

# DEID PIPELINE

August-September 2003

Issue 112

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## District and Wildlife Refuge Work on Water Supply

Many years in the making, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Bureau) and the Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District are continuing a cooperative pursuit of a method to bring a long-term water supply to the Pixley National Wildlife Refuge.

The proposal, conceived by the Bureau in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game, has its roots in a 1993 law passed by Congress that mandated new water for refuges within the service area of the Central Valley Project.

The Bureau has recently released a public review document entitled "Conveyance of Refuge Water Supply Environmental Assessment and Initial Study". In that document, the public is asked to comment on a number of conveyance alternatives that



the Bureau has evaluated.

Among the alternatives that has been considered is one that

involves using a portion of the District's existing water distribution system when not needed for water deliveries to DEID water users. The plan, which is the preferred alternative, would use the District's 111.6 west pipeline that runs along Avenue 56.

The study modeled the water supply needs

*(Continued on page 2: REFUGE)*

## DEID Water Deliveries Remain Strong

District water users continued a strong demand for irrigation water through the 2003 summer irrigation season. That is not much of a surprise, given the unusually hot summer.

Total deliveries in the June-July August period totaled 69,180 acre-feet. That amount included 915 acre-feet of non-project water that was obtained for delivery to "excess lands" that are otherwise pre-

cluded from receiving federal water from the District.

While the 2003 summer deliveries were sizable, they reflect a downward trend

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Taking Another Look at the Delta Smelt

Thanks to a legal challenge by the California Farm Bureau Federation (CFBF) and other California agricultural interests, the status of the Delta Smelt as an endangered species will get another look.

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has agreed to re-evaluate the species to see if it still warrants being on the list for endangered species under the federal Endangered Species Act.

The lawsuit brought by the CFBF asserted that the USFWS had not fulfilled its legal obligation to review the status of the fish at least once every five years.

Measures to protect the 3-inch fish that has a life span of one year and has no commercial value have caused havoc to water exports from the Sacramento delta. Agricultural and urban water users have had water deliveries significantly affected when export pumps at delta pumping plants are curtailed due to the presence of the smelt in the vicinity of the pumping stations. Pumping curtailments have been commonplace in order to protect the smelt.

The USFWS should have the status of the smelt reevaluated by March of 2004.



## Governor Davis Appoints Two

Governor Gray Davis has appointed two new individuals to his Administration that deal with water issues.

Michael Spear is the new Interim Director of the State Department of Water Resources. Mr. Spear was a Deputy Director in the State Resources Agency, and

was previously Western Regional Chief of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Nancy Sutley has been appointed to the State Water Resources Control Board. Ms. Sutley previously served as a Deputy Secretary of the State Environmental Protection Agency.

BOTH APPOINTMENTS ARE INDIVIDUALS WITH EXTENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL BACKGROUNDS

## Continued from Page 1....Refuge Water

of the refuge with the available capacity in the Avenue 56 lateral that is unused during certain times of the year. The Service concluded that this option would be the least cost alternative when considering all facets of installation and continued operations for conveying water to the refuge.

Yet to be negotiated is a wheeling agreement between the District and the Bu-

reau that would allow use of the District's facilities. Several starts at that negotiation have been thwarted by changes in federal personnel assigned to the discussions.

The proposal does not involve any of the District's water supply.

A copy of the draft study is available for public review at the District office.



## Automatic Congressional Dam Authorization?

Legislation introduced in Congress by Congressman Ken Calvert (R-Corona) has been amended by Congressman Devin Nunes (R-Tulare) that would make it easier to authorize water projects in California.

Nunes' amendment would provide for any new dam or reservoir that has been deemed feasible by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to be automatically authorized unless Congress blocks the authorization within 120 days.

Congressman Calvert welcomed the amendment to his bill that would also reauthorize the state-federal partnership that was created to resolve water problems in California, commonly known as CalFed.

Congressman Nunes is a freshman congressman that was elected last November on a platform that included the need for new water supplies for the central valley and all of California.



