...*

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San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority, adding "We look forward to advancing the proposed reservoir project in 2021."

Work on the DPCR Project in 2021 will consist of attaining the necessary permits for the field work needed for additional geotechnical and other work, selection of dam and roadway design consultants, development of Geotech investigation plan, working with PG&E with the goal of reducing costs while at the same time finishing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under the federal environmental NEPA regulations.

White also reported that the project "qualified for \$1.5 million in funding from WIIN," which provides for the conservation and development of water related resources. The WIIN Act (Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation) is administered by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

### **Orestimba Creek Groundwater Recharge and Recovery Project**

The 80-acre Orestimba Creek Groundwater Recharge and Recovery Project is entering its next phase of environmental study and permitting related to the project's engineering following its advancement through the Department of Water Resources' Integrated Regional Water Management grant program.

Located about 3 miles west of Newman in Stanislaus County, the Recharge and Recovery Project would deliver stored water during wet or normal water years. The water would be delivered via dedicated wells into the Delta-Mendota Canal or the Outside Canal during dry years.

### **Los Banos Creek Detention Dam**

Successful tests in the last quarter of 2020 revealed that increased water flows into the Los Banos Creek Detention Dam could result in 250-acre-feet of water being delivered this spring to several districts for use by farmers and refuges.

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## Water Resources Plan projects...

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The San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority partnered with Central California Irrigation District, San Luis Water District and Grassland Water District to develop the LB Creek Detention Dam.

Prior to construction of the LB Creek Detention Dam, the three agencies delivered surface water from Los Banos Creek to lands riparian to the Creek for crop production, maintenance of wetlands, waterfowl habitat and vegetation growth.

### Los Banos Creek Detention Reservoir project map

