



GCID

CURRENTS

SUMMER 2022



A Note From the General Manager

On a recent early morning drive, I came across a western pond turtle crossing one of our county roads. It was easy to see the creature had left a dry drain on one side of the road in search of wetter habitat. I stopped, picked it up and moved it to the drain it was heading for, but unfortunately, there was no better habitat to be had.

It is only the beginning of summer and our beautiful part of the Sacramento Valley, often called God's Country, is dying a slow death as historic, minimal water deliveries limit farming and, as a result, the moist environment and habitat that many of our local species rely upon. Some of those are state and federally listed endangered species, like the giant garter snake, which are often cited by corporate environmental groups as needing protection. Conveniently, those groups are quiet this year.

In addition to our land animals, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and concerned bird environmental groups have called for action this fall to protect shorebirds and their cousins that use the Pacific Flyway. The birds are accustomed to using our local refuges and surrogate wetland rice lands and streams for their stopover habitat as they move down through California. With the Klamath Basin facing historical impacts as well, birds will arrive in this area starving for food and it will be in extremely short supply.

We were able to help this year by selling the refuge supplemental water that was not purchased by water users, which offset some District expenses as detailed later in this newsletter.

Unfortunately, regulators have traded in all benefits to multiple species to try and protect one life state of winter-run salmon, and for which the data fails to give a complete story of what is really happening with these iconic fish. Our mission continues to be to improve the status of winter run salmon which in turn improves our water supply, regardless of those whose sole agenda is to take away our water. We look forward to working with fishery agencies and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation on restoration projects, monitoring, and science that will guide the recovery of winter run salmon and other salmon species on the Sacramento River.

In the meantime, I will continue to watch for western pond turtles and other struggling species and help them whenever I can.



Respectfully,
Thad Bettner

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After Landowner Distributions, District Helps Federal Refuges



This year's severe drought has limited GCID's supply from the Central Valley Project to an all-time low. The District worked with federal and state agencies on a workable operations plan to achieve a degree of certainty to operations, which resulted in an effective 18% supply.

To ensure the very limited water supply is used within the GCID service area as efficiently as possible, the District created a supplemental water pool for the first time. The District purchased water from landowners who ceded all or part of their allocated water supply for \$300 per AF.

The water was made available to willing buyers within the District at \$321.79 per AF, which covered the \$300 per AF paid to the seller and the regular \$21.79 per AF water rate.

Landowners sold approximately 20,420 AF back to the District for inclusion in the supplemental pool, and about 10,500 AF was purchased by landowners needing additional water. This left the District with surplus water it had to find a home for. Fortunately, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation wanted to buy the remaining water for the Sacramento, Delevan and Colusa wildlife refuges.

In addition to providing significant environmental benefits to the Sacramento Valley, the deal will help reduce the District's deficit to \$11.2 million. The deficit stems from the dramatic decrease in water supplies. **The sale to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation will net about \$4.2 million for the District - a positive note in an otherwise challenging year.**



FINDINGS FROM THE FIELD

Drought Year Goal: Accounting for Every Drop

By Jose Velasquez, Acting Water Supervisor

With a third season of severe drought, this year has been unlike any other in the history of Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District. As a result, the District has adopted new ways of measuring water to accurately assess use.

The field crews are doing a great job of adapting to this new assignment and metering will continue as a regular part of operations.

The District is tracking water by using various devices to get a reading on what's being used on fields where a meter is not yet available. Every parcel presents unique challenges, which dictates the type of measurement used.

Staff has meters that gauge acre-feet, gallons per minute and cubic feet per second; and also use Weir Sticks and new digital meters. The most accurate process is used to achieve a measurement, ensuring the District is being as fair to the grower as possible.



Jordan Tripp measures outflow at a landowner's inlet. Measurements and metering help GCID account for every drop of water used.

Matt Dermody takes a reading with a staff gauge at the weir where a grower is taking water. The difference between measurements taken above and below the weir reveals how much water is used.





Increased Accessibility to Canals Provides Opportunities for System Upgrades

With more of the conveyance system out of use this season due to limited deliveries, operations staff has identified areas where some needed infrastructure improvements can be addressed.

The District, with the assistance of the Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority dredge and an operator, dredged the forebay at the Hamilton City pump station in May.

Other potential project locations include:

- Ranch Weir - west of Highway 99, south of Lurline Road, in Colusa County
- 64-1a Check - southeast of Williams
- 45-2 STA 127+85 - south of Maxwell
- 48-1b STA 26+50 - southeast of Maxwell
- 48-1b STA 56+00 - southeast of Maxwell

Maintenance and water personnel will assist with water measurement and conservation throughout the summer. Some laterals and drains have been identified as needing sediment removed and will be tended to when equipment is available.

County Road and Culvert Repair Projects Near Completion



Repairs are complete on five of seven failed culverts on county roads, and two more are scheduled for replacement this summer and fall.

The overhaul was a shared project between GCID and Colusa and Glenn counties. GCID purchased the materials and performed the repairs outside of the counties' rights-of-way. The counties installed the pipe and did the work inside their rights-of-way. The two remaining culvert repairs will be made at Road W / Lateral 16-4 and Road U / Drain A-12 in Glenn County.

Culvert failures repaired or replaced:

- County Road D / Lateral 36-1
- County Road 39 / Lateral 17-1
- County Road 40 / Lateral 13-3i
- County Road WW / Lateral 13-2
- County Road S / Lateral 21-1
- Colusa County - Danley Road / Lateral 47-1

Unfortunately, after the replacement of just one culvert, Colusa County made the decision to terminate the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the District.



Welcome to GCID!

The District extended a warm welcome to the newest members of its team:



Loren Chapman,
Abatement Department

Loren was born and raised in Willows. He is married and has three children. In his spare time, Loren works his cattle ranch and is involved in 4-H.

Dylan Fusaro,
Welder/Fabricator

Dylan is a life-long resident of Colusa, where he lives with his wife and 21-month-old son.

He is a graduate of Butte College's welding program. When he's not at work, Dylan enjoys fishing and bird hunting with his family.



Employee Safety Training Nets Insurance Refund



GCID received an **\$87,602 reimbursement** from its insurance provider for increased safety training classes taken by employees. A check for the payment was presented by a representative of the Association of California Water Agencies Joint Powers Insurance Authority (ACWA/JPIA) to GCID during an April Board of Directors meeting.

Altogether, 44 GCID staff members attended 282 safety-related courses over the last year. The additional training ultimately saves the District money by reducing insurance claims.

ACWA/JPIA serves as a risk management pool covering property, liability, workers' compensation, and employee benefits. The organization offers safety training at little or no cost to members.

GCID is committed to timely and effective communications with landowners and water users. If you haven't already done so, please provide your email address and cell phone number so we can send the latest updates through electronic newsletters, robocalls and texts.

Ways to update your contact information:

- Call the office: (530) 934-8881
- Email: contact@GCID.net
- Use the kiosk/tablet at the office front counter

Join Us

The GCID Board of Directors meets on the **first and third Thursday of the month at 9 a.m.**

GCID Board Room, 344 E. Laurel St., Willows