



March 2015

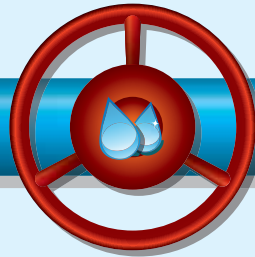
**Mission statement**

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



## Drought's Impact Far-Reaching in 2015

The early promise of a wet December has given way to harsh reality: Far from being over, the California drought, now in its fourth year, is worse than ever.

And though we at the Oakdale Irrigation District have strived to responsibly manage and conserve our water resources the past three years, there is no avoiding the impact of another winter of historically low Sierra snowpack.

Barring a miracle spring of significant rain and snow, the implications are clear across our 62,000-acre service area: Water will be at a premium this summer.

What does that mean for our 2,900 agricultural customers? Be very frugal. Conserve every drop. Plan ahead. Prepare to make some difficult decisions.

**"The goal is to get through September with minimal impact."**  
– Steve Knell, OID general manager

New Melones and Tulloch reservoirs could drop to their lowest levels in 23 years as the combination of drought and government-mandated fish flows on the Stanislaus River take full effect.

The snowpack in the Central Sierra is forecast to be only 17% to 19% of normal – the worst since 1991. Normal runoff into New Melones is 1.1 million acre-feet of water. This year, 240,000 AF is predicted.

OID and the South San Joaquin Irrigation District share water storage rights at

### Heads up for farmers

*Our Board of Directors formally declared a drought at their March 3 meeting. Irrigation season began March 16. Here's what else farmers should know about 2015:*

- **Waste will not be tolerated.** Minimal runoff will be allowed from fields, pastures and orchards. Customers will be given one warning. On the second offense of excessive runoff, their water privileges may be cut off for the rest of the season.
- **Fines will be enforced.** Proven cases of water theft or taking water outside of scheduled rotations will result in a \$1,500 fine for the first offense, and a \$2,500 fine and loss of water rights this year for the second.
- **Allotments are likely.** In April, our Board of Directors will consider whether to adopt appropriate water allotments for this irrigation season.

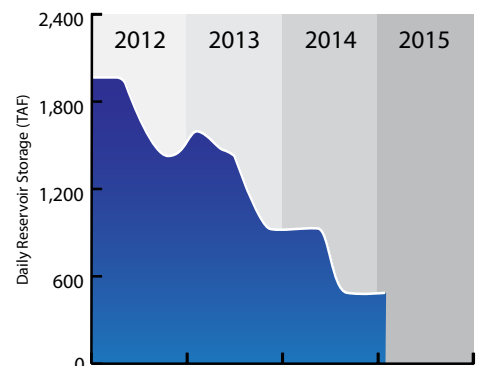
■ **Surcharges possible.** The base rate for water this season is \$27 per acre. In April, our Board of Directors will consider whether to impose a first-ever drought surcharge of \$6.10 per acre to partially offset increased electrical costs related to groundwater pumping.

New Melones with the federal Bureau of Reclamation, which operates the reservoir. This year, each district expects to receive about 75,000 AF less than normal to deliver to farmers.

Federal and state rules for salmon and steelhead trout require water to be released down the river at specific temperatures at specific times. OID and SSJID are working with the bureau to relax flows for fish and water quality requirements in the river. Doing so could get us through one more drought year, but leaves few options for next year if the reservoirs in the basin do not begin to refill.

By the fall, New Melones – with a capacity of 2.4 million AF -- could be reduced to 80,000 AF. This would leave no water flowing in the Stanislaus River except for the 67,000 AF OID and SSJID own in Tulloch Lake. That reservoir would be the last usable water to meet fish flows or irrigation demand – or both.

### New Melones Storage



# On-Farm Conservation Program likely delayed

Despite interest from more than 100 customers, a first-ever On-Farm Conservation Program appears unlikely to happen in 2015. OID directors put the program on hold because of the drought and a protest by former board member Louis Brichetto, who threatened legal action unless a study was completed to address “significant environmental effects.”

