

Fall 2014

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KDWCD Vision Statement

Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District's vision is to protect, conserve, and maintain the Kaweah Basin's water resources through actively pursuing a comprehensive understanding of the region's water resources and through the management of those resources to their fullest potential. The District strives to achieve its vision by engaging in the following core directives:

- Monitoring water resources and demands
- Conserving and enhancing available water resources, both local and regional,
- Investigating and evaluating the Region's water resources,
- Conserving and protecting Kaweah Basin water rights,
- Preventing the interference with/or diminutions of natural flow, and
- Protecting lands from flood or overflow

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California Groundwater to be Regulated

For the first time in its history, California resource, unlike the other Western states. Instead, will begin regulating groundwater now that the California has relied upon a body of common law state Legislature has passed three bills that make that governs the extraction and use of groundwater. AB 3030 and SB 1938 called for the development of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. Governor Jerry Brown signed the legislation Sept. 16; the law goes into effect January 1, 2015.

The three bills, SB 1168(Pavley), SB 1319 (Pavley) and AB 1739 (Dickenson) provide comprehensive groundwater legislation that will govern the State's groundwater starting next year. While the bills were hammered out in a relatively short period of time, the issue of groundwater regulation has been on Governor Brown's agenda since he assumed office.

The SGMA provides a framework for sustainable management of groundwater supplies by local authorities, with a limited role for state intervention only if necessary to protect the resource.

"While there is a great deal about this legislative package that has to be reviewed in terms of practical implementation, the fact that local management of our groundwater resource has been maintained in the law is incredibly important," said Mark Larsen, general manager of Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District. "Local management is crucial and in our area, we have a long history of proactive and appropriate activities, and multiple cooperative partnerships to successfully manage our underground water resources."

While California is often viewed as a fore-runner in many issues, groundwater management has not been one of them. Until now, California has never had a comprehensive system to regulate this



ment of groundwater management plans by local agencies, which consist largely of the compilation of information.

Farmers and other groundwater users, such as homeowners with residential wells, have been able to pump any time and any amount with virtually no regulation. As the state has grown, however, several factors have contributed to more and more groundwater being pumped. Factors such as increased urban demands, agriculture's shift to more water intensive crops, and environmental laws that restrict surface water deliveries, have contributed to an increase in groundwater usage.

California Groundwater to be Regulated cont'

In the Kaweah River Watershed, the increase in pumping has led to a persistent overdraft situation in the basin.

"Groundwater in the Kaweah Basin has been a great resource that has provided years and years of water supply, in dry years as well as wet years, and the farmers and water users in our area are well aware that the current level of pumping cannot be maintained," Larsen said. "We will continue to be vigilant in our monitoring and activities to improve conditions and will work with the new laws to ensure that our management of our Kaweah Delta resource remains right here."

The SGMA requires the formation of local groundwater sustainability agencies, or GSAs. The agencies must assess conditions in their local water basins and adopt locally-based management plans. The law provides 20 years for GSAs to implement their plans and to achieve long-term groundwater sustainability. The law also protects existing surface and groundwater rights. As long as a GSA develops and implements a groundwater sustainability plan as required by the legislation, it is protected from state intervention. The SGMA provides local GSAs with tools and authority to a range of options including:

- 1) Request revisions of basin boundaries, including establishing new sub-basins; and
- 2) Require reports and assess fees; and
- 3) Require registration of groundwater wells; and
- 4) Measure and manage groundwater extractions.

For those agencies with high and medium priority basins, groundwater sustainability plans must be adopted within five to seven years, depending on whether the basin is in critical overdraft. The Kaweah Delta area is considered a high-priority basin.

Groundwater sustainability plans are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act, of CEQA, and must include a physical description of the basin, including groundwater levels, groundwater quality, subsidence, information on groundwater-surface water interaction, data on historical and projected water demands and supplies, monitoring and management provisions,

and a description of how the plan will affect other plans, including city and county general plans. Plans will be evaluated every five years.

