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Imperial Irrigation District
Protecting the flow of progress.

Changes made to equitable distribution plan

With a supply/demand imbalance declared for 2009, the IID Board of Directors adopted changes to the district's equitable distribution plan during its Nov. 18 meeting.

Under the plan, which takes effect Jan. 1, 2009, each eligible farm acre in the Imperial Valley will have a water apportionment volume of 5.25 acre-feet per acre for the year.

Six changes to the regulations to the equitable distribution plan, which were made after staff and members of the Imperial Valley farming community collaborated, include:

(1). Removal of second ap-

portionment, and (2) removal supply of last resort.

(3). Definition of "agricultural water" will include fish and algae farming.

(4). Determined that take-or-pay apportionment for agricultural water users, based on actual use, is to be paid monthly. (Year-end payments are required for any unused take-or-pay-obligation).

(5). Modifications to district water exchange.

(6). Allowance and charge methods established for unused water from district water exchange.

The second apportionment

See **PLAN**, Page 2

Water Watch

2008 IID approved use: 2,863,270 AF

2008 Forecast of IID use: 2,867,604 AF

2008 Projected Overrun: 4,334 AF

(Figures are projections made by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation on 12/01/2008).

I'd like to know

WCAB member Jim Walker, who farms near Westmorland asked: ***"What agricultural lands are eligible to receive water under the equitable distribution program?"***

Section 2.10 of the equitable distribution plan defines eligible agricultural acres. The language is as follows:

a. Farmable cropland defined as fields, based on the (proprietary) IID geospatial data base compiled from district records, inspections and CFSA common land units, greater than 5 acres, used for crop production, fish farming or algae farming.



Jim Walker

b. Current with water availability charges and water bills

c. Connected to IID water distribution system

d. Each field must: (1) have been irrigated for crop production, fish farming, algae farming, leaching or duck ponds, or under contract to the district fallowing program during each of the prior three years; **or**, (2) be the subject of a notice of intent to farm accompanied by a crop plan; **or**, (3) be the subject of other reasonably equivalent evidence of intent to farm during the supply/demand imbalance water year.

The equitable distribution plan is available online at:

www.iid.com/Water/EquitableDistribution

Water storage reservoir to be built near Drop 2

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is constructing a new water storage reservoir in the Imperial Valley.

With a capacity to store 8,000 acre-feet, the new reservoir will help capture much of the water that was ordered, but not needed, by contractors along the lower Colorado River.

Annually, about 70,000 acre-feet of ordered Colorado River water is not delivered. Currently, much of this water flows to Mexico. This water is *in addition* to the 1.5 million-acre-feet to which Mexico is entitled to receive, under treaty, each year.

“Cancelled water orders, largely due to rain, will be able to be conserved in this reservoir and released when the demand returns,” said IID Water Department Manager Michael L. King.

The water captured in the new reservoir will be available first to those who are paying for the construction of the nearly \$172 million project – the



The site is located 23 miles east of Holtville on the north side of Interstate 8 near the Brock Research Center Road exit. IID has asked that the reservoir be named after Warren H. Brock.

Southern Nevada Water Authority, Metropolitan Water District and the Central Arizona Water Conservation District.

The reservoir may be named after a prominent person who, for years, farmed where the reservoir is being constructed. The IID has proposed the name of Warren H. Brock Reservoir.

PLAN: *Continued from Page 1*


option was modified to allow for all initially offered, but declined apportionment, to be available through a district water exchange.

The supply of last resort was also eliminated after the district received feedback from farmers who felt that the district water exchange – where water that is not accepted in the initial apportionment and any unused apportionment water is banked – would be available to farmers who need additional water.

“The intent of the supply of last resort was to have a pool of water available to help a few farmers finish a crop in case they ran out of water,” said Michael L. King, Water Department manager. “But it was determined the district water exchange would be available to meet those needs, serving as the safety net the supply of last resort was intended to be.”

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Under the plan, more than 476,000 acres of Imperial Valley farmland qualify for apportionment. Of that amount, 31,500 acres have not recently been farmed. Should they continue not to be farmed, this would make about 160,000 acre-feet available for the district water exchange.

 **Help from the Web**
EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION
www.iid.com/Water/EquitableDistribution
CANAL CUTOUTS
www.iid.com/Water/CutoutSchedule
WATER RATES
www.iid.com/Water/WaterRateSchedules
RULES & REGULATIONS
www.iid.com/Water/WaterRulesandRegulations

New water cards to be issued to owners, tenants

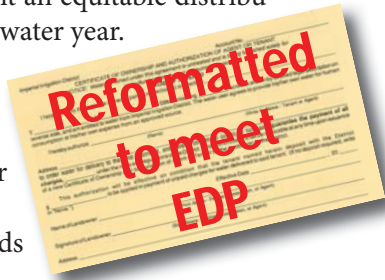
New water cards for agricultural land will soon be mailed to all agricultural landowners and tenants.

This exercise is needed to enable the Water Department to implement an equitable distribution plan for the 2009 water year.

