



GCID *Currents*

WINTER 2019

Note from General Manager



Dear Landowners and Water Users:

One of the biggest issues being discussed in the water world right now are the Voluntary Agreements related to the State Water Resources Control Board Bay-Delta process. We have laid out the background and objectives of the negotiations underway in previous newsletters, but I wanted to highlight how the timing of these discussions intersects with the District.

These discussions come at a time when GCID is undergoing major reassessments and planning for the future. We know that our main issues right now are water supply reliability, costs/affordability, and an aging water delivery system. To best manage these challenges, we must take control our own future and minimize any risks to the District.

The Voluntary Agreements being negotiated offer a level of certainty we are unlikely to achieve through any other means. This certainty will allow us to plan for the future and move us forward on the issues our District is dealing with now.

We have included a status update on the Voluntary Agreements in this issue, along with updates on the Sites Project and status of District and Private Laterals.

To discuss these issues and more, we are holding landowner and water user meetings on March 19; the first will be at the Willows City Council Chambers at 9:30 a.m., and the second meeting will take place at Granzella's Banquet Facility in Williams at 1:30 p.m. We hope you will join us at one of the upcoming meetings to discuss these critical issues.

Thaddeus Bettner
General Manager

In this issue... Highlights of Topics Covered:

- *Update on Voluntary Agreements*
- *GCID Sites Project Participation Reduced*
- *Private Laterals Update*
- *Winter Maintenance*
- *2019 Water Supply Update*
- *Landowner and Water User Meetings – March 19*



For more information contact us at:
www.gcid.net or (530) 934-8881

Update on Voluntary Agreements

As shared in previous communications, critical discussions between local, state and federal agencies have been taking place about how to improve the system and management on the Sacramento River to benefit fisheries.

The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) has one proposal on how to improve the situation. Sacramento River Settlement Contractors (SRSC), including GCID, are working towards another solution – Voluntary Agreements – which are rooted in understandings gained from on-the-ground work and are the product of extensive negotiations.

The Voluntary Agreements being developed include approaches and actions to achieve specific water quality and environmental objectives including flows, habitat enhancements, and much more. We know what will work to improve conditions for fish and wildlife and these Voluntary Agreements reflect the lessons learned from projects that have already been implemented and will provide the science to guide future decisions.

Furthermore, once approved by the SWRCB, the Agreements will lead to immediate improvements to the environment and endangered species, while also setting the course for the next 15 years for collaboration and commitment by local, regional, state and federal agencies. This process can provide a level of stability we have not been able to count on ever before.

On the other hand, the SWRCB proposal, that is primarily based upon increasing flows that would come from upstream users, provides an unproven approach to helping fish and presents significant risks for water users on the Sacramento River. The Voluntary Agreement the SRSC are seeking to reach, while not ideal and reflective of the difficult choices facing water suppliers, will ultimately better serve fish and water users on the Sacramento River.

The Voluntary Agreements will be discussed in detail, including the impacts and risk associated with the SWRCB proposal, at the Landowner and Water User meetings on March 19. (See the back panel for more details.)



STATUS OF VOLUNTARY AGREEMENTS – PACKAGE SUBMITTED TO SWRCB

On March 1, the California Department of Water Resources and the Department of Fish and Wildlife, along with SRSC members, other water agencies, and conservation groups, submitted [documents](#) to the State Water Resources Control Board outlining Voluntary Agreements to support environmental objectives through a broad set of tools, while protecting water supply reliability. The documents submitted include a project description identifying resources and actions that could be deployed to support environmental and biological objectives, and a planning agreement that outlines an implementation approach and terms for the additional work ahead.

Participants in the Voluntary Agreements discussions will continue to develop terms for Agreements and inform the legal and scientific analyses. SRSC members are reaching out to landowners to seek input and feedback as more specific details become available. The SWRCB is expected to vote on the initial proposal soon, with final signed agreements to be achieved by the end of 2019.

[See more information on the GCID website.](#)

Voluntary agreements provide a new way forward for our region and are our best chance at improving conditions for fish and wildlife while minimizing the loss of water supply.

GCID Sites Project Participation Reduced

In January, the GCID Board of Directors reviewed and considered a recommendation to adjust the GCID Sites Reservoir Project participation level. Ultimately, the Board approved lowering GCID's participation level to 5,000 acre-feet (AF), from 20,000 AF.

Sites JPA participants wishing to continue to be part of the Sites Project were required to execute a 2019 Participation Agreement no later than February 15, 2019. Up to this point in time, GCID has been participating at a level of 20,000 AF, but after reviewing the financial model for the Project, GCID's Board recommended lowering the GCID participation level to 5,000 AF going into Phase 2 of the Project.

