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## 2018 Water Season Gets Off to Early Start

### Lack of rain and snow along with dry soil conditions cause Board of Directors to declare season opening on Tuesday, February 27, 2018.

**Good News, Bad News**

First the bad news, although it's not really news to anyone who has been paying attention – it hasn't been a great snow year in the Central Sierra Nevada.

But the good news is that South San Joaquin Irrigation District growers should expect to receive a full water allotment in the 2018 irrigation season, which begins on Tuesday, February 27.

"The reservoirs are nice and full," explained SSJID General Manager Peter Rietkerk. "But we're not seeing the amount of precipitation and snowpack we hope for this time of year."

In early February, the snowpack in the Central Sierra – the watershed that provides runoff to SSJID users – was 30 percent of where it should be. "We're woefully behind the curve," Rietkerk said.

The Sierra snowpack is the state's biggest reservoir, capturing winter precipitation and releasing it in the spring and summer. In an ideal year, the Sierra gets buried under feet of wet, heavy snow that melts off slowly, replenishing reservoirs around the state throughout the spring and deep into summer.

So far this year, that's not happening. Based on the current snowpack, district hydrologists are conservatively estimating that at least 275,000 acre feet of water will flow into New

Melones Reservoir this spring and summer, about a quarter of the one million acre feet the reservoir would receive in an average year.

"It's a weird year because the reservoirs are full and yet, we are experiencing a significant snow drought," Rietkerk said.

However, despite the lack of snow and inflow, SSJID is expecting to provide a full allotment of water to all its growers and meet its environmental and drinking water demands because of the amount of water already available to the District from inflow and conservation account storage in New Melones.

"We have all just recently experienced the extreme swings that California hydrology can produce," Rietkerk continued. "At SSJID, we have a responsibility to remember this time and plan strategically to build resiliency and reliability into SSJID's operations and prepare for these extremes, and every point in between. We appreciate our growers partnering with us as we plan to review our long-term water management and operational strategies to protect our water rights and

ensure our region's future success."

The dry weather did provide ideal conditions to complete a number of winter infrastructure projects in time for the upcoming irrigation season, including a new bridge over the SSJID main canal near McHenry Avenue, relining 800 feet of an upper supply canal, replacing 900 feet of pipelined distribution, and replacing intake screens in Woodward Reservoir supporting the Nick C. DeGroot Water Treatment Plant.

**Time to Recover**

The other bit of potential good news is that it's still February, and the rainy season has a couple more months to come through.

"From a statistical standpoint," Rietkerk said, "we have half of our rainy season to go from February on."

What's needed now is for the high pressure systems that have been parked off the West Coast to break up and allow Pacific storms to blow in much needed snow for the Sierras.



Your 2018 Water Operations Team

## Pressurized Water Service Rate Increases Due to Higher Electrical Consumption

Following the formula determined through a Proposition 218 rate-setting process completed in 2016, the District Board recently confirmed that the pressurization rate for those customers receiving water via the Pressurized Water Service will increase to **\$45/acre-foot**, up from \$41/acre-foot last year.

The pressurization rate is based on actual electrical costs to operate the pressurized system in the preceding year, plus \$10 for system maintenance and

improvements. The pressurization rate increased because the system was operated in 2017 at a slightly higher pressure than in 2016, which increased electrical consumption. The higher pressure was chosen after determining the optimal system pressure necessary to meet all customer needs and demands.

All District customers are subject to an agricultural water usage rate of \$24 per acre, with a minimum fee of \$50. There is also a standard volumetric charge of \$3 per

acre-foot for the first 48 inches of water, and \$10 per acre-foot for water usage over 48 inches of water.

Customers will receive monthly bills from SSJID for the volumetric portion of their water charges, with the remaining flat rate charges being collected by the County of San Joaquin.

The District would like to remind you to keep your account current and pay your monthly bills during business hours prior to their due date

to prevent any irrigation service interruptions. If your monthly bills are not paid within the 15-day grace period after your bill is due, irrigation service will be withheld and there will be no exceptions. Your division manager will not be able to release water to your operation until your bill is paid in full. The District accepts multiple payment methods including in-person at the District main office, via mail, and through online accounts on our website. Questions? Please call (209) 249-4608.

## District Undertakes Studies and Construction Projects

SSJID, as it continually strives to be proactive and diligent with system planning and maintenance, has undertaken numerous studies and performed necessary winter maintenance, all to benefit our customers.

