

Water Year 2017 in Review

by Steve Knell, General Manager

No better way to start the New Year than a wrap up of 2017, which turned out to be a year for the record books. New Melones Reservoir, which can store up to 2.4 million acre feet (MAF), started the 2017 water year on October 1, 2016 with a measly 527,400 acre feet. That's 22% of its capacity. A record rainfall and runoff year allowed the 4th largest dam in California to finish the water year on September 30 2017 with 2.02 MAF or at 92% of capacity. Between those two dates however, the total inflow to New Melones, per Government records, was 2.9 MAF. If you're doing the math, the pass through of water through New Melones was 1.41 MAF! Basin precipitation as measured at Strawberry was 76.07 inches and only second to 1982-83 water year of 76.65 inches. Average in the basin is 38.84 inches.

The State has implemented legislation that will change the face of groundwater usage and management in the Central Valley forever. The Groundwater Sustainability Management Act (2014) (SGMA), has put all the Central Valley on a fast track for compliance. No one is exempt. All cities, irrigation districts, and those not in either, will have to comply. There are small water user exemptions but for the most part, we are all going to be impacted. Back in January, OID, MID, and the cities of Modesto, Oakdale, Riverbank, Waterford and the County of Stanislaus began forming a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA), to begin development of the organizational structure for management of groundwater in our basin, called the Modesto Subbasin. The compliance deadline for GSA formation was June 2017, which was accomplished through a lot of hard work by the staffs from the above agencies.

If not enough mandates from the State, at the beginning of 2017 all the water and irrigation districts who divert and use surface water, made their public comments to the State's Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan Substitute Environmental Document. The State's Plan is to take 40% of all the river flows generated by the Stanislaus, Tuolumne and Merced Rivers and send it to the ocean. Using some bizarre and voodoo science processes, and ignoring the other ills of invasive species, non-native fish predation, waste discharges from cities, climate change, poor habitat, etc., they believe that sending our water to the ocean is going to improve delta health. Go figure. In an effort to avoid a decade of litigation the three rivers and their diverters, OID, MID, TID, CCSF and MeID have been meeting with the Governor's office and other state resource agencies to see if there is

enough common ground and common sense to come up with a workable option. We should know something in early February if there is hope in that effort.

In March OID awarded a construction contract to Drill Tech Drilling and Shoring to bore a new tunnel that will be replacing a failing section of the OID's South Main Canal. That \$15 million project is being paid with cash from water sales revenues of OID's surplus water. That's a bill you won't have to pay.

More good news, OID was the recipient of a \$3 million matching grant from the State's Proposition 1 Water Bond monies. The grant money is going to the expansion of OID's Rubicon Total Channel Control Technology System. This system will expand canal water control abilities in the OID service area and result in better, quicker and more responsive water service to our water customers. OID's \$3 million contribution is being paid by, you guessed it, water sales revenues of surplus water. Another bill you won't pay.

In June OID finalized the last of 1,100 acres of annexations to its service area. Since 2012, OID has expanded its agricultural base by over 10,000 acres and has committed over 30,000 acre feet of conserved water to that local benefit. This water was generated through conservation projects paid for from the sale of surplus waters. Without this money OID could not have generated the water to annex these lands resulting in both a benefit to our local Ag economy and to our community at large.

In July OID lost a very strong and committed agricultural representative on its Board, Gary Osmundson. His departure was the result of him moving out of his district division. Gary brought a depth and breadth of knowledge to the Board that will be greatly missed.

Another departure of significant consequence by one who has provided a lifetime of selfless service and devotion to OID is Steve Webb. Having decided after 32 years to devote time to his own life and family needs, he decided not to run for re-election. Steve is the longest serving member of the OID in its history. His guidance and rational decision making over the years has placed OID as a premier irrigation district in the Central Valley. We wish Steve and his family all the best in the coming years.

As a cap to the end of 2017 was the Board's nomination of Gail Altieri, Director Division 1, as OID's first woman officer on the Board. Congratulations!

OID HIGHLIGHTS OF 2017



2 Mile Bar Tunnel

Board President Steve Webb visiting the 2-Mile Bar Tunnel Project which began construction in July of this year. The 5,800 foot tunnel is expected to be completed in time for the 2019 Water Season at a cost of \$15 million, for which OID will pay cash! OID's water sales revenues at work for you.

November Election Results



New Board Member and President
Tom Orvis
Director Div. 3



New Board Member
Brad DeBoer
Director Div. 5



Re-Elected Board Member
Herman Doornenbal
Director Div. 2