The issue is the timing. An environmental impact report takes about 90 days, meaning farmers wouldn’t know until July whether the program would be available to help them pay for water efficiency projects.

“I think the risk is not so much to OID, it’s to the farmers who want to participate in the program. I don’t think we should burden them with that,” said Director Frank Clark at the March 3 board meeting.

The conservation program is the first of its kind in the region and is intended to meet new state mandates. In return for voluntarily taking their land out of production for one year, enrollees would be paid 95% of the value of the crop water they would have used – 20% in cash and 75% in credits to make long-term improvements.

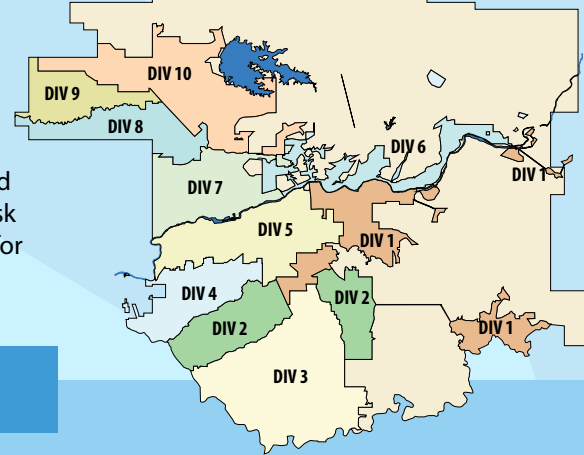
The non-crop water the farmer would have applied – roughly 3,000 acre-feet -- would be put back into storage to offset drought-related water shortages.

The money would come from the California Department of Water Resources and San Luis & Delta Mendota Water Authority, which have agreed to buy an estimated 10,000 acre-feet of saved water for \$400 an acre foot.

OID General Manager Steve Knell said the ongoing drought also compromised the effort. “I think there is substantial risk we won’t have enough water this year for the program,” he said.

Even if directors decide in April to delay the program this year while an environmental report is completed, it can be considered again in 2016, Knell said.

## Distribution System Operator Divisions



## DSO Contact Numbers

### SOUTH SIDE

DIVISION 1 988-3532	DIVISION 2 988-2882	DIVISION 3 988-2881	DIVISION 4 988-2883	DIVISION 5 988-2884
Randy Walker	Chris Farris	Erik Peterson	Frank Coehlo	John Scheftic
Leon Van Diepen	Leon Van Diepen	Leon Van Diepen	Anthony Nunez	Anthony Nunez
Luke Bell	Jimmy Blase	Jimmy Blase	TBD	TBD
Jeff Dove	Jeff Dove	Jeff Dove	Jeff Dove	Jeff Dove

### NORTH SIDE

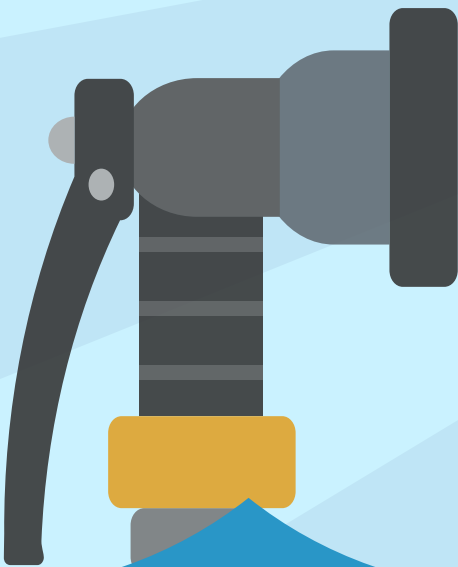
DIVISION 6 988-3065	DIVISION 7 988-3066	DIVISION 8 988-3067	DIVISION 9 988-1802	DIVISION 10 988-3068
Josh Loveall	Vince Rocha	Matt Dickens	Mike Ayers	Marc Oberkamper
Lori Hawkins	Lori Hawkins	Jim Long	Jim Long	Jim Long
Luke Bell	David Grenzebach	David Grenzebach	Richie Lertora	Richie Lertora
Gary Green	Gary Green	Gary Green	Gary Green	Gary Green