*Congressman Devin Nunes (R-Tulare) recently authored legislation that would make it easier to authorize new water projects.*

### Continued from Page 1...Summer Water Deliveries

that has occurred over the past decade of lower water demands from DEID growers. When excluding those years where the District had to prorate its water supply, the 2003 summer water deliveries were the second lowest since the 1987-1992 drought. Last year's 2002 water deliveries were the lowest.

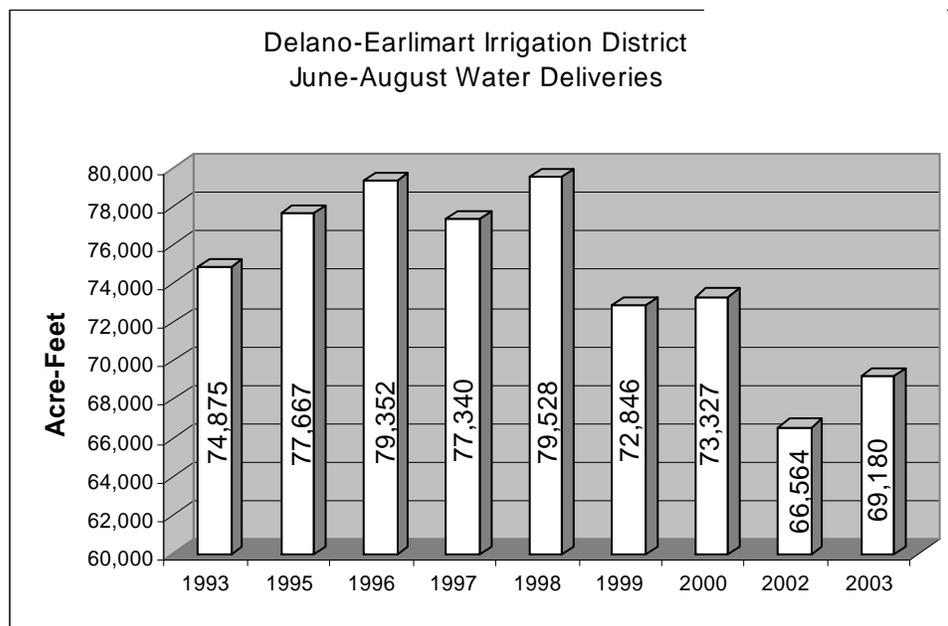
Recent reductions in planted acres, replacement of established plantings with new crops, and widespread use of water conservation measures account for the reduction in water demand.

Growers are reminded that District water will remain available through the fall and winter months. The only potential exceptions are specific sections of the

distribution system that may require temporary shut down for short-term repairs and/or maintenance.

Normal water ordering procedures will be in place for those growers wanting water during the fall and winter months.

“... 2003 WATER DELIVERIES WERE THE SECOND LOWEST SINCE THE 1987-1992 DROUGHT.”



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DEID will soon  
launch its new Web  
site! Coming this fall.

PROVIDING INFORMATION ON ISSUES OF INTEREST TO WATER USERS AND  
GROWERS IN THE DELANO-EARLIMART IRRIGATION DISTRICT

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## State-Feds Talk Project Integration

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the California Department of Water Resources have developed a proposal that would increase operational integration of the federal Central Valley Project (CVP) and the State Water Project (SWP) for the benefit of all. The proposal was developed at a week-long “retreat” this summer. The result were numerous proposals that will allow the water delivery flexibility and efficiency of both the CVP and SWP to improve.

“The CVP is water rich. The SWP is conveyance rich. The Bureau wants conveyance. The State Project wants some water”, said Michael Jackson of the Fresno office of the Bureau.

“FROM A PROCESS POINT OF VIEW, IT  
STINKS.”

TOM GRAFF OF THE OAKLAND-BASED ENVIRONMENTAL  
DEFENSE

The proposals includes operational plans where Delta exports could raise from 6,680 cubic feet per second to 8,500 cfs. That could add 200,000 acre-feet to the existing yield of both projects.

Environmental groups have universally panned the ideas coming out of the retreat. Environmental groups were not invited to participate in the development of the proposals.