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NID WaterWays

A Newsletter to the Customers
of the Nevada Irrigation District

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Snowpack Holds Good Water Supply

The 2004-05 rainfall year has produced a number of significant storms and an abundant snowpack on NID high mountain watershed.

In the official April 1 snow survey, the year's best indicator of water supplies, NID snow surveyors measured 126 percent of average water content in the mountain snowpack.

NID collects snowpack runoff on a 170,000-acre mountain watershed, stores the water in 10 reservoirs and supplies water to nearly 24,000 homes, farms and businesses in the district.

In the April snow survey, taken at elevations ranging from 4,850 to 7,800 feet, NID snow surveyors found an average water content of 42.7 inches, which is 26 percent higher than the 34-inch historical average for April 1.

(Please See Snow Survey, Page 3)

2005 Irrigation Season is Up and Running

Most NID customers count on having water 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Not so for about 5000 irrigation water customers who purchase their water on a seasonal basis.

The NID irrigation season runs from on or about April 15 through October 14 each year. During this time, water is transported through a vast network of canals, many of which are not used during the winter months.



NID Water Supt. Warren Hart releases irrigation water from Loma Rica Reservoir into the Chicago Park Canal.

Canal water nourishes crops in wide areas of Nevada and Placer counties. NID irrigation water is used in pastures, orchards, vineyards, family gardens, landscapes, golf courses and in many other ways.

Irrigation water fills ponds and reservoirs for stock watering, fire suppression and recreation. The availability of irrigation water is a key factor in the preservation of open space greenbelt areas.

Gravel Takes Up Valuable Water Storage Space in Rollins Reservoir

Rollins Reservoir was built 40 years ago and since that time, gravel and sediment from the Bear River have washed downriver into the reservoir, claiming valuable water storage space.

To prevent this buildup, NID for many years contracted with local aggregate companies to remove the material, which is a valuable product in the construction and road building industries.

Aggregate removal continued on the river above Rollins from 1971-1999 but after questions arose as part of a lease renewal, activities were suspended.

To gain a deeper understanding of the gravel buildup, NID last year contracted with Engeo, Inc. of Roseville to perform a sedimentation study. The study is now in draft form and a final report is expected to go to the NID Board of Directors this spring.

"The purpose of the study is to find out if continued aggregate removal will be in the public's best interest and help preserve storage space in the reservoir," said NID Asst. Manager Tim Crough.

Preliminary findings indicate that at least 3000 acre-feet of water storage capacity has been lost over the past 40 years and that without aggregate removal the loss of space will accelerate.

Crough said the study is examining five key areas, 1) storage capacity, 2) effects on the integrity of the dam and reservoir, 3) effects on public recreation, 4) effects on water quality, and 5) monetary benefits related to aggregate removal.

Sediment buildup is also a problem at downstream Combie Reservoir and Crough said information from the study could also benefit planning for that area.

Remembering Ernie Bierwagen

The late **Ernst L. "Ernie" Bierwagen** was a widely respected community leader who served six elected terms and 25 years on the NID Board of Directors.

Now, through a community effort, Mr. Bierwagen's life and career will be recognized at a commemorative site on NID property overlooking Rollins Reservoir.

A groundbreaking ceremony is tentatively scheduled for May 19 at 4 p.m. at the Orchard Springs Campground, followed by a reception at the Happy Apple Kitchen.

A special donation account has been opened at the Grass Valley Bank of America and donations may be mailed to the Bierwagen Commemorative Fund, c/o NID, P.O. Box 459003, Grass Valley, CA 95945.

Mr. Bierwagen, a lifelong Chicago Park resident and orchardist, died in February, 2004 at the age of 88.

For information on the community effort, contact NID Board President John Drew at (530) 272-5257.



Personnel Notes



Clockwise,
from
above,
Powell,
Lantz,
Hoskin



Brian J. Powell, an engineer with the district since 1997, has been appointed as NID Maintenance Manager. In his new position, Powell will oversee NID's largest department and the activities of 62 employees.

Powell succeeds **Robin Lantz**, who retires May 5. Lantz, a Grass Valley resident, spent 15 years with the district, including eight years as Maintenance Manager.

Leland A. "Lee" Hoskin, Senior Right-of-Way Agent, and with 35 years of service NID's senior employee, retires May 6. Hoskin plans to enjoy retirement in Grass Valley.

Weather Delays Work at Cascade Shores

Wet weather throughout the winter has delayed completion of recreational improvements at Scotts Flat Reservoir, but NID and its contractor planned to have the work done by Memorial Day.

The improvements at the Cascade Shores day use area include a new boat ramp, which has been completed. Work still in progress includes a new boat boarding float, new restrooms, day use area, beach area and parking lot improvements.

Contractor Cache Creek Construction of Redding began work in September and experienced weather delays a month later. Work was suspended in December due to wet conditions.

The improvements are being funded through a grant from the California Department of Boating and Waterways.

Snow Survey

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By March 31, annual precipitation at Bowman Reservoir (elev. 5,650 ft.) had reached 52.06 inches, or 86 percent of average precipitation for the date. The month of March produced 13.01 inches of precipitation, or 125 percent of the March average.

NID Operations Supervisor Sue Sindt said snowpack runoff should fill or nearly fill NID's mountain reservoirs and that foothill reservoirs (Scotts Flat, Rollins and Combie) are already full and spilling.