It is also essential to gather the most current and accurate agricultural water user information.

The new water cards now consist of :

- Certificate of Ownership and Authorization of Agent or Tenant. This form seeks essentially the same information as did the small, former, yellow water cards.
- Equitable Distribution Authorization and Obligation Information. This form seeks to document how much of the apportionment the owner wants to assign the field and what the owner will permit the tenant to do with the water (if applicable), payment obligations, etc.
- Farm Unit Designation Form. This form seeks to document all fields that will be included in a farm unit so the farmer will be able to freely move water among those fields and not be required to use the district water exchange to move water between these fields.



Local Entity

The Local Entity, charged with dispersing up to \$50 million in mitigation funds to offset the impacts from land fallowing, will be comprised of the five members of the IID Board of Directors.

Fallowing impacts for the 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 programs were mitigated with a disbursement of \$3.5 million in 2007 by the entity.

Applications to apply for entity funds for the 2005-2006, 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 programs will soon be available.

Under the Quantification Settlement Agreement, land fallowing by IID for purposes of creating water for transfer or mitigation, will end by year 2017 or sooner.

For more information on the Local Entity program, please visit:

www.iid.com/Water/LocalEntity

2009-10 fallowing program

The deadline to submit applications for the 2009-10 fallowing program was Nov. 25, 2008. The 2009-10 fallowing program application process was initiated earlier than in past solicitation offerings at the request of the farming community to help them with their farm planning process.

A 2010 fallowing program is scheduled to occur to accommodate farm operations that are better suited to a Jan.1-Dec. 31 schedule verses solicitation programs of July 1 to June 30. For more information on the IID fallowing programs, please visit:

www.iid.com/Water/FallowingPrograms

Water Conservation Advisory Board

The WCAB generally meets at 1:30 p.m. the second Thursday of each month (except August) in the Water Control Center conference room in Imperial. The meetings are open to the public and public comments are welcome.

“WCAB meetings give us a chance to discuss, with district personnel, water issues that affect farmers,” said Larry Gilbert. Gilbert, a WCAB member, farms in rural Imperial.

Agendas for the WCAB meetings are posted prior to each meeting. The agendas are accessible at:

www.iid.com/Water/WaterConservationAdvisoryBoard

Recent WCAB meetings have focused on contracts for the 2009 pilot on-farm efficiency conservation program, which will serve as a model for future on-farm efficiency contracts as IID transitions from fallowing to efficiency on-farm conservation in 2013.

Board adopts definitive Salton Sea restoration position

The Imperial Irrigation District Board of Directors took action at its Nov. 18 meeting to adopt a definitive position regarding the restoration of the Salton Sea. The resolution unanimously adopted by the board came at the urging of its general manager, Brian Brady, who said the time had come for the district to unequivocally state what it was for, rather than to simply reiterate what it would be against.

Brady conceded that there is a distinction between restoration of the Salton Sea and mitigating the environmental impacts to this troubled body of water from the water transfers authorized by the 2003 Quantification Settlement Agreement.

“Restoration of the sea, while it may not be a requirement of the QSA,

is going to be necessary in instituting on-farm conservation measures in the Imperial Valley and transitioning out of fallowing as a means of generating transfer water,” Brady said. “That transition is supposed to occur by 2017, if not sooner, and a viable restoration plan for the Salton Sea will be critical element in allowing it to move forward.”

It is the state’s responsibility, according to language contained in SB 277, to not only select a preferred restoration plan for the sea, but to fund and implement it. To this point, the resources secretary has selected a preferred restoration model, but neither the governor nor the Legislature has adopted it. The state’s mitigation liability under QSA is set out in separate legislation (SB 654), which stipulates that all mitigation costs arising from the water transfer agreement with the San Diego County Water Authority and the Coachella Valley Water District in excess of \$133 million belong solely to the state.

The resolution passed by the IID board endorses the preferred Salton Sea restoration plan, which Brady acknowledged is problematic for some local stakeholder groups, including the Imperial County Board of Supervisors and the Salton Sea Authority, of which IID is a founding member. Even so, he said, the preferred restoration plan is the one selected by the state, and to call for a completely new approach would be, in effect, to start the process all over again.

“Time is not on the side of either the Salton Sea or the residents of the Imperial and Coachella valleys,” said Brady.

Specific components of the board resolution include the following: that the state live up to its commitment to fund and implement some ac-

ceptable variation of the preferred Salton Sea restoration model; that it move with speed to initiate early start habitat programs that address environmental impacts and enable the district to convert from fallowing to efficiency-based water conservation measures.

Finally, the resolution explicitly states that any restoration plan must allow for the continued use of the Salton Sea as a repository for the IID’s drain water while preserving its right to recapture and reuse this same water.

“What’s been missing is the political will to take on the restoration question,” Brady said. “By staking out the position that it did, the board has signaled to all of the parties that it is no longer content to assume a passive role in resolving this fundamental question.”

The board resolution can be viewed at:
www.iid.com/Media/Resolution-No.-23-2008.pdf

