



The Waterfront

El Dorado Irrigation District • September–October 2008

Message from the GM: Thoughts on an organization



Tom Gallier

As this newsletter goes to press, EID and its partners are in the thick of a fish rescue at Caples Lake reservoir. A report on the Caples emergency is in this newsletter, but I want to share what this project says to me about the nature of the District and its employees.

You can learn quite a lot about the core abilities of an organization by how it responds to an emergency. I am struck by many things in my first four months on the job, but nothing has given me more enthusiasm and trust in EID than seeing the determination of the many employees who responded, and are still responding, to this emergency.

In an incredibly condensed period of time—from identification of serious problems with the outlet works at the Caples main dam in mid-June and the Board's declaration of an emergency on July 1 to the steps taken to replace the slide gates in cooperation and coordination with a dozen entities and agencies—the broad range of employees who came together to make this project a success is awe inspiring. And they are accomplishing all of this while still tending to daily business at the District.

In September, I will announce some organizational changes based on my observations over the past several months and on recommendations in the Westin management study. I have great confidence that the get-it-done people who make the District "work" day in and day out will seize this opportunity to improve our service to you, our customers.

That's what our response to the Caples emergency has taught me about this organization. It's a place where people coalesce to get things done as best they can, and their best is darn good.

A report on the Caples Lake reservoir drawdown and gate replacement project



On July 1, the District's Board of Directors declared an emergency after a mid-June underwater investigation at Caples Lake revealed major problems with two slide gates and other infrastructure at the Caples main dam. To fix the problems, the District has to draw down the reservoir level so that workers are safe. The drawdown began July 19 and will continue through the first half of September.

Caples Lake is part of Project 184, the hydroelectric power generation system that the District acquired from Pacific Gas and Electric Company in 1999. Under conditions of the federal license to operate the system, the District must assure safe operation of the dam. If the slide gates, for example, were to fail in an open position, uncontrolled releases could result in unsafe conditions downstream.

"The last thing we wanted to do was draw down the reservoir during the recreation season," said EID general manager Tom Gallier. "But we are responsible for safe operation of the two dams at the reservoir, and the badly deteriorated slide gates at the main dam must be replaced for us to do that."

The District coordinated with the California Department of Fish and Game to put together a plan to mount a fish rescue in the last week of August and prepare a long-term program to restock the reservoir with fish, beginning next spring. The fish rescue was aided by more than 80 volunteers coordinated by the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance and Trout Unlimited.

The next phases of the project involve construction of a temporary bladder dam to store as much water as possible in the reservoir while ensuring the safety of the workers. It is anticipated that the replacement will be completed during October, barring any unforeseen complications.

Caples Lake Reservoir Drawdown and Slide Gate Replacement Project Information

Request Background
On July 1, the El Dorado Irrigation District's Board of Directors declared an emergency after a mid-June underwater investigation at Caples Lake revealed major problems with two slide gates. The gates are located in a shallow pool within the dam. If either gate were to fail, the outlet works would be exposed to about 88 feet under water when the lake is full.

Request Information
In asking for emergency declaration, District staff and expert consultants agreed that the gates must be replaced to ensure safe operation of the dam. The District has retained a manufacturer who can furnish the replacement parts, and the lake must be drawn down for the replacement work to proceed.

News Releases and Updates

DATE OF READING	ACRE FEET	FEET*	DECREASE IN FEET 24 HOURS
August 21, 2008	11,866	48.10	2.00
August 20, 2008	11,867	48.10	0.00
August 19, 2008	11,867	48.10	0.00
August 18, 2008	11,867	48.10	0.00
August 17, 2008	11,867	48.10	0.00
August 16, 2008	11,867	48.10	0.00
August 15, 2008	11,867	48.10	0.00
August 14, 2008	11,867	48.10	0.00
August 13, 2008	11,867	48.10	0.00
August 12, 2008	11,867	48.10	0.00
August 11, 2008	11,867	48.10	0.00
August 10, 2008	11,867	48.10	0.00
August 9, 2008	11,867	48.10	0.00
August 8, 2008	11,867	48.10	0.00
August 7, 2008	11,867	48.10	0.00
August 6, 2008	11,867	48.10	0.00
August 5, 2008	11,867	48.10	0.00
August 4, 2008	11,867	48.10	0.00
August 3, 2008	11,867	48.10	0.00
August 2, 2008	11,867	48.10	0.00
August 1, 2008	11,867	48.10	0.00