The state Department of Water Resources will review GSPs to ensure they are adequate. If the DWR deems a plan inadequate, the State Water Resources Control Board may designate the basin as "probationary." If the local agency does not respond within 180 days, the State Board could create an interim plan that remains in place until the local GSA is able to resume its responsibilities with a compliant plan.

"Clearly, there is a great deal that still must be sorted out, such as what entity or entities will form our GSA," said Larsen. "We are working to first and foremost ensure that the Kaweah Delta Basin is preserved and that local autonomy is maintained."

What is "Sustainable Groundwater Management"? The GSMA defined sustainable groundwater management as *the management and use of groundwater in a manner that can be maintained during the planning and implementation horizon without causing undesirable results*. So-called "undesirable results" include the following:

- ⇒ Chronic lowering of groundwater levels (not including overdraft during a drought, if a basin is otherwise managed)
- ⇒ Significant and unreasonable reductions in groundwater storage
- ⇒ Significant and unreasonable degradation of water quality
- ⇒ Significant and unreasonable land subsidence
- ⇒ Surface water depletions that have significant and unreasonable adverse impacts on beneficial uses

Key Implementation Dates

- *June 30, 2017*: Local groundwater sustainability agencies formed.
- *Jan. 31, 2020*: Groundwater sustainability plans adopted for critically overdrafted basins.
- *Jan. 31, 2022*: Groundwater sustainability plans adopted for high and medium priority basins not currently in overdraft.
- *20 years after adoption*: All high- and medium-priority groundwater basins must achieve sustainability.

California's Drought Heads Into Fourth Year

When the water year ended on September 30, it received the dismal designation as the third driest year in the state's record-keeping history which spans 119 years. This announcement followed the 2013 end-of-year announcement that it was the driest calendar year ever.



Drought Conditions at Lake Kaweah

By all accounts, California's drought is far from over and appears to be heading into its fourth year. In July, the U.S. Drought Monitor classified 58 percent of California in "exceptional" drought, which is the worst category...that percentage remained unchanged through Sept.

The end of the 2014 water year also showed that the state's major reservoirs held only 60 percent of average storage, or about 41 percent of capacity. Cumulative reservoir storage in 1977 – the driest years on record – was about five million acre-feet less than this year, but then the state had 16 million fewer people.

Did You Know?

Drought emergency regulations prohibit the use of potable water in fountains or other decorative water features, except where the water is part of a recirculating system?

Prop 1 Water Bond - Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 = \$7.5 Billion Dollars

The overwhelming water bond of 2012, known as Proposition 43, has been reexamined, revised and was eventually approved by the California voters as Proposition 1 on November 4th, 2014.

Proposition 1 will enact the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014. The multi-billion-dollar package authorizes \$7.12 billion in general obligation bonds for state water supply infrastructure projects, such as public water system improvements, surface and groundwater storage, drinking water protections, water recycling and advanced water treatment technology.

Proposition 1 also provides for additional water supply management and conveyance, wastewater treatment, drought relief, emergency water supplies and ecosystem watershed protections and restoration.

The ballot initiative was a pet project of Governor Jerry Brown and has received significant bipartisan support. The Friant Water Authority supports the initiative, along with California Farm Bureau Federation, Western Growers and California Citrus Mutual, as well as the Nature Conservancy and the Natural Resources Defense Council

Recent polls showed voter support for the measure, even though it includes Brown's \$25 million plan to build twin tunnels underneath the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The project has a great deal of opposition and when Brown proposed his peripheral canal plan in 1982 during his first tenure as governor, voters soundly rejected it. The new twin-tunnel plan would allow easier conveyance of surface water from north to south, while protecting against the collapse of Delta levees during a major earthquake, an issue that is of notable concern.