"We expect to make full deliveries to all of our customers this year, and with the reservoirs nearly full, it should also be a good year for water



NID snow surveyors Jessica Erickson and Sue Sindt weigh a probe pole filled with snow to determine snowpack water content. NID conducts snow surveys at six mountain locations.

recreation," she said.

A member of the California Cooperative Snow Survey, NID conducts three official snow

surveys each year. Results of the snow surveys are used to predict water availability locally and statewide.

NID Begins Lengthy Relicensing Process

NID has begun a multi-year process to obtain a new federal license for the continued operation of the NID Yuba-Bear Hydroelectric Power System.

The NID Board of Directors on Feb. 23 hired Devine Tarbell Associates, Inc. a Sacramento based consulting firm, to help with initial steps in the relicensing process.

The district constructed the Yuba-Bear Project in 1963-66 under a 50-year federal license issued in 1963. The license expires in 2013.

The Yuba-Bear Project is a system of dams, waterways and powerhouses ranging from Jackson Meadows on the northeast to Rollins Reservoir on the southwest.

'Creek Week' Marks Water Awareness Month

May is Water Awareness Month in California and it is being observed in Nevada County through efforts of the Nevada County Resource Conservation District.

In a special project set for May 14, local youths and parents were planning to mark approximately 1000 storm drains in the City of Grass Valley. Special tags will remind people that the drains empty into local creeks and rivers and should not be used for other purposes.

Other stewardship activities, including school programs, were being planned for "Creek Week," May 7-14, said Lesa Osterholm, RCD manager and Bear River Watershed coordinator.

"This has turned into an exciting project", said Osterholm. "Everyone is working together to raise awareness."

For information, call the RCD office at (530) 272-3417.



District Policy Protects the Public Water System

NID has an encroachment policy designed to protect the public water system from excavations, road crossings or other private property modifications that could impede the operation and maintenance of the water system.

Property owners who wish to build near NID canals or pipelines are advised to contact the district first to determine if an encroachment permit is necessary.

The permit procedure is designed to allow landowners full utilization of their private property, while protecting the district's responsibility to operate the water system.

NID strives for quick turnaround on permits but with differing conditions, the time involved can vary.

For information, call the NID Right-of-Way Section at (530) 273-6185. Placer County customers may call toll-free to (800) 222-4102.

Tim West Remembered

The late Tim West will be remembered as good employee and ambassador for NID and friend to many irrigation water customers on NID Route 11 in the North Auburn Area.



Tim, a Water Distribution Operator with NID, died Dec. 21 in San Francisco following a three-month fight against cancer. He was 35.

He was a graduate of Nevada Union HS in Grass Valley, veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps and seven-year NID employee.

Awareness Called For West Nile Virus in Area; Carried by Mosquitoes

West Nile Virus is a mosquito-borne disease that can cause serious illness or death. It has been detected this year in 19 California counties, including Placer County.

In Nevada County, the virus was detected in birds last year and County Agricultural Commissioner Paul Boch expects it will be found again this spring or early summer.

With a newsletter reaching 24,000 homes and businesses, NID has agreed to help provide public information on the virus. The newsletter reaches many rural areas where ponds and standing water can provide mosquito breeding grounds.

Nevada County Ag Commissioner's Recommendations

Here are some recommendations from the county agricultural commissioner:

- **Protect Yourself.** Eliminate stagnant standing water whenever possible, use mosquito repellent and wear long sleeves and long pants, especially in the evening hours.
- **Organic Mosquito Control.** Organic mosquito control products are available through local farm and garden supply outlets.
- **Mosquito Eating Fish.** People with ponds may wish to check with the Nevada County Ag Commissioner and RCD offices which are planning mosquito fish giveaway programs for this year.
- **Horse Safety.** Horse vaccines, which require lead time, are available through local veterinarians.



• NID NEWS BRIEFS •

Lincoln Studies Move Forward. NID is working with the City of Lincoln to identify a site for a new NID water treatment plant to supply the greater Lincoln area. Staff recommendations on a proposed site along with alternate sites are anticipated this spring. It is estimated that plant construction is three to five years in the future.

New Tank for Deer Creek Park. The NID Board of Directors has approved a project to add a new 1.1-million-gallon treated water storage tank at the Deer Creek Park tank site off Red Dog Road east of Nevada City. The tank will be built at a lower base level than the existing 236,000-gallon tank so that the top elevations of the two tanks will be the same.

Solar Energy System in Auburn. Working with Alternative Power Systems of Grass Valley, NID has installed a solar energy system to supply some of the electrical needs of the North Auburn Water Treatment Plant and Customer Service Office. District officials said the pilot project, if successful, could lead to other NID solar installations.

Water Quality Report. Over the next few months, NID treated water customers will be receiving the annual Consumer Confidence Report. The report shows that during 2004, as in previous years, NID drinking water met or exceeded all state and federal public health standards. Water suppliers are required by law to report on water quality.

Automatic Payment Plan. NID customers may arrange to have water bills paid electronically by their banks. For further information, please contact NID Customer Service.

How to Contact Your Elected Directors

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

The NID Board of Directors meets regularly on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, beginning at 9 a.m., at the NID Business Center in Grass Valley. NID board meetings are open to the public.

www.nid.dst.ca.us