



GCID *Currents*

SUMMER 2021

GCID Board Takes Actions Due to Critical Water Year

DUE TO THE DRASTICALLY DRY 2020-2021 WINTER, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) announced a Shasta Critical Water Year, under the criteria in the Sacramento River Settlement Contracts. This designation reduces the District's water supply to 75% and landowners and water users received an allocation of 4.1 acre-feet per deeded acre to use towards their 2021 irrigation needs. The Shasta Temperature Control Management Plan limits the diversions on the Sacramento River for all users and for GCID this means that we cannot fully utilize the 75% supply. The District is relying heavily on the GCID Critical Year Conservation Policy as was done in the 2014 and 2015 Shasta Critical Water Years. As we learned through our most recent drought years, early preparation is key, and water managers at GCID and other districts across the north state started preparing for dry conditions earlier this year.

In February, the GCID Board acted to move forward with two water transfer programs: a land idling program for districts south of the Delta, and a groundwater substitution program for Tehama Colusa Canal Authority water districts. GCID landowners committed to idle a total of approximately 14,700 acres for this program. Tehama Colusa Canal Authority districts will receive 10,00 acre-feet of water through the Groundwater Substitution Program.

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Note from General Manager



Dear Landowners and Water Users:

Our dry winter, on top of last year's critically dry designation, have made this water year the most challenging ever. I recently told some friends who aren't tied to water that this year was the driest since 1977, and if you add on the additional operational requirements, species protections, and increased population that have occurred since then, this is in reality the worst water year on record. They were shocked and said, "then why aren't we hearing more about it like we did in previous droughts?"

While there are some likely answers to that question, it doesn't change the situation we are in, and it is challenging to say the least. As spring has progressed, difficult water supply conditions have continued to worsen with both nature and California's complex water bureaucracy throwing us curveballs in the process. Fortunately, we have been able to build from our experiences since the last drought years of 2014/2015 and have been doing everything within our power to ensure reliable supply for our landowners and water users during this critical dry year.

It has been a difficult spring and I want to thank all of you for your patience with District staff – both in the field with water deliveries and virtually as we were still navigating pandemic protocols and could not hold in-person public meetings.

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

Sacramento River Temperature Management Plan Accepted

ON JUNE 10, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) notified the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) that the final 2021 Sacramento River Temperature Management Plan (TMP) had been accepted. The purpose of the TMP is to demonstrate the measures that Reclamation will be taking to meet a daily average water temperature of 56 degrees on the Sacramento River at Red Bluff Diversion Dam, during periods when higher temperatures will be detrimental to fish. Copies of the SWRCB June 10 approval letter and the Final Temperature Management Plan are available at <https://www.gcid.net/news>.

Reclamation worked with the Sacramento River Settlement Contractors, fishery agencies and the SWRCB, fishery agencies to develop the proposed reasonable management actions included in the Final TMP. The SWRCB June 10 letter included the condition that Reclamation continue to evaluate additional temperature control measures that could improve Reclamation's ability to control temperatures and minimize temperature dependent mortalities to winter-run Chinook salmon. The SWRCB expressed concerns regarding adequate temperatures this year, but stated, "Despite these concerns, due to the extremely dry conditions and the significant reduction in expected Shasta inflows this year, the State Water Board is satisfied that the TMP reflects



the currently known feasible and reasonable management actions Reclamation could take to control temperatures this year." GCID General Manager Thad Bettner said that while there are issues and concerns with conditions included in the letter that we will need to work through, this is good news for CVP water users."

The District will keep landowners and water users updated and informed on changes and developments as the season progresses.

("Note from General Manager" continued from page 1)

Clearly, this was a new way of working for many of us, and I speak for all GCID staff when I express our gratitude for the understanding you have shown over the last year. These meetings have been important touch points for our staff as well, hearing questions and issues raised from Landowners and Water Users that have in turn helped us in our operations. Staff has been working to find new and effective ways to get information out to all of you and as we approach a summer where communication will be key, I am confident our open dialogue will continue.

Water deliveries continue to be tight through the conclusion of the rice reflooding period. Currently, GCID is diverting 1,950 cubic feet per second (cfs) at the main pump station – following the schedule with Reclamation, GCID and other Sacramento River Settlement Contractors to meet the Sacramento River Temperature Management Control Plan criteria. Knowing supply is tight, District Water Operations staff is working to ensure the equitable distribution of water within the District and is continuing to work with water users to resolve isolated issues that arise on a case-by-case basis. Under the Temperature Management Plan, diversions will go to 2,000 cfs during the month of July.

