



January 2015

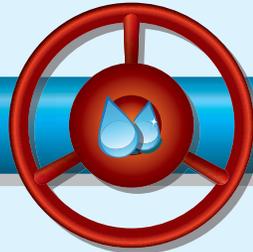
Mission statement

To protect and develop Oakdale Irrigation District water resources for the maximum benefit of the OID community by providing excellent irrigation and domestic water service.

OID

PIPELINE

Excellence in affordable, reliable and innovative water management



Innovative Program Helps Farmers Fund Irrigation Upgrades

For the first time in 2015, OID is proud to offer a pioneering plan to help our farmers pay for expensive water efficiency improvements on their property. It is called the On-Farm Conservation Funding Program and is completely voluntary.

The program works like this:

- **Farmers will not irrigate land enrolled in the program for one year**
- **OID will market the unused irrigation water to buyers**
- **95% of the proceeds will be returned to the farmer – 20% in cash and 75% in credits to make efficiency upgrades on their property**

This year, OID will transfer the unused water for \$400 an acre foot to federal and state water contractors representing land south of the Delta.

OID General Manager Steve Knell estimated the value of the water this year at about \$4 million, with most of it being directly reinvested into on-farm upgrades. He expects much of that money to be spent with local companies.

The OID board of directors unanimously approved the program at its Jan. 6 meeting.

Response was strong, with 114 landowners representing 135 parcels and 3,250 acres signed up in the first year. The deadline to apply was Jan. 14.

Most of the parcels are pastureland, though some also have been planted in corn, oats or rice. The parcel sizes are a mixture of ranchettes (less than 10 acres), small farms (up to 40 acres) and larger properties (over 40 acres).

Already, there are 15 parcels representing 310 acres that have been enrolled in the 2016 program.

The plan comes in the wake of state mandates related to efficient water use and pricing.

The state requires farmers to be more efficient in how they irrigate, but provided no financial assistance to pay for on-site improvements.

The district also must measure how much water is delivered to each of our 2,900 agricultural users and bill customers based on the volume of water used. The OID board already has adopted a new rate structure that will be phased in beginning in 2015.

Based on the typical amount of irrigation water used in a season, the owner of a 50-acre pasture enrolled in the conservation program will be paid about \$16,000 in cash and receive a credit worth another \$58,000 to apply

toward improvements. The owner of a 10-acre parcel would receive \$3,200 in cash and about \$12,000 for projects.

Eligible improvement programs under the program include:

- **Installing volumetric meters and irrigation gates**
- **Replacing open ditches with pipelines**
- **Replacing old and leaking pipes with new plastic pipelines**
- **Installing a tailwater return system**
- **Ripping, laser leveling and reseeding land**
- **Converting land to grow crops that use less water**

“The purpose of the program is to drive money into the farm so people can do productive work. With water rates going up, the state issuing requirements to conserve more water and be more efficient, and providing no money to do so; OID has developed a funding program to meet those demands with little to no cost to its farmers.”

– Steve Knell, OID General Manager

Water outlook: **The drought is not over**

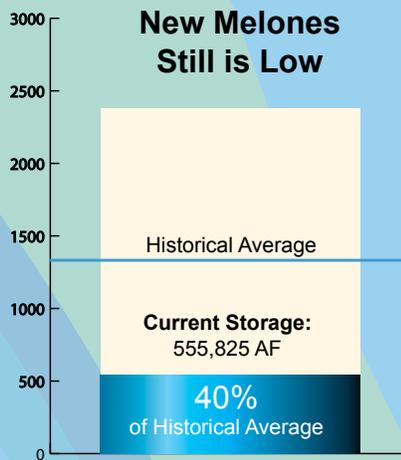
In 2014, the third year of drought in California reminded everyone of the value of every drop of water and how it is used.

The OID and our 2,900 agricultural customers responded responsibly and proactively to the need to conserve. The district delivered 208,000 acre-feet of surface water to ag users, down from 230,000 to 235,000 acre-feet in a “normal” year. One acre-foot is about 326,000 gallons.

OID’s long-term commitment to rebuild and modernize our infrastructure -- canals, pipelines, pumps, automated gates, deliveries, etc. -- helped save water. It is these improvements that allowed OID to meet our constituent’s crop water requirements in 2014 while those around us struggled and had water allocation reductions. That is the benefit of all our past work in upgrading our system.



All those savings added up and allowed OID to end the 2014 irrigation season with some water still remaining behind New Melones Reservoir.



Current Storage: 555,825 AF
23% of Total Capacity
40% of Historical Avg. For This Date
(Total Capacity: 2,400,000 AF)
(Avg. Storage of Jan 19: 1,406,765)

A wet December was a welcome start to the winter, but the historic drought is not close to being over. It will take more than a few powerful storms to refill the state’s depleted reservoirs.