### Current Studies

**Master Plan Study for French Camp Outlet Canal (FCOC):** SSJID and the City of Manteca will be jointly participating in a study to help evaluate existing and future capacity needs of the FCOC to help plan for City growth and to ensure that the District has adequate capacity and ability to effectively maintain and improve its system in the future. The study will likely take about nine months to complete.

**Joint Supply Canal Hazard Study:** Condor Earth Technologies recently completed an update of a nearly 10-year old study identifying hazards to its main diversion conveyance facilities and recommending measures to mitigate and/or avoid those hazards in the future. One of the preferred recommendations included investigating future tunnel facilities that could bypass and eliminate potential hazards to these facilities. We are expecting to begin a feasibility study of the recommended tunnel alternatives in 2018.

**Woodward Reservoir Inundation Mapping:** We recently completed inundation mapping as required by Department of Safety Of Dams. The inundation map identifies potential areas at risk in the event of a reservoir failure. This added scrutiny is in response to the recent events in Oroville.

**Main Distribution Canal (MDC) Geotechnical Investigation:** Several areas along the MDC have noticeable erosion issues. The District hired Kleinfelder to assist the District with investigating means and methods for the stabilization of canal banks along the MDC.

**Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA):** The South San Joaquin Groundwater Sustainability Agency, a partnership between SSJID and the cities of Ripon and Escalon, is working toward SGMA compliance with other Eastern San Joaquin Subbasin agencies. Recently, basin partners selected a consultant and received a grant to assist in development of a basin-wide groundwater sustainability plan to meet state groundwater requirements.



District team member Bryan Kennedy prepares to crawl pipe for a winter maintenance project.

### Winter Construction Projects

Aside from routine maintenance projects, District crews worked on the following projects this winter:

**Lateral "Web":** Replacement of approximately 900 feet of pipeline from station 40+00-49+00, located near the intersection of Fig Avenue and Oleander Avenue.

**Lateral "QF":** In lieu of replacing 600 feet of pipeline, crews installed a control box and automation to help keep the pressure off the pipeline and regulate sprinkler flows. The project is located on the north side of Hwy 120 between North Ripon Road and Jack Tone Road.

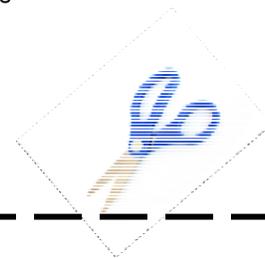
**Lateral "V":** Lining of approximately 1,400 feet of canal between stations 180-194 located along Highland Avenue in Ripon.

**Main Supply Canal:** Lining an approximately 800-foot section of canal beginning just downstream of the Joint Supply Canal, a distribution canal shared with Oakdale Irrigation District. The work was necessary to eliminate canal leaks.

**Rossier Road Storm Pond:** Excavation of a new pond and upsizing a pipeline that connects the pond to Lateral "B"-15 in an effort to alleviate drainage issues at that location.

## 2018 Water Department Contact Information

<b>Division 1</b>	Ryan Thrasher Sean Jefferson	652-9793	<b>Division 6</b>	Michael Donahue Mark Schneringer	652-2409
<b>Division 2</b>	Andrew McDonald Bob Anderson	652-9784	<b>Division 4-6 Relief</b>	Jeff Hammond Nelson Matos	
<b>Division 1-2 Relief</b>	Anthony Podesto Chris Looney		<b>Operations/ Water Superintendent</b>	Frank Avila	495-8927
<b>Division 3</b>	Randy Sprinkle Josh Stanley	652-9775	<b>Assistant Water Supervisor</b>	Joe Hasten	652-9888
<b>Division 4</b>	Bryan Kennedy Rob Shipman	652-7025	<b>Field Maintenance Superintendent</b>	John Briggs	652-2857
<b>Division 3-4 Relief</b>	Trenton Fereria Ken Bedsaul		<b>24 Hour Emergency # (209)249-4632</b>		
<b>Division 5</b>	Joe Lourenco Jason Wirstlin	652-3427			



## SSJID Management Staffing Updates

As always, there are bittersweet moments when we have to say goodbye to our devoted employees after many years of service and wish them well in retirement. On the flip side of the coin, we are pleased to welcome and congratulate their replacements.

Sam Bologna, our engineering department manager retired after working for SSJID in various capacities for 46 years. Sam was the longest-term employee SSJID had. We are grateful for the many contributions Sam made over his years here—we called him our District historian due to his involvement in so many of the District’s projects and initiatives. He will certainly be missed! Promoted into Sam’s position is Forrest Killingsworth, the District’s former associate civil engineer, who has served the District since 2012.