Additionally, the District is coordinating with landowners who own groundwater wells and are participating in the Emergency Groundwater Pumping Program to add to the District's available water supply. There are 50-60 private wells pumping to add approximately 225 cfs to the total supply. Any landowners with groundwater wells who may be interested in participating in the Program may contact the District office at (530) 934-8881 for additional information.

While our immediate priorities are dictated by the extremely dry conditions, we continue to look toward the future to ensure GCID will continue to provide reliable, affordable water supplies to our landowners and water users for years to come.

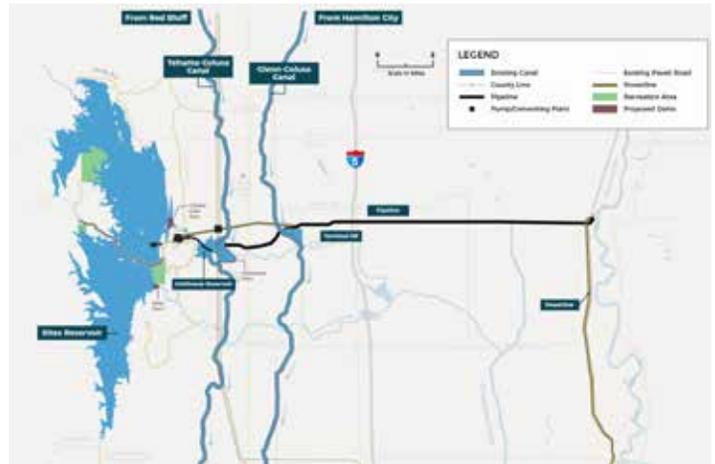
Thaddeus Bettner
General Manager

SITES RESERVOIR: *Designed for Years Like 2021*

AS WE ALL KNOW WELL, drought is part of California's water landscape. In the last decade we have seen the extremes of California water, with years of historic drought followed by some of the wettest years on record, and now we are again facing severe dry conditions. For this reason, 30 water districts and suppliers across the state have backed the construction of Sites Reservoir, a modern water storage project designed not to just meet the needs of today, but also benefit the environment, families, and farms well into the future.

While many traditional water storage projects were designed and built to capture snowmelt, the realities of climate change mean less snow and more rain for California. To capture the excess water from faster moving and often more intense storms that come more frequently, we need a new model for water storage. As an off-stream reservoir, Sites Reservoir captures excess water from major storms. This water is saved and used later when it's needed most.

The project utilizes existing state-of-the-art screened, fish-friendly water diversions on the Sacramento River and existing water conveyance facilities (including from GCID). It provides a new off-stream water storage facility that integrates well into our current water management system.



If Sites Reservoir were operational today, California would have nearly 1 million acre-feet more water available to help get through this year's challenging water conditions.

In fact, not only does this project have an extremely benign environmental impact, but it also dedicates a significant portion of its water supply and operational benefits to the enhancement of terrestrial and aquatic environments.

Reclamation Places Hold on North-Of-Delta Ag Service Contractors

DUE TO WORSENING DROUGHT CONDITIONS, agricultural water service contractors north-of-Delta, including the Tehama Colusa Canal Authority water districts, received an announcement from Reclamation that the allocation of 5% of their contract supply is not available for delivery until further notice.

Allocation amounts are based on an estimate of water available for delivery to CVP water users and reflects current reservoir storages, precipitation, and snowpack in the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada. Northern California has about 48% of average precipitation for this time of year; statewide average snowpack levels are at 24% of average. With a dry forecast and warm temperatures, much of the remaining snowpack is expected to melt over the next few weeks; however, the dry preexisting conditions will limit snowmelt-driven reservoir inflow.