Go to our website at www.eid.org to find more information about the Caples Lake reservoir drawdown and slide gate replacement project.

Water waste workshops highlight regulation, examples of wasteful practices



Sharon Fraser (at left, blue shirt) and Bill Cassady (above) talk with water waste workshop attendees.

What is water waste? Is there a water waste regulation? How is the regulation enforced? How can we avoid wasteful practices and save money in the bargain? These questions framed EID's water waste workshops held on August 19 and 26 in Placerville and El Dorado Hills. During the 30-minute sessions, **Sharon Fraser**, EID's water conservation program coordinator, and **Bill Cassady**, EID water efficiency specialist, gave presentations and fielded questions from attentive audiences.

"EID now has a regulation that is in effect and will be enforced to 'close the tap' on water waste," said Fraser, "and with these workshops as a starting point, we hope to continue to get the message out to our customers."

According to EID's administrative regulation (AR) 1041, water waste occurs when a user causes or permits water to discharge, flow, or run to waste; allows water fixtures to leak or discharge; and maintains bodies of water without recirculation devices. Other water waste practices include operating an irrigation system that is in disrepair or one that applies water to an impervious surface—don't saturate the lawn and don't water the pavement! Using a hose without a control nozzle can also waste water as can irrigating a landscape when it's raining or overfilling any pond, pool, or fountain.

Exceptions to the regulation include flow resulting from temporary water fixtures or devices that lasts 48 hours or less; flow resulting from firefighting, testing of hydrants, or training in firefighting techniques; water applied to abate spills of flammable or hazardous materials; and water applied to prevent or abate imminent health, safety, or accident hazards.

Cassady, who conducts many of the water surveys at the District, showed a variety of pictures depicting wasteful practices. "Often, a small irrigation adjustment can make a big difference," said Cassady, pointing to a picture of water running over a sidewalk and into a storm drain.

These workshops are part of an ongoing effort to increase customer awareness about wasteful practices and suggest how to change those practices. To download a copy of the water waste regulation or to report a water waste violation, click on the "Close the Tap on Water Waste" icon on our website at www.eid.org.

Sign up for a complimentary water survey for your home or business today.

Call the Office of Water Efficiency at (530) 642-4126, or go to our website—www.eid.org—and click on the Water Efficiency page to sign up online.

2007 financial audit confirms sound practices

During their June 23 meeting, EID Board members heard positive news from Tim Krisch of Maze & Associates, the independent auditing firm that completed the 2007 financial audit of the District. "We have given you a 'clean' opinion, and that's the highest level of assurance an auditor can issue," said Krisch. "From a numbers perspective, the District is in great shape."

The District is audited annually and the results are published in our Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. You can download a copy of the report online from our document library at www.eid.org.

Upcoming Board 2008 meetings

Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
8	6	10	15
-	27	24*	-

* tentatively scheduled

Watch your November to February water use to lower your 2009 residential sewer fees

Your 2009 residential sewer fees are derived from the water you use during the months of November 2008 through February 2009. With a little preparation, you can conserve water and save on your 2009 rates.

As the November–February period approaches, here are some things you can do to help prevent unwanted water use.

- Stop irrigating during the winter and cover your irrigation control valves to prevent cracks and leakage caused by the weather.
- Inspect water appliances for signs of leakage throughout the interior of your home and garage. This includes water heaters, toilets, sinks, showers, tubs, and hoses on your washing machine.
- Use your clothes and dish washers only for full loads.