Looking Back

The District’s search for reliable water supplies was not wholly centered on lower elevation ditches, canals, and reservoirs. EID also looked to the high Sierra, particularly the El Dorado Canal project that had its beginnings in 1856. That’s when John Kirk, an engineering consultant from Pennsylvania who had made his way to Placerville, posted his first notice claiming waters of the South Fork American River.

With that, Kirk initiated a vast water storage and conveyance system, now called Project 184, that includes Lake Aloha; Echo, Silver, and Caples lakes; 22.3 miles of flumes and canals; Forebay Reservoir in Pollock Pines; and a powerhouse.

This accomplishment involved hard labor, fantastic engineering feats, mechanical ingenuity, and inventive solutions to the challenges of storing and distributing high-Sierra water in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

It also centered on questions about who should hold rights to the water. Kirk himself was involved in the early years of claims, counterclaims, and court decisions that attempted to settle such questions.

Today, legal disputes still dot the water rights landscape.

Building and Filling Jenkinson Lake

Kirk’s grandly envisioned canal project evolved to include hydropower production, and in 1928, Pacific Gas and Electric Company bought the system from Kirk’s successors. Seventy-one years later, in 1999, PG&E conveyed the system to EID. Operating under a renewed, 40-year federal license, Project 184 delivers water for EID customers and produces up to $10 million worth of hydropower each year.

Since 1925, the District has secured rights to nearly 80,000 acre-feet of water. This includes the 33,400-acre-foot at Jenkinson Lake; more than 32,000 acre-feet in the high-Sierra water delivery system; 7,550 acre-feet of Central Valley Project water; and 4,560 acre-feet of water from ditch systems and Weber Reservoir.

Most of the ditch rights date back to the 1800s and are not subject to the Splitting Act. Over the year, we’ll revisit some of the history of EID. The following is excerpted from the EID history brochure located on our website.

* An acre-foot (325,851 gallons) is equal to one acre covered by a foot of water.

Board Adopts Resolution Proposing to Change District’s Election Cycle

At its February 9 meeting, the EID Board of Directors adopted a resolution proposing to change the District’s election cycle from odd-numbered years to even-numbered years, so that the Board elections would coincide with statewide general elections. The proposed change will increase voter turnout and reduce the District’s election costs.

The District has held elections on the off-year election cycle since it was formed in 1925. For a number of years, members of the public have advocated changing the election cycle, so that the elections occur in even-numbered years. The vast majority of El Dorado County’s local government agencies hold even-year elections, including other special districts that have recently opted to make the transition from odd-year to even-year elections.

El Dorado County election statistics show that this shift will greatly increase voter participation in EID’s elections, from today’s 20 to 30 percent voter turnout to rates ranging between 63 and 85 percent. Based on preliminary estimates, the District could also significantly cut the cost of holding elections, saving approximately $40,000 in its next election if this change is implemented. Election costs would also remain lower over time, based upon an ever-increasing number of agencies opting for even-numbered year election cycles.

According to EID General Counsel Tom Cumpston, Elections Code sections 13231 and 13404 allow such a change upon approval of both the District’s Board and the El Dorado County and Sacramento County Boards of Supervisors, provided that certain timing and other procedural requirements are met. The adopted resolution is a key step in that process.

The first election that this change would affect, currently scheduled for November 3, 2015, would instead be held on November 8, 2016. The 2017 election would likewise be deferred to 2018.

As part of any agency’s transition to the even-numbered year cycle, state law retains all incumbent Board members in office for one additional year. In EID’s case, state law would extend Directors Day, George and Osborne’s time in office to even-numbered years, so that the Board elections would coincide with the 2014 election.

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The Waterfront

The culmination of more than fifteen years of work came to fruition in January, when the United States Bureau of Reclamation approved a five-year contract that allows EID to divert up to 8,500 acre-feet of Project 184 water from Folsom Reservoir for consumptive use.