Californians last approved a water bond in 2006. Known as Proposition 84, that bond authorized \$5.4 billion in bonds for water projects. In 2005, voters passed Proposition 50, allowing for \$3.4 billion for water projects. And between 1996 and 2006, voters approved about \$11 billion in bonds for water projects. Interestingly,

Proposition 1 of 1960 created the State Water Project under Governor Brown's father, Governor Edmund G. "Pat" Brown Sr.

While the project was considered an engineering marvel at that time, it was built for a state with a population of about 20 million people, not the 38 million people that California has today.

The following is a summary of all projects and programs identified in the approved package:



Regional Water Reliability | \$810 Million

- Integrated regional water management (\$510 Million)
- Stormwater capture (\$200 Million)
- Water conservation (\$100 Million)

Water Recycling | \$725 Million

- Statewide water recycling projects and activities

Safe Drinking Water | \$520 Million

- Small Community Wastewater Program (\$260 Million)
- Drinking Water Public Infrastructure (\$260 Million)

Groundwater Sustainability | \$900 Million

- Prevent and reduce groundwater contaminants (\$800 Million)
- Provide sustainable groundwater management planning and implementation (\$100 Million)

Watershed Protection, Watershed Ecosystem Restoration, State Settlements | \$1.45 Billion

- Conservancies (\$327.5 Million)
- Wildlife Conservation Board (restoration of flows) (\$200 Million)
- Department of Fish and Wildlife (out of delta, no mitigation on BDPC) (\$285 Million)
- Department of Fish and Wildlife (in delta with constraints) (\$87.5 Million)
- State settlement obligations including CVPIA (\$475 Million)
- Rivers and creeks (\$120 Million)

Statewide Flood Management | \$395 Million

- Statewide flood management projects and activities (\$100 Million)
- Delta levee subvention programs and delta flood protection projects (\$295 Million)

Storage | \$2.7 Billion

- Continuous appropriation for water storage projects



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VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.KDWCD.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION!

Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District hopes that you have found the information in this issue of the KDWCD Water Report helpful. It is our goal to provide water resource information that is relevant and useful to those who live, work and farm in the District. As our District strives to protect and enhance the groundwater resources of the Kaweah River Basin, we also would like the landowners, water users and the general public to be informed and knowledgeable about our water resources, so that together we can make the best use of our water now and into the future.

Water/Weather Related Web Links

- California Irrigation Management Information System (CIMIS) - www.cimis.water.ca.gov
- Friant Water Authority (FWA) - www.friantwater.org
- National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) - www.noaa.gov
- United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) - www.usbr.gov
- United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) - www.usace.army.mil
- Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) - www.acwa.com
- California Department of Water Resources (DWR) - www.water.ca.gov
- Water Education Foundation (WEF) - www.watereducation.org
- Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) - www.waterboards.ca.gov
- Water Education Foundation—Aquapedia—www.aquapedia.com

Agricultural Water Management Resources

- CA Agricultural Technology Institute** - A non-profit, educational institution dedicated to improving California agriculture
- Irrigation and Training Research Center** - An irrigation teaching program through outside activities specializing in training, research, and technical support
- National Weather Service** - Provides forecasts and warnings for the central U.S.
- CA Water Institute** - Offers seminars and classes dealing with Regional Water Issues, Irrigation Technology, and Research
- UC Ag Extension** - Includes farm, nutrition, family and consumer science advisors based in more than 50 county offices, reaching millions of farmers, businesses and residents every year
- Center for Irrigation Technology (CIT)** - As an independent research and testing facility, CIT assists designers, manufacturers and users of irrigation equipment to make the technological advances required for our growing and ever changing world. Provides pump efficiency testing
- USDA Farm Service Agency** - Provides contact information as well as a listing of the programs and offices that make up the Farm Service Agency
- USDA/ARS Water Management Research Laboratory** - The development of water and weed management technologies and practices for irrigated agriculture in water deficit areas that use water efficiently, improve agricultural productivity, sustainability and reduce negative environmental impacts
- Farm Advisors Office, Agricultural Commissioners' Offices, Tulare and Kings Counties**