

the Grower

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Allotment, water available increases for 2012

Better than average rain and snowfall in March and significant precipitation in early April have helped improve the water year outlook. So much so that the Turlock Irrigation District Board of Directors increased water available for the 2012 Irrigation Season at its April 17 meeting.

This year's irrigation allotment was raised to 30 inches, and the Board also decided to make an additional 10 inches available for purchase above the allotment, for a capped amount of 40 inches. In late February, when conditions were dry, the Board set the 2012 allotment at 24 inches with six inches available above the allotment, for a 30-inch cap. The Board also set the irrigation season to run March 8 through Oct. 10, pending weather and crop conditions.

The increase in available water comes on the heels of the April 1 Department of Water Resources (DWR) snow surveys, which showed that snowpack levels affecting the Tuolumne River watershed were less than half of normal. Additionally, the 5.99 inches of precipitation in March marked the first time since September that a month's precipitation totals bettered the DWR 50-year average. (5.42 inches in March is the DWR average.)

As of April 15, the total precipitation to the watershed stood at 21.17 inches, or 64.8 percent of average for that date.

Prior to April, there were concerns about just how dry the 2012 year could be. And TID is still evaluating the potential of 2012 as possibly one of the driest in 115 years of record keeping. To get an idea of just how dry it had been on the Tuolumne River since last October, the Full Natural Flow of the river at the start of March was around 150,000 acre-feet (AF), compared to DWR's 50-year average of about 500,000 AF.

In addition to the water stored in Don Pedro Reservoir used for irrigation, TID is expecting to pump about 120,000 AF of groundwater this year, about twice the amount of normal years. TID will also operate the canal system as efficient as possible, limiting spills to 5 percent.

While it's uncertain what the weather holds for the current water year, TID will continue to monitor and balance long-term water storage and current water needs.



With the irrigation allotment to growers being increased, more water from Don Pedro Reservoir will be flowing via canals like this one to irrigate crops.

October 10
Final day of irrigation season

Throughout November
Water Use Statements mailed

December 20
Water transfers must be completed

Interested in receiving
The Grower
newsletter
**via email
rather than a
printed copy?**
Please contact
us via email at
info@tid.org
or by calling
209.883.8448.

INSIDE

- Proposal to modify 2013 irrigation rate structure
- Q&A: Volumetric pricing, rates & measurement
- TID film available

TID proposing to modify irrigation rate structure for 2013

In order to fully comply with Senate Bill x7-7, a state law that, in part, mandates water conservation for agricultural water users, Turlock Irrigation District has proposed moving to volumetric pricing, rather than the current 'allotment-plus-additional-water-available' rate structure.

Volumetric pricing is charging for water based on quantity (or volume) delivered.

Though TID is required by July 2012 to have pricing structures that charge by the quantity of water delivered, any changes to the rate structure would take place in 2013. TID's current structure is not fully compliant with SBx7-7.

Part of the proposal includes a potential rate increase. The last time water rates were increased was in 2010, and there remains a deficit for the costs of delivering water. This proposed increase would help cover a portion of these costs.

Of course, before any water rates are modified, TID will follow the Proposition 218 process, which includes notifying growers about the proposed rate structure change, notifying them of their right to

Public Hearing

WHEN: June 12, 2012 at 9 a.m.

WHERE: TID Board Room, 333 E. Canal Dr., Turlock

WHAT: In compliance with state law, the public hearing will be held to consider a proposal by the TID to adjust the 2013 irrigation water rate structure.

WHO: Anyone, specifically irrigation water customers, who is interested in discussing the proposed changes.

More on the web: www.tid.com/news-resources/public-notice



formally protest the change, and holding a Public Hearing on the matter prior to Board action on the proposal, among other items.

The Public Hearing is set for June 12, 2012 at 9 a.m. inside the TID Boardroom, located at 333 E. Canal Drive in Turlock.

Informational packets were mailed to landowners in April, notifying them of the proposal, Public Hearing and the potential changes to the water rate structure. Identical information is available online at www.tid.com/news-resources/public-notice.

