Two Signs of Progress

As the policy debate about how water is managed in CA roars, those of us interested in collaboration and progress continue to actively engage to find solutions. There are two encouraging developments to report. First, growers and water managers from up and down the state are putting aside their differences to find common ground on policies that will preserve California farming and provide water for communities. The recognition that our interests are aligned is a powerful bond that ties us together. While there are numerous threats to many regions, there is a growing belief that agriculture is under attack and differences must be put aside. As we know, there are several proposals that could radically impact the water supply for cities and farms, such as the State Water Resources Control Board Bay Delta Plan for new flow requirements, the implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, and the rhetoric from activist groups calling for the retirement of hundreds of thousands of acres of prime farmland. But new collaboration within the water community provides hope for improvements to the water delivery systems and more effective use of the water resources.

The second encouraging sign is the growing support for a water policy that fully embraces the co-equal goals of a vibrant agriculture and urban economy and a healthy ecosystem. The impact of the drought and the collapse of elements of the state’s water infrastructure focused public attention on the need to pursue water supply reliability as a vital part of the state’s future. At the same time, Westlands and other farm and water groups continue to question the effectiveness of current policies in light of the fact that the situation is worse for all the impacted stakeholders – farmers, urban and rural communities, fish and wildlife, and the Delta.

Progress has been made on the legislative and regulatory front, and the policy discussions are moving toward a more balanced consideration of the issues. However, there are many challenges ahead and more work to ensure that policies live up to the co-equal goals and create a better future for farmers.

Johnny Amaral
Deputy General Manager of External Affairs
Westlands Water District
What’s New: Important Notices

7th Annual Westside Luncheon for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Fresno County

Tickets are still available for the 7th Annual Boys & Girls Clubs of Fresno County Westside Luncheon, May 25th at Harris Ranch! All event proceeds will fund education and leadership programs at the Huron and Firebaugh clubs. For more information on sponsor opportunities or to purchase a table, contact Sandra Dee Chaney at (559) 266-3117 or schaney@bgclubfc.org.

Westlands Charitable Foundation

For decades, Central Valley growers have contributed to a variety of charitable and community organizations. We’re proud to carry on the tradition of giving and philanthropy through the Westlands Charitable Foundation, offering growers the opportunity to combine their contributions to make a substantial impact in our local communities. For more information on the Foundation, contact Gayle Holman at gholman@westlandswater.org or (559) 241-6233.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service is offering funding through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to provide technical and financial assistance to eligible agricultural producers for addressing their natural resource concerns, including the air quality concerns from their farming operations. Funds are available to replace old diesel-powered farm equipment, establish windbreaks, and more. Interested farmers must apply by May 26th. For more information, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov.

Westlands Water District will be closed on Monday, May 29, 2017, in observance of Memorial Day.
59 Days of Code
The largest technology competition in the Central Valley

Water. It’s important.
Water is relevant to everyone, especially now, here at home in the Central Valley. This year’s competition will think about how geeks can save the world, we turn our attention to water.

California is finally nearing the end of its worst drought in 1,200 years, and there’s no better time to figure out how to solve future water issues than now.

In collaboration with local professionals, the 59 Days of Code competition comes to life June 18, 2017, as part of a multi-pronged approach to growing and cultivating technology entrepreneurship in the Valley. The competition and showcase is the catalyst in movements that brought you companies like Bitwise, Drip, and QuiqLabs. This year, competitors will use their brilliance to solve the plague of persistent problems our Valley faces. Full event information about the competition, sponsorships and timeline are available here.

Westlands Water Quality Coalition Members
The Westlands Water Quality Coalition will host a series of Nitrogen Management Plan Self-Certification courses this year which will allow members to self-certificate the required Nitrogen Management Plan for three years. The first opportunity to take the no-cost course featuring Nitrogen Management Specialists Bill Jones, CCA, and Ryan Dodd, CCA, is Tuesday, June 13, 2017, from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Fresno County Farm Bureau office located at 1274 W. Hedges Avenue, Fresno, CA. Seating is limited; to reserve your seat please contact Debra Dunn, at ddundw@westlandswater.org or by phone (559) 241-6242 or Nicole Branum, at nbranum@westlandswater.org or by phone (559) 241-6235.
SOURCE CONTROL: ADVANCED IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

Westlands is a leader in water conservation, employing advanced techniques and the latest technologies to increase water efficiency and help crops withstand harsh conditions. More than 93% of all fields in Westlands use some form of drip irrigation.

RETIRED LAND PUT TO BENEFICIAL USE

Water systems on retired lands are capped to make additional water available to irrigable areas. Lands can be equipped with solar panels to take advantage of plentiful natural sunlight and convert it to renewable energy. Solar projects in the District are expected to generate up to 2.4 gigawatts of power, greater energy potential than the combined output of several large nuclear power plants.

INTEGRATED ON-FARM DRAINAGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Integrated On-Farm Drainage Management (IFDM) system was developed to manage these problems. A state-of-the-art, yet practical irrigation management system, the IFDM provides for drainage water reuse to improve water availability for crop production and to minimize salt and selenium risks to water quality and the environment.
Westlands could implement innovative collection and reuse technologies to supply agricultural water. The drainage settlement language requires Westlands to manage drainage water, and reuse is a potential solution.

**A tail water collection and reuse system.**

**Drainage water treatment facility.**

**Salt is a byproduct of the treatment process that requires disposal.**

An example, the Panoche Water and Drainage District collects drainage water (through the process described to the left) and provides it as recycled water to irrigate crops such as Jose Tall Wheatgrass and pistachios.

**Jose Tall Wheatgrass and pistachios grown with drainage water.**