Most of this water comes from EID’s high Sierra reservoirs where it is stored before traveling through the Project 184 system. As a modest fraction of the water used by Project 184 annually, boasting a 1927 water rights seniority, this new drinking water supply is reliable and drought-resistant.

Turn to the Q&A on page 3 to read more about this exciting addition to EID’s water portfolio.

Watering Restrictions Still in Effect, One Day Per Week Until April 15

EID’s service area is still under a Stage 2 Water Warning and the mandatory watering restrictions the Board declared in April of 2014 are still in effect.

Watering is only allowed once a week (addresses ending in even numbers on Sunday and odd numbers on Saturday). Go to www.eid.org/WateringRestrictions for more information.

These mandatory water restrictions remain in place for Residential, Recycled, Commercial/Landscape (CII), Small Farm, and Recreational Turf water customers.

EID thanks its customers for their good conservation in 2014. But we do not want to reduce our efforts now.

see RESTRICTIONS, page 2
to divert an additional 8,500 acre-feet of Project 184 water out of Folsom Reservoir. We have sought this water, which has rightfully been ours, for over a decade and it adds significantly to the District’s overall water portfolio and particularly to the amount of water available to the District’s customers in El Dorado Hills. The District has made significant progress in the repair of the Esmeralda Tunnel, a segment of the Project 184 El Dorado canal and flute system. A portion of the 85-year-old tunnel collapsed last fall and required the District to divert water from Jenkinson Lake to make up for the loss. Soon we’ll be able to again start conveying water from the Project 184 system and operating our hydroelectric plant, which means more revenue for the District and less reliance on water from Jenkinson Lake.

We have received favorable news from our property and liability insurance carrier that our policy costs have decreased $36,947—a 9 percent reduction from 2014-5, with comparable coverage.

As you probably know, Proposition 1, California’s $7.545 billion water bond, was overwhelmingly passed by the voters last fall. This bond will fund new surface and groundwater storage projects, regional water reliability, water recycling, water conservation, and other water-related programs that are desperately needed by EID and other water agencies. The District will continue to compete for grants from the bond money as good opportunities arise. As you may recall, last fall we received news of winning a $1 million grant from the Proposition 84 funds allocated by the Department of Water Resources to help fund a $6.5 million project to pipe the District’s Main Ditch which runs from the Reservoir 1 facility, received the award for 100% commitment to safety. The installation of a manual and motor-operated valve that detects and automatically stops any uncontrolled chemical releases. The District’s guiding principles is “100% commitment to safety” and it is clear these employees take that principle to heart.

EID Employees Honored for Safety

In January, two EID employees were recognized with “H.R. LaBounty Safety Awards” from the Association of California Water Agencies-Joint Powers Insurance Authority. The award recognizes efforts to promote safety in the workplace.

Bill Peterson, chief water treatment operator at the El Dorado Hills facility, received the award for his contribution toward improving chemical safety. The image of a manual and motor-operated valve that detects and automatically stops any uncontrolled chemical releases.

Jake Maker, water treatment operator IV at the Reservoir 1 facility, received the award for identifying a fall hazard at the facility and coordinating the installation of a system to prevent injury.

One of the District’s guiding principles is “100% commitment to safety” and it is clear these employees take that principle to heart.

Q&A: New Water Supply from Folsom

EID Director of Communications and Customer Services Mary Lynn Carlson talks with EID General Council Tom Compton (right) and Deputy General Counsel Brian Poulson about the new water supply.

Can you tell me about the new water supply EID recently received?

On January 12, 2015, the Board approved a five-year Warren Act Contract with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation that will allow the District to divert up to 8,500 acre-feet per year of Project 184 water—not previously available to the District—from Folsom Reservoir for consumptive use. This is half of a water right the District originally applied for back in 1991. Contract negotiations began in 2004, and our efforts to gain access to the full 17,000 acre-feet of supply are still ongoing.

That’s a significant amount of water—does that ease the need for drought conservation?