Current Irrigation Rates	Topic	Proposed 2013 Irrigation Rates
Allotment available for fixed price, tiered pricing above allotment	Type of rate structure	Fixed charge per acre, water charged based on amount used; tiered pricing
Allotment: typically 48 inches (\$26 per acre) Tier 2: \$15 per acre-foot, up to 1 acre-foot Tier 3: \$20 per acre-foot, additional available	Normal Year Water Rates	Fixed charge: \$23 per acre Water Charges: Tier 1: \$2 per acre-foot, up to 2 acre-feet Tier 2: \$3 per acre-foot, up to 2 acre-feet Tier 3: \$15 per acre-foot, up to 1 acre-foot Tier 4: \$20 per acre-foot, additional available
Allotment: typically less than 48 inches Tier 2: \$15 per acre-foot, up to 1 acre-foot Tier 3: \$20 per acre-foot, additional available <i>(In a typical dry year, the Board reduces the amount of water available, due to limited supplies.)</i>	Dry Year Water Rates	Fixed charge: \$26 per acre Water Charges: Tier 1: \$2 per acre-foot, up to 1 acre-foot Tier 2: \$3 per acre-foot, up to 1.5 acre-feet Tier 3: \$15-20 per acre-foot, up to 1 acre-foot Tier 4: \$20-25 per acre-foot, additional available <i>(In a typical dry year, the Board reduces the amount of water available, due to limited supplies.)</i>

Questions & answers: rates, pricing and more

Below are some frequently asked questions that will likely be posed related to potential changes to TID's irrigation rate structure.

Volumetric Pricing

What is volumetric pricing?

Charging by the volume of water delivered. Growers will pay for the water they use.

What law is making TID implement volumetric pricing?

Senate Bill x7-7 was signed into law in 2009. It is part of the comprehensive water package. TID is required to have a pricing structure established by July 2012; however it would not be effective until 2013.

Why isn't TID in compliance now?

Under the current rate structure, majority of growers do not reach volumetric levels for water usage.

What are some penalties if TID doesn't convert to volumetric pricing?

TID would be out of compliance with state law. TID would not be eligible for grant monies.

What about other water agencies?

Each agency is evaluating how the law applies to them, and what actions may be needed.

Why is TID proposing two rate schedules (Normal/Dry)?

In dry years there is less surface water available, causing the District to pump more water, which increases costs.

What about the billing process?

The billing process and due dates would remain the same. The District's intention would be to mail the fixed charges during the month of March with the due dates as June 20th and December 20th. The water use statement would be mailed out during the month of November, with those charges currently being due on December 31 without penalties.

Who determines the schedule for the water year and when?

Each year the TID Board of Directors will establish the total amount of water available to growers and will determine if it is a normal or dry year schedule.

Measurement

What are the water measurement requirements under the new law?

Under the new law, TID is required to measure deliveries to customers within 12% accuracy. While the existing system was designed to reliably deliver water, in some instances it was not designed to measure water to that accuracy level. In those instances, modifications may be needed. TID is reviewing the current measurement methods and facilities to determine the options available. More information will be provided later this year regarding the measurement requirements and how TID plans to comply with the new requirements.

If facility modifications are needed to meet the new measurement standards, who will be responsible for paying for it and when does the work need to be complete?

At this time, it is anticipated that the growers will need to make the improvements to the facilities downstream of the side-gate to enable measurement. The improvements will be phased in over the next three years. TID is still working on the specifics for this and will be informing growers who are impacted by the new requirements later this year.

Irrigation Water Rates

Why is TID proposing to raise rates?

The District under collects for irrigation services; this is even magnified in dry years due to pumping costs.

What if the rate increase does not pass?

To comply with state law, TID would consider implementing volumetric pricing. However the existing gap between irrigation revenue and costs would widen further.

When was the last irrigation rate increase?

The last rate increase was \$6 spread over two years (2009 & 2010). Each year the water charge (the charge for the allotment) was increased by \$3. A similar increase (\$3/year) was implemented in 2004 & 2005.

What improvements has TID made to the irrigation system?

TID has an ongoing program to improve the components of TID's canal system, such as canal lining, canal banks, drop structures, pumps, telemetry, etc.

TUSD gauging interest in ag project

Turlock Unified School District is evaluating the option of acquiring land to be used by schools for agricultural education.

Once a site is acquired, the grounds of a potential

Agricultural Field Station would house a school farm that would

be used for ag education purposes. The produce harvested on site would benefit school nutrition programs and the community.

If you are interested in learning more about this project's possibilities, call TUSD Superintendent Sonny Da Marto's office at 667-0633.



TID historical film available

More than 1,100 people saw screenings of *The Irrigationist: The Story of TID* in February.

The film was produced to serve as an educational tool to illustrate TID's rich history, as well as a way to celebrate TID's 125th Anniversary with customers.

You can purchase a copy at TID Customer Service locations in Turlock, Ceres or Patterson. DVDs are \$5 each. Limit of 5 per person. Or you can view the full-length film online at:

<http://vimeo.com/turlockid/irrigationist>

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125
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Water Statistics

Don Pedro Reservoir as of April 15

Elevation this week: 790.3 feet

Elevation last year: 797.7 feet

Average inflow: 3,100 cfs

Average outflow: 1,090 cfs

Average to TID canal: 670 cfs

visit tid.com/water/hydrological-data for up-to-the-hour data