Second is Steve Emrick, our former general counsel for 17 years. While he is continuing to work with SSJID on a part-time basis as special counsel for retail electric, he expects to be fully retired in April or May 2018. Replacing Steve as general counsel is Mia Brown, a local attorney who was hired in August 2017 to work alongside Steve gaining from his experience and legal advice.

Last is the retirement of Joe Catanzarite, who rose through the ranks to eventually become operations/water superintendent. Joe retired after over 33 years of service last December. Frank Avila has been chosen as Joe’s replacement. Frank previously served as the District’s telemetry systems and MDC Supervisor and has been with the District for nearly 31 years.

We wish to say “Thank You” to our three retirees who served the District with their loyalty and hard work. We offer them best wishes for a wonderful retirement. We look forward to our new managers’ success in their positions and their contributions to the SSJID management team in fulfilling the District’s mission and vision for our customers. Please congratulate them if you see them in the community or at the office!



*On left, Sam Bologna, retired engineering department manager.*



*On right, Forrest Killingsworth, promoted to engineering department manager.*



*On left, Steve Emrick, set to fully retire as District general counsel in April or May.*



*On right, Mia Brown, the District’s new general counsel.*



*On left, Joe Catanzarite, retired operations/water superintendent.*



*On right, Frank Avila, who was recently promoted to operations/water superintendent.*



## Providing Water Since 1909

South San Joaquin Irrigation District  
11011 East Highway 120  
Manteca, CA 95336

### SSJID Leadership

Key staff and elected officials include:

President **Dale Kuil**

Vice President **Dave Kamper**

Director **John Holbrook**

Director **Robert Holmes**

Director **Ralph Roos**

General Manager:

**Peter Rietkerk**

Assistant General Manager:

**Bere Lindley**

General Counsel:

**Mia Brown**

The SSJID Board meets at 9:00 AM every second and fourth Tuesday of the month. Meetings are open to the public and are held at the SSJID Headquarters located at 11011 East Highway 120 in Manteca. If you would like more information, please visit our website at [www.ssjid.com](http://www.ssjid.com), where you can view upcoming agendas, approved Board minutes, and a map of District divisions.

## SSJID Retail Electric Plan Update

Since 2004 the District has endeavored to become the retail electricity provider in our service area. After many years of planning, financial projections and feasibility studies, the San Joaquin Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) gave SSJID's plan approval and said "you can do it," in 2014. In 2016, after a public hearing, the District's board adopted a Resolution of Necessity allowing it to move forward with a lawsuit against PG&E to acquire their facilities through a process called eminent domain. The board believes this action is necessary for the public benefits of local control, public transparency and accountability, and reduced electric rates.

PG&E sued LAFCo over three conditions of its approval of SSJID's retail electric project (the sufficiency of our environmental review, feasibility of providing a 15% discount and ability to make payments in-lieu of property taxes). The District has successfully defended the ability to offer a 15% discount condition. However, PG&E believes that LAFCo did not have the authority to impose payments made in-lieu of taxes. PG&E appealed the judge's ruling that it was too early to

rule on this condition's constitutionality and that the condemnation court would make that decision.

In October 2017, the San Joaquin County Superior Court ruled that we cannot constitutionally make in-lieu of tax payments to the county because SSJID, as a public agency, is tax-exempt. Furthermore, the same court also dismissed the District's eminent domain case without adequate comment or explanation for its actions. SSJID is appealing this decision.

Our retail electric plan is now facing numerous court appeals in an attempt to resolve outstanding legal challenges brought by PG&E. We expected them at some point in the legal process but did not believe they would be as likely during the early stages. PG&E's strategy, which follows a playbook widely used by independently-owned electric utilities to squash local retail efforts, is to use all possible legal means to delay or prevent us from purchasing their distribution system and provide retail electric service to our communities.

While these developments are disappointing, the District knew from the beginning that it would encounter many difficult obstacles in implementing its retail electric project, and has endured many already to achieve its current progress without adverse financial impacts on our growers. We continue to plan for and make capital improvements, invest in water resources master planning, groundwater management, protecting our senior water rights and other projects meant to preserve and enhance service for our grower community.

***"SSJID operates many successful projects that overcame time, skepticism and adversity before their true benefits were realized. These projects serve as reminders of what is possible for our customers and our region when District determination, guided by an altruistic public purpose, overcomes and ultimately achieves success. We believe the electric project will have the same result."***

*Peter Rietkerk, SSJID general manager*