It represents a welcome addition to EID’s portfolio of water, but no, it shouldn’t relax our resolve to conserve water.

In January 2014, Governor Brown proclaimed a drought emergency and directed local water suppliers to implement water shortage contingency plans to avoid or forestall outright restrictions. Later, he called for 20 percent conservation statewide, and last summer, the State Water Board adopted regulations requiring all water agencies to adopt and enforce mandatory drought measures. All of these statewide emergency actions are still in effect.

Last February, the EID Board declared a drought in the EID service area, calling for 30 percent reductions, and later enacted mandatory watering restrictions in April 2014 that are still in effect. EID customers responded well to the call to conserve and managed a more than 20 percent reduction in 2014. At the same time, EID acted proactively to move water into the District’s primary drinking water reservoir, Jenkinson Lake, to ensure adequate carryover storage should the drought extend into 2015.

All of these actions helped position EID well going into 2015, but drought conditions have not improved. California still faces an enormous water deficit and we must remain vigilant and continue to plan for the worst.

“...This new water supply presents the possibility of having surplus water that we must put to beneficial use or risk losing to downstream users. In other words, we must "use it or lose it."

—Tom Compton

How does this water supply benefit the District and its customers?

Although the most immediate and direct benefits are to customers in El Dorado Hills, the new supply benefits the entire District because the increased availability of water from Folsom Reservoir helps to reduce demand on Jenkinson Lake, the District’s primary drinking water reservoir. EID runs an integrated water distribution system, but in some ways it is more integrated from east to west. This is because gravity is a great ally in distributing water to lower elevations. At this time, the new water can only be used for consumption in El Dorado Hills due to infrastructure limitations—we don’t have the ability to pump it up the hill to serve our eastern service areas. Even if we could do that, much pumping would be very costly.

EID is preparing to seek state approval to add upstream diversion points in K wybuck and White Rock, but environmental studies and state approval will take time. At that time, the water could be used to areas in the eastern service area for consumptive use. In the meantime, we must begin “perfecting” the water right—legalese for exercising the water right by putting it to beneficial use.

What is beneficial use?

Under California law, almost any productive use of water qualifies as “beneficial use,” provided that the method of use is reasonable, and not wasteful. The Water Code makes domestic use the highest beneficial use of water in the state, and ranks irrigation second. Other recognized beneficial uses include power generation, commercial and industrial use, recreation, and fish and wildlife benefits. To encourage water transfers, state law also credits the transferor for the beneficial use that the transferee makes of the water they receive.

How does water demand in El Dorado Hills affect the new supply?

Since 2007, water demand in the El Dorado Hills service area has averaged 76 million gallons per day. Much of the available water is currently being used for landscape irrigation and the El Dorado Hills service area for consumptive use. In the future, we will have more water available to serve our customers. What we can do with the surplus water?

One way we could make the most of our Folsom Reservoir supplies is to negotiate one-year deals to market the surplus water to entities downstream that need additional water. In 2014, some transfers sold at $252 per acre-foot, or $325,000 per 1,000 acre-feet. This potential non-rate revenue could improve the District’s financial performance especially during drought years—another benefit to the District as a whole.
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Jim Abercrombie

Message from the General Manager

District Receives Good News

We have a lot of positive activity going on in the District as we quickly move through the first quarter of the year. For starters, in January we had some good news from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Reclamation granted the District a five-year Warren Act Contract to convey water from the Project 184 system and operating our hydroelectric plant, which means more revenue for the District and less reliance on water from Jenkinson Lake.

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We have also begun the process of converting our election cycle from an odd-year primary and even-year general election to an all-primary election. If the District want to do this, you might wonder. The change will increase voter participation in electing EID Board members and reduce election costs—both good things. More voter participation means more input from a higher percentage of the District’s membership, which we believe is the best way to ensure that the District is responsive to its members.

