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NID WaterWays

A Newsletter to the Customers
of the Nevada Irrigation District

Volume 24 • Number 2 • Summer, 2003

Good Water Flows From a Healthy Watershed

Pour yourself a tall glass of cool NID drinking water, raise it high, and salute the Sierra Nevada mountain watershed. Mmmmm.... Tastes good.

NID water customers are fortunate to be near the Sierra snowpack, source of their water. This location limits the chance for upstream pollution, provides for a high quality of water into the water treatment system and a better, tastier product flowing out.

Preserving and improving watershed in the mountains



NID's French Reservoir (elev. 6,560 ft.) pictured June 18, 2003

and throughout the district is an important part of NID's role, and as such the district is widely involved in planning and management activities on several local watersheds.

Looking to the Future

NID Water Operations Manager Terry Mayfield says good watershed management is imperative so future generations may enjoy the quality

and quantities of water we enjoy today.

Watershed health can be affected by activities such as timber harvest, fire, erosion, livestock grazing, recreation, mining, highways and railroads. Knowledge and planning can help reduce any negative water quality impacts these activities may produce.

(Please turn to back page)



Monica Reyes enjoys NID water

Tax Shift Could Lead to Water Rate Increases

Along with other districts around the state, NID is closely following a move in the State Legislature that would transfer property tax revenues from special districts to other governmental entities.

Senate Bill 407, by Sen. Tom Torlakson of Antioch, could, if eventually signed into law, shift 40 percent of the ad valorem property taxes received by multi-county special districts or 10 percent of the districts' total revenues, whichever is less.

In NID's case, Finance Manager Tess Andrews says the district stands to lose from \$2.4 million to \$2.6 million annually. Such a transfer could lead to substantial increases in the water rates paid by NID ratepayers.

SB 407 targets multi-county "enterprise" districts that serve customers in more than one county and have the ability to charge for services, such as water or sewer service. It is estimated that more than \$95 million in revenues could be lost to 37 multi-county districts

across the state.

The bill would repeal the Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF) exemption that multi-county districts were granted 10 years ago from legislation to transfer more local money to education.

However, the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) points out the new proposal does not direct more funding to K-12 schools and community colleges; it instead points to discretionary use by city and county governmental entities.

Because SB 407 could cause significant revenue losses for water suppliers, the bill has received opposition from ACWA, the League of California Cities, California Assoc. of Counties and California Special Districts Assoc.

Despite opposition, the bill moved forward June 11 in a 5-2 vote of the Assembly's Local Government Committee. The proposal was then scheduled for consideration by the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

Future Water

District Studies its Raw Water Systems

Where will NID water will be needed in 20 years? How will it be used? What improvements will be needed to meet demand?

These are among a broad range of questions addressed in the current update of the NID Raw Water Master Plan, being prepared by Kleinschmidt Energy & Water Resources Consultants of Sacramento.

A public outreach process through the early part of this year helped the district formulate goals and objectives for the study, which is planned for completion by Summer, 2004.

The study looks at NID's extensive canal delivery system that supplies raw water to 5,700 agricultural users and also carries water to the district's eight water treatment plants.

Chief Engineer Tim McCall said the new plan will identify the water infrastructure NID will need to meet local water resource needs efficiently and economically during the 20-year planning period.

Fall Planting Ideas

Here are some California native plants that do not require a lot of water. They can help you save water and also to create defensible space and a fire-safe landscape at your home:

Trees

Catalina Cherry

Shrubs

Toyon

Coffeeberry

Holly-Leaf Berry

Lemonade Berry

Groundcovers

Bearberry

Dwarf Coyote Brush

Carmel Creeper

Point Reyes Ceanothus

Creeping Sage

Perennials

Monkey Flower

Woolly Blue Curls

California Fuchsia



AWWA

-- Office of Water Use Efficiency
Calif. Dept. of Water Resources

Awesome April Wet Spring Boosts Storage to Above Average Levels

The month of April brought 267 percent of average precipitation (14.82 inches) to NID's Bowman Reservoir, pushing rainfall and storage levels to above average levels.

As of June 15, NID water storage stood at 247,234 acre-feet of water, or 113 percent of average for that date. Precipitation at the 5600-foot elevation had reached 76.26 inches, or 107 percent of the annual average (July 1-June 30) with two weeks to go in the rainfall season.

NID Operations Supv. Sue Sindt characterized the 2002-03 rainfall season as mediocre until the surprise April rains. "The April 1 snow survey showed only 72 percent of average water content and we thought that maybe the reservoirs would fill," she said.

"After the April precipitation, the reservoirs filled, spilled and are still nearly full. This should make for a good recreation season and also give us ample carryover water storage for next year."