Day DSO Night DSO Day Relief Night Relief

Night Rover (All Districts) - Lance Amarante: 216-8628

## PG&E offers rebates for pump repairs

PG&E has a special rebate program targeting farmers who need to fix their pumps. It can provide up to half the repair cost. For more information, call PG&E field representative Sarah Faridi at (209) 756-8835 or go to [pge.com/drought](http://pge.com/drought). Funds are limited, so those interested are encouraged to act soon.



# Health issues force longtime Director Jack Alpers to resign



Longtime Director Jack Alpers resigned Feb. 28 from the OID board, citing "serious health problems."

Alpers, 79, was first elected in November 2001 to represent District 5 southwest of Oakdale and was re-elected in 2005, 2009 and 2013. He is a retired large animal veterinarian who grew up in Oakdale and has a long history of civic involvement.

"Jack was a businessman, he knew how to balance the books and he knew what was needed financially for an organization of our size," praised Steve Knell, OID's general manager. "He had a passion for water and he was an important advocate a decade ago for water resources planning."

"Jack brought integrity and unique insight to this board," said Director Steve Webb. "He always had OID in mind when making decisions. He'll be missed."

*Because Jack Alpers' term does not expire until 2017, the remaining four OID directors have decided to appoint a replacement until November -- when District 5 voters can select someone to finish the final two years of Alpers' term.*

*Applicants must live in District 5, own land within the OID and be registered to vote. March 16 was the deadline for those to return completed applications. Selected applicants will be interviewed by the other directors April 7 at 1 p.m. and an appointment announced by the end of April.*

## Stanislaus County offers assistance to owners of failing domestic wells

One of the unfortunate side effects of the drought and increased groundwater pumping all across Stanislaus County are problems associated with shallow, residential wells. County officials are particularly interested in people whose domestic wells have gone dry or threaten to soon. Forms to report well problems can be obtained by calling the Environmental Resources Department at 525-6700 or by going to the county's website at [www.stancounty.com](http://www.stancounty.com) and clicking on "**Report a Well Problem.**" There also are low-interest loans available from the county for qualifying well owners. Forms in English or Spanish are available by calling Environmental Resources or by clicking on "**Water Well Loan Application**" on the county's website.

## Students learn lessons about salmon lifespan



OID is proud to again support a popular lesson taught to fourth-graders in the Oakdale Joint Unified School District. This year, nearly 400 students at Cloverland, Fair Oaks, Magnolia and Sierra View elementary schools will learn about the lifespan of Chinook salmon in the Stanislaus River. The students combine classroom projects – including raising baby salmon in special chillers on campus – with field trips in November to see adults spawn and another in March to release the tiny fry into the river.



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### **Board of Directors**

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

### **In The Pipeline**

#### **Drought Getting Worse:**

*Barring a miracle of springtime rain and snow, the four-year drought will have major impact on farmers this summer.*

#### **On-Farm Program on Hold:**

*A threat of legal action by Louis Brichetto likely has delayed for one year an innovative program to that would help farmers pay for water-efficiency projects by voluntarily idling fields.*

#### **Moving Ahead to Replace Alpers:**

*Longtime Director Jack Alpers has resigned for health reasons. A successor is expected to be appointed by the end of April.*

#### **Help for Well Owners:**

*Stanislaus County has programs in place to assist owners of domestic wells that have gone dry or threaten to during the drought.*

#### **How To Reach Us**

**Office: 847-0341**  
**Emergency Irrigation Water: 988-3750**  
**Emergency Domestic Water: 606-6582**  
**Email: [info@oakdaleirrigation.com](mailto:info@oakdaleirrigation.com)**  
**Address: 1205 East F St., Oakdale**

## The OID **PIPELINE**