Aquatic Weeds Impact District Waterways

UNSEASONABLY DRY AND HOT WEATHER CONDITIONS this spring contributed to the early arrival of aquatic weeds this irrigation season, which dramatically restrict the flow of water through the main canal and lateral systems. District personnel reacted to the emergency situation created by the rapid weed growth in May and removed it mechanically in some locations where aquatic herbicides could not be used at the time. On June 11, District staff applied 2,000 gallons of the aquatic herbicide Cascade at the Norman Check (location Mile Post-35.53) with the expectation that it will move through the southern portion of the main canal and lateral system. A second Cascade application of 3,100 gallons took place on June 16, near Stony Creek (location Mile Post-7.23), to treat the northern portion of the conveyance system. The cost of the two Cascade treatments was approximately \$400,000 and it is anticipated that the combination of these two treatments will eradicate aquatic weeds in the main canal and laterals throughout the entire system and improve irrigation deliveries throughout the remainder of the season.



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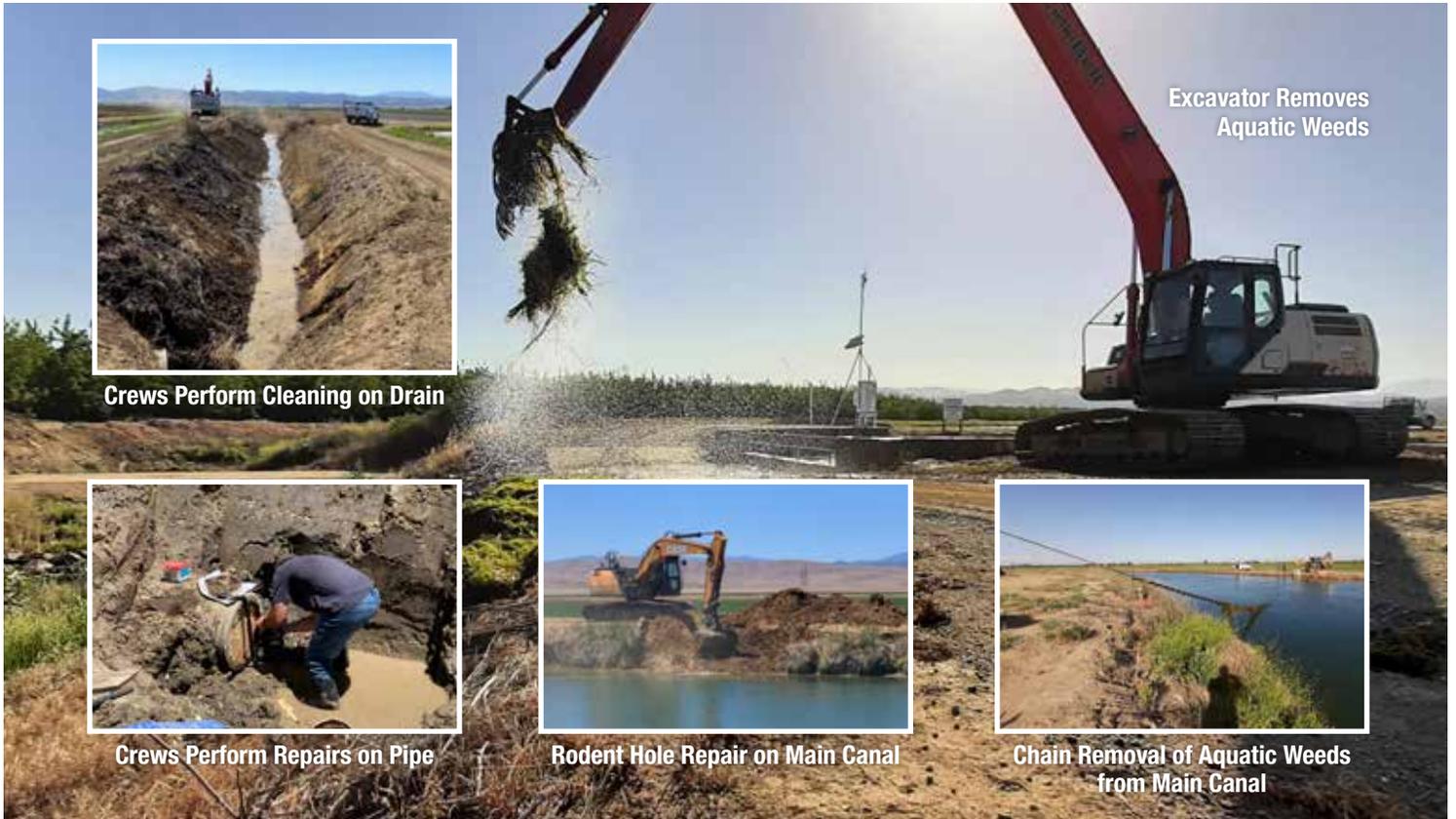
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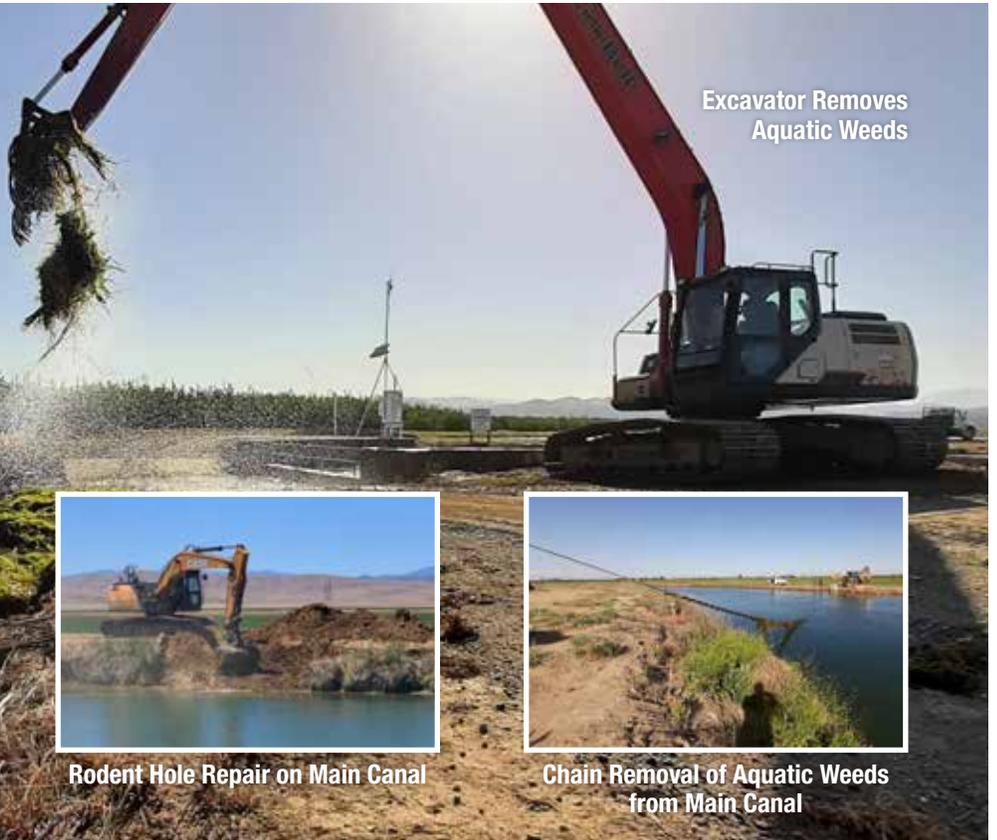
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Crews Perform Cleaning on Drain