The Stanislaus River watershed – which provides runoff into New Melones – was so dry that December’s storms barely made a dent in the shortfall there. Instead, the parched ground in the mountains soaked up much of the moisture with little “extra” runoff making it to the reservoir.

On Jan. 19, New Melones held 555,825 acre-feet. That was just 40% of its historic average for the date – 1,406,765 acre-feet. It is the lowest the reservoir has been at this time of the year since the drought of the early 1990s and a vivid reminder about how little rain and snow have fallen the past three years.

Water experts predict it will take multiple years of above-average precipitation to recover from this drought. There still is a long ways to go. January was very dry. Whatever happens the rest of this winter, conserving and efficiently using water still will be critical in 2015.

River Restoration: Video Highlights Salmon Project

A salmon success story is taking shape on the Stanislaus River and a new video shines a light on the key players, including the Oakdale Irrigation District.

Entitled “**Replenishing a River: Stanislaus River Honolulu Bar Restoration,**” the 11-minute video uses underwater photography, still images and narration to illustrate an important fish habitat project completed in 2012. The Oakdale Irrigation District and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service split the cost of the \$1.1 million project. The work was done over two years by biologists, engineers and technicians at FISHBIO as well as OID employees.



Groundwater Pumping, Water Transfers Not Related

One local media outlet consistently has carried misleading stories inaccurately linking the amount of groundwater pumped annually by OID with the district's strategic business decision to transfer surplus water to willing buyers.

Let's be clear:

OID DOES **NOT** PUMP GROUNDWATER AND TRANSFER IT ELSEWHERE.

OID pumps groundwater to meet customer demands where there are constriction points in our canal system. We do this via a network of 28 deep wells, most of which were installed in the 1940s and early 1950s.

When the irrigation demands of our customers have been met and there is a declared surplus, the district transfers that surplus surface water to other water agencies in need. Those transfers began in 1998 as a means to protect that water under state law and to raise the funds necessary to do system improvements while not unreasonably burdening our constituents with higher water rates. All money received from water transfers goes into OID's capital construction budget to rebuild and modernize its infrastructure. That investment is paying off. Our drought resiliency the past three years is evidence of that.

Today, OID delivers water more efficiently than ever to our 2,900 agricultural customers – and pumps less groundwater than at any time in our history. The more we modernize and save water, the more water is available for our farmers, creating surpluses to transfer and money to reinvest in our conveyance system, saving more water and reducing how much we pump.

Using water transfers to pay for infrastructure upgrades is a winning formula that is reflected in our pumping data:

- Between 1998 and 2014 – with water transfers in place – OID's deep wells pumped an average of 6,762 acre-feet of groundwater annually.
- From 1981 to 1997 – with no water transfers in place – OID's deep wells pumped an average of 8,513 acre-feet each year.
- And from 1964 to 1980 – again with no water transfers in place – OID's deep wells pumped an average of 10,827 acre-feet each year.

In 2014 – in the third year of statewide drought – OID pumped about 17,000 acre-feet. But that was an anomaly. Similar short-term increases were seen last year in other San Joaquin Valley districts. OID also did not transfer water in 2014.

The fact is that OID pumps less water from the aquifer than during any comparative period in its history. We are committed to doing that moving forward.

Historically, tens of thousands of Chinook salmon returned to the Stanislaus River to spawn each fall. In contrast, only about 6,000 returned in 2014. Diminished habitat in the river is a key factor in the decline.

The Honolulu Bar project focused on a 2½-acre site that was part of a larger gravel dredge bar in the river about halfway between Oakdale and Knights Ferry. The intent was to restore and, in some cases, create vital habitat for adults to spawn and juvenile fish to thrive until they begin their journey downstream through the Delta and San Francisco Bay to the Pacific Ocean.





NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
OAKDALE, CA
PERMIT NO. 23

Board of Directors

Frank Clark – District 1
Herman Doornenbal – District 2
Steve Webb – District 3
Al Bairos – District 4
Jack Alpers – District 5

The OID **PIPELINE**

Financial Support: The On-Farm Conservation Funding Program gives landowners an innovative way to pay for much-needed irrigation efficiency projects.

The Drought Isn't Over: It will take more than a rainy December to end California's three-year drought. OID continues to responsibly manage our water resources.

Trends in Pumping: OID pumps less groundwater than ever before thanks to long-term investments to modernize our water delivery systems.

River Restoration: A new video highlights an exciting project partially funded by OID to improve salmon habitat on the Stanislaus River.

How To Reach Us

Office: 847-0341

Emergency Irrigation Water: 988-3750

Emergency Domestic Water: 606-6582

Email: info@oakdaleirrigation.com

Address: 1205 East F St., Oakdale