JPA work efforts in 2019 will be primarily related to design and permitting for the Project and by the end of 2019 there should be more clarity regarding the optimum size and economic

viability of the Project. The end of 2019 will provide another off-ramp to withdraw from the Project for those participants not wishing to continue to the next Phase. No debt will have been issued, so there is no long-term liability associated with the withdrawal at that point in time.

For now, GCID is continuing to participate in the Sites Reservoir Project planning and development. The District would certainly benefit from the increased water supply security during drought years, such as 2014-15. However, the District will also continue doing its due diligence in assessing the cost involved and what this would mean for landowners.

Sites Reservoir and the potential impacts to owners will be discussed in depth at the public meetings on March 19.

PRIVATE LATERALS – CHANGE TO CATEGORY

As discussed in previous newsletters, in order to adhere to the District's Operation and Maintenance (O&M) policies and limit liability and costs by conducting O&M activities only where the District has documented responsibility, GCID has been evaluating the entire water delivery system to determine which facilities are privately owned and which have District easements and rights-of-way. This assessment has resulted in the categorization of private laterals with corresponding recommendations on how the O&M policies will be applied to each category. The Board recently reviewed a draft resolution formalizing the categories with one notable update to what has been shared previously.

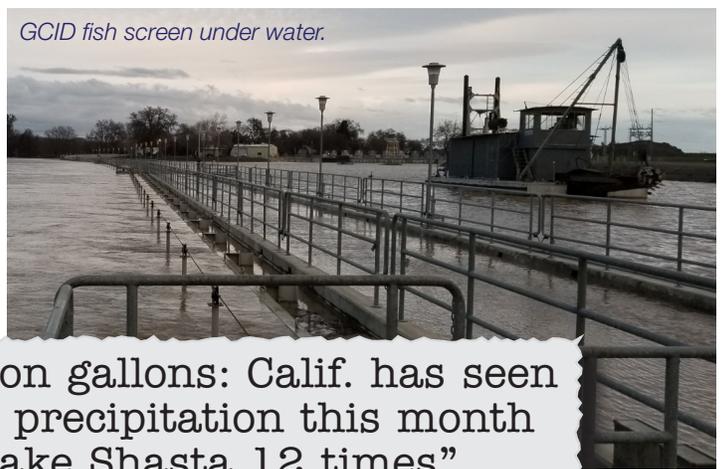
The relevant category is the Private Lateral with History of Maintenance. The resolutions states now that private lateral landowners are going to be offered the chance to pay \$20 per acre over a three-year period and have the District take it over and assume O&M responsibilities. If the landowners that fall into that category fail to enroll in the program by 2020 they will be moved to the Private Lateral category and would need to go through the petition process to have the District take over the lateral.

[The full resolution can be found on the GCID website.](#)

2019 WATER SUPPLY UPDATE – A WET WINTER

The United States Bureau of Reclamation (Bureau) announced in February that GCID and other Sacramento River Settlement Contractors will receive a 100% supply this year and have not made any updates to the supply announcements since that time, nor are any expected.

The full water supply press release from Reclamation can be accessed on the GCID website at: www.gcid.net/water-supply



San Francisco Chronicle

FEB. 19, 2019

“18 trillion gallons: Calif. has seen enough precipitation this month to fill Lake Shasta 12 times”

Landowner & Water User Public Meetings



MARCH 19 , 2019

**9:30 a.m., Willows City Council Chambers
201 North Lassen Street, Willows**

**1:30 p.m., Granzella's Banquet Facility
457 7th Street, Williams**

Public Meetings!

At this meeting for landowners and water users, representatives from the District will discuss voluntary agreements, water supply and rates, Sites Project, and ongoing litigation.



WINTER MAINTENANCE – TAKING CARE OF OUR PHYSICAL SYSTEM

As is typical, GCID's maintenance, water operations and engineering staff are currently undertaking maintenance projects. The wet weather we have been experiencing has posed some issues in timing but projects are moving forward as possible. Delivery of water is of course dependent on the District's physical system, which is why infrastructure updates and maintenance continues to be a top priority.

Projects undertaken during this maintenance period include:

- *Repaired the Mile 10 Siphon*
- *Installed 40 metered turnouts*
- *Building a flume at Lateral 38-1*
- *Built three pre-cast single opening checks*
- *Rebuilt Bayliss Pump*
- *Removed over 2 miles of sediment in the main canal*
- *Built a long crested weir at 41-1*
- *Build a double opening check with ITRC gate at Lateral 45-1*