In January 2014, Governor Brown proclaimed a drought emergency and directed local water suppliers to implement water shortage contingency plans to avoid or forestall outreach restrictions. Later, he called for 20 percent conservation statewide, and last summer, the State Water Board adopted regulations requiring all water agencies to adopt and enforce mandatory drought measures. All of these statewide emergency actions are still in effect.

In February, the EID Board declared a drought in the EID service area, calling for 30 percent reductions, and later enacted mandatory watering restrictions in April of 2014 that are still in effect. EID customers responded well to the declaration, with customer reduction of 20 percent or more. The District also made a voluntary commitment to reduce demand on Jenkinson Lake, the District’s primary drinking water reservoir. EID runs an integrated water distribution system, but in some ways it is more integrated from east to west. This is because gravity is a great ally in distributing water to lower elevations. At this time, the new water can only be used for consumption in El Dorado Hills due to infrastructure limitations— we don’t have the ability to pump it up the hill to serve our eastern service areas. Even if we could do it, that much pumping would be very costly. EID is preparing to seek state approval to add upstream diversion points in Kyburz and White Rock, but environmental studies and state approval will take time. At that time, the water could be used to areas in the eastern service area for consumptive use. In the meantime, we must begin “perfecting” the water right—legalese for exercising our water right by putting it to beneficial use.

What is beneficial use? Under California law, almost any productive use of water qualifies as “beneficial use,” provided that the method of use is reasonable, and not wasteful. The Water Code makes domestic use the highest beneficial use of water in the state, and ranks irrigation second. Other recognized beneficial uses include power generation, commercial and industrial use, recreation, and fish and wildlife benefits. To encourage water transfers, state law also credits the transferor for the beneficial use that the transferee makes of the water they receive.

How does water demand in El Dorado Hills affect the new supply? Since 2007, water demand in the El Dorado Hills service area has averaged 70 million gallons per day, and increased to approximately 60 million gallons per day during the dry months of July through September. The new water can only be used for consumption in El Dorado Hills, but the District’s customers are spread across the District, and it would be costly to divert water to areas beyond El Dorado Hills.

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In April of 2014 that are still in effect,

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Looking Back

October 5, 2015, marks EID’s 90th anniversary. Through the years EID has grown in mission and complexity. Over the year, we’ll revisit some of the history of EID. The following is excerpted from the EID history brochure located on our website.

Water Rights—Key to Present and Future Water Supplies

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It also centered on questions about who should hold rights to the water. Kirk himself was involved in the early years of claims, counterclaims, and court decisions that attempted to settle such questions. Today, legal disputes still dot the water rights landscape.

Building and Filling Jenkinson Lake

1927 – mid-1930s: After an EID Board-sanctioned engineering study, residents pass a $1.3 million bond to finance development of Hazel Valley for water storage and delivery. The Great Depression, bank failures, and defaulted taxes contribute to financial troubles. Work at Hazel Valley stops. Storage water from Diamond Ridge Ditch helps, but is subject to fluctuating streamflows.

1938 – 1939: EID’s engineer/manager develops the first plans for a reservoir at Sly Park, but the District’s Securities Commission says no.

1943 – 1946: Demand for water continues to go up. Raising Blakely Reserve five feet helps, but not enough. In 1944, the District sets aside $5,000 for a study of Sly Park and Squaw Hollow Creek as reservoir sites and asks the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to assess the study. In late 1945, the Bureau agrees to examine the Sly Park site.

1946 – 1955: As EID and Reclamation work on the Sly Park site, the federal government contributes a large dam on the American River near Folsom. Enlisting the support of Congressman Clair Engle, EID and citizens push for inclusion of a Sly Park unit in the legislation authorizing the dam at Folsom. Success is achieved. The first water from Sly Park Reservoir is delivered in the summer of 1955.

2015 REGULAR BOARD MEETINGS

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Board meetings generally occur on the second and fourth Monday of each month. The dates marked (T) take place on a Tuesday. The November 23 date is tentative.

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