Excavator Removes Aquatic Weeds



Crews Perform Repairs on Pipe



Rodent Hole Repair on Main Canal



Chain Removal of Aquatic Weeds from Main Canal

("GCID Board Takes Action" continued from page 1)

The Board also directed staff to proceed with a 2021 Emergency Groundwater Production Program, following Governor Newsom's May 10 Drought Proclamation, with the intent of providing up to 25,000 acre-feet of groundwater pumping in GCID. The groundwater produced through this Program will be used instead of diverting an equivalent amount of surface water and help to preserve a cold-water pool in Shasta Reservoir to benefit fish species. GCID is offering \$90 per acre-foot for groundwater in this Program, which matches what other Sacramento Valley irrigation districts are offering for emergency groundwater production programs. District staff members have been working with groundwater well owners who are interested in participating and there are currently 20 wells included in the program.

In May, the GCID Board took additional steps to help to meet landowner and water user needs through the rest of the irrigation season. The Board acted to immediately implement the no-spill policy under the Critical Year section of the GCID Water Management and Conservation Policy rather than wait until July 1 – meaning no field spillage will be allowed until the end of the irrigation season. Tail boxes are required to be sealed with plastic or a soil berm. Our Water Operations and Maintenance Departments are working closely on monitoring water management and conservation practices to ensure water savings during the irrigation season. District personnel will be continuing to monitor spills and field drainage throughout the District.