Contacting NID

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(530) 823-2466

Web Site: www.nid.dst.ca.us

Dedication of the Pioneer National Recreation Trail



Celebrating a 20-Year Effort

NID General Manager Ron Nelson, with sunglasses, and Tahoe National Forest Supervisor Steve Eubanks, center, were among those celebrating completion of the Pioneer National Recreation Trail.

NID joined on June 8 with several other agencies and numerous volunteers to celebrate the completion of the Pioneer National Recreation Trail. The dedication was held at the Bear Valley YMCA Camp off Bowman Lake Road.

The Pioneer Trail is a 25-mile-long, non-motorized use trail that runs from the Five Mile House east of Nevada City to Lake Spaulding, where it provides access to Grouse Ridge and the Pacific Crest Trail.

The trail has historic as well as recreational value. Much of it follows the approximate route of the 1851 Nevada City Cutoff that diverged from the California Emigrant Trail.

Development of the trail has been spearheaded since 1983 by the Gold Country Trails Council, an equestrian group, whose volunteers have been helped by Bicyclists of Nevada County (BONC), Boy Scouts, Folsom-Auburn Trail Riders and many others.

The Tahoe National Forest, NID, Pacific Gas & Electric Co., CalTrans and the YMCA also have been instrumental in the project. NID granted trail easements across district property and also provided some equipment and manpower.

More than 80 people attended the trail dedication ceremony. Representing NID were Directors Nancy Weber and John Drew and General Manager Ron Nelson.

U.S. Troops Like NID Water



U.S. Marines in Kuwait seem to prefer bottled drinking water sent by NID's Ed Rossovich Jr.

(Photos Courtesy of Lt. Col. Sean Metroka)



• NID NEWS BRIEFS •

See NID at the Fair

Customers are invited to stop by the NID booth in the Main Exhibit Hall at this year's Nevada County Fair, Aug. 6-10, in Grass Valley. Theme for this year's NID exhibit is "Recreate, Cultivate & Celebrate."

LOP Nears Completion

The overall \$7 million upgrade of the Lake of the Pines water treatment system is scheduled for completion in September. The LOP treatment plant supplies a population of more than 5100 in Lake of the Pines and surrounding areas. Its capacity is being increased from 3 to 5 million gallons per day and new filtration is being added.

Recreation Grants

NID is planning improvements to the group camp and day use areas at Scotts Flat Reservoir and has applied for \$442,000 in grant funding through the Wildlife Conservation Board and Land and Water Conservation Fund.

How to Contact Your Elected Representatives

NID is an independent special district governed by a five-member Board of Directors. Your elected representatives are:

Division I, Nevada City Area
Nancy Weber, (530) 265-0424

Division II, Grass Valley-Chicago Park
John Drew, (530) 272-5257

Division III, Lake of the Pines-Alta Sierra
Dr. Scott Miller
Call NID (530) 273-6185, ext. 222

Division IV, Lincoln-North Auburn
R. Paul Williams (916) 645-8507

Division V, Penn Valley-Lake Wildwood
George Leipzig (530) 432-2492

Watershed - Continued from Page 1

Mayfield, former chairman of the Yuba Watershed Council (YWC), an umbrella group, says NID is involved with six watershed study groups.

Local watershed groups include Auburn Ravine/Coon Creek, Deer Creek, South and Middle Yuba Rivers, Bear River, Wolf Creek and the YWC, a clearinghouse group.

"As the end user, we want to be involved with all of the groups and agencies," he says. "It's an opportunity for us to educate others on our responsibilities and to learn about others' concerns."

Current YWC chair Janet Cohen sees great value in cooperation. "It definitely helps to know each other's interests and find common solutions to common problems," she said.

All of the watershed groups are studying current conditions, identifying desired conditions and determining what might be done to reach desired conditions.

Auburn-Ravine/Coon Creek

This group has worked on a management strategy for the two Placer County waterways, seeking to protect fish and wildlife as well as the creeks' role in the delivery of raw water. Control of erosion and sediment has been a focus.

Bear River

This group has conducted water

quality monitoring, a disturbance inventory and mercury studies and is developing a coordinated resource management plan.

Deer Creek

A monitoring effort by Friends of Deer Creek has identified areas of concern. A demonstration project to filter storm drains in Nevada City is under way along with a project to restore natural conditions on Little Deer Creek.

Wolf Creek

Friends of Wolf Creek has been working with NID, the Resource Conservation District and City of Grass Valley to restore Wolf Creek through downtown Grass Valley and to improve Peabody Creek in Grass Valley's Condon Park.

South and Middle Yuba Rivers

The South Yuba River Citizens League is involved in an extensive water quality monitoring project to identify areas where disturbances from early mining and other activities might be rectified.

In addition to its support of local watershed groups, NID has been active with school watershed education programs. The district helped fund water quality studies at Lincoln High School and is involved in an ongoing water quality monitoring project with students at Nevada Union HS in Grass Valley.