



Water News

WESTLANDS WATER DISTRICT

MARCH 2017

PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE

Contradiction in Water Policy

In 2016, annual precipitation was average for the Central Valley and above average for northern California. But the allocation of Central Valley Project water to public water agencies that serve farmers south of the Delta was only 5%. The federal government blamed the low allocation of water on hydrological conditions, rather than environmental regulations that limited pumping of water and prevented water from being moved through the system to communities south of the Delta.

This year, hydrological conditions are vastly different--there is great hope that the allocation will be different as well. Indeed, California is experiencing one of the wettest years on record. But just two weeks ago, the Federal Bureau of Reclamation was unable to make an allocation to those same public water agencies. It did estimate that it would be able to supply approximately 900,000 acre-feet of water, which amounts to a 25% allocation. But final word on the allocation has been delayed until late March, more than a month after allocations are to be made under the terms of water service contracts. Why? Because the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) was unable to approve the allocations.

A 25% allocation represents an improvement over the 0% allocation in 2014 and 2015, dry years, and the 5% allocation in 2016, an average year, but is completely antithetical to the extremely wet conditions that exist in the state. Reservoirs are in distress because of too much water, rivers are overflowing their banks, water tables are replenishing, and more than 8 trillion gallons of water has already been sent to the ocean in the past 5 months. Mother Nature has done her share to lift the state from a water crisis, but it appears the broken system is still unable to deliver water to communities in desperate need. So what's the problem?

The answer is simple. The laws, regulations, and biological opinions, namely the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan, the Central Valley Project Improvement

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IN THE NEWS

"CO-EQUAL" GOALS OF WATER RELIABILITY AND DELTA PROTECTION DESERVE MORE THAN LIP SERVICE

Fox & Hounds: Westlands' Deputy General Manager Johnny Amaral encourages a return to original intentions and a comprehensive approach to water supply.

[READ FULL OP-ED](#)

CROPS AND CLIMATE

Your Central Valley: A look at the complex planning process for a growing season in the face of uncertainty.

[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

FARMERS SCRATCHING HEADS OVER ANNOUNCEMENT

Hanford Sentinel: In spite of abundant rain, some CVP growers are still anxiously awaiting an allocation announcement.

[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

FEDERAL AGENCIES WORK TO CREATE WATER SHORTAGE

Ag Alert: Bureaucracy could strike to prevent farmers from reaping the benefits of overflowing reservoirs.

[READ FULL OP-ED](#)

WILL WESTSIDE FARMERS RECEIVE FULL WATER ALLOCATION?

Western Farm Press: Delayed allocation decisions from the Bureau of Reclamation present challenges and rouse concern.

[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

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CALENDAR

MAR 21 WWD Board Meeting

MAR 21 Annual Water Users' Workshop

APR 18 WWD Board Meeting

What's New: Important Notices

Annual Water Users' Workshop

Westlands' annual water users' workshop will be held on Tuesday, March 21, 2017, at 1:30 p.m., at the District's Five Points Field Office which is located at 23050 W. Mt. Whitney, Five Points, CA 93624. District staff will provide updates on District activities and other matters.

Save the Date
for the
**7TH ANNUAL
WEST SIDE LUNCHEON FUNDRAISER**
Thursday, May 25th
11:30-1:00 p.m.
Harris Ranch Restaurant
24505 W Dorris Ave, Coalinga, CA

If you would like to be a table sponsor, purchase tickets, or receive details regarding the Luncheon, please call (559) 266-3117. You can also email your request to schaney@bgclubfc.org or fax to (559) 266-0664.

All Proceeds Benefit the Huron & Firebaugh Boys & Girls Clubs

Annual Westside Luncheon for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Fresno County

Mark your calendars for the annual Boys & Girls Clubs of Fresno County Westside Luncheon, May 25th at Harris Ranch! Westlands Water District is a proud supporter of Boys & Girls Clubs and continues to champion opportunities for youth in our community. Luncheon attendees will hear about impactful programming the Clubs offer while enjoying a delicious Central Valley meal. All proceeds benefit the Huron and Firebaugh Boys & Girls Club.

Water Everywhere!



San Luis Reservoir, at capacity, March 12

PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE

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Act, and the Endangered Species Act, which are designed to balance water delivery with environmental protection have failed. Regardless of the amount of snow and rain the state receives, the laws have created regulatory water shortages across the entire state, and ironically, they have failed the species they were designed to save. The impacts of these laws vary based on circumstances present in a particular year, but the impacts of an unreliable water delivery system are felt no matter how much it rains. This situation is a classic case of government unable to change in the face of failed policies.

Also, the process itself is flawed. Under a biological opinion issued in 2009, the Bureau of Reclamation is required to confer with the NMFS regarding the hydrological conditions to determine the appropriate amount of water allocated to contractors. But rather than improving the operations, the consultation process has delayed decision-making—to the detriment of farmers who must make real world decisions about financing, labor, and water supply. For example, this year the consultation process has delayed the initial allocation announcement to allow the fish agencies to further develop their cold water plan, despite the fact that Shasta is full and the Sierra snowpack is massive.

Sometimes it is hard to pinpoint the cause of a problem; but other times, conditions arise that reveal a point of clarity and the cause of the problem is exposed for everyone to see. We are at that point now. The laws governing California water supply are not functioning properly or with any common sense in a year of overwhelming precipitation and snowpack. And if they cannot function this year, after record precipitation and 2016 Congressional action to improve the process, fundamental changes must be made for them to ever function correctly. It is obvious we need greater reform of the laws governing our water system. Let's not wait until the next drought.

Johnny Amaral
Deputy General Manager of External Affairs
Westlands Water District

Also appeared in Fox and Hounds Daily on Wednesday, March 15, 2017:
<http://www.foxandhoundsdaily.com/2017/03/contradiction-water-policy/>



AGRICULTURE: Food for Life

National Ag Day
March 21, 2017

50th World Ag Expo a Success

The World Ag Expo celebrated its 50th anniversary last month, bringing in over 100,000 attendees representing over 71 countries. The event showcased new technology, offered educational sessions, and of course live entertainment such as the Tractor Parade. Congrats to the international Agri-Center for hosting a fantastic event!

