The outlook for Madera Irrigation District’s (MID or District) water supplies in 2017 is exceptional, with impressive supplies developing in the two reservoirs MID has access to, Millerton Lake (Friant Dam) and Hensley Lake (Hidden Dam).

On February 28, 2017 the United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) announced a Friant Division allocation of 100% Class 1 supply, this is the first time a 100% Class 1 declaration has been made since 2011. MID’s Class 1 contract amount is 85,000 acre feet. In addition, Friant contractors may schedule and take delivery of Class 2 supplies up to their contract maximum during the current “uncontrolled season.” MID’s Class 2 contract amount is 186,000 acre feet. The District also has access to other supplies including its Hensley Lake supply and Pre-1914 water rights supplies this year. The forecast for the remainder of the water year is positive with recent snow pack measurements for the Sierra Nevada Mountains at approximately 200% of normal conditions, according to the Department of Water Resources (DWR).

Significant surface water supplies this year provides MID growers the opportunity to utilize this valuable resource at reduced rates. Surface water has been available for use by MID growers since early January and the District expects to continue operations through the summer and into the fall. District surface water is currently available at a reduced rate of $40 per acre foot to Original District growers and $80 per acre foot to Subordinate growers. The District is currently accepting Crop Water Applications, and growers are encouraged to sign up immediately.

The District is also urging growers within MID who have not utilized the District’s surface water in the past to consider its use this year and in future years. Surface water usage offers growers a number of benefits, in addition to preserving our groundwater aquifer. MID has the fortune of exceptional surface water quality, and operates an “on demand” system which allows growers to order water as it is needed.

It is vital that MID growers maximize their use of surface water this year to allow our groundwater aquifer an opportunity to recover from over five years of almost exclusive use. If you have any questions related to Crop Water Applications or 2017 operations, please contact the District at 559-673-3514.
Madera Irrigation District’s Partnership with Madera County on Recharge Activities at the Ellis Street Basin is a Success

The Madera Irrigation District (District) understands the importance of groundwater recharge, especially when floodwater is available and basins have additional capacity. The District and Madera County (County) worked cooperatively to construct a 180-ft. pipeline to connect MID’s Lateral 24.2 canal to the County’s Ellis Street Basin in early 2016. When water is available, a lift pump is used to convey the water through a meter to the County’s basin. The total project cost of approximately $24,000 created major recharge benefit for this year and years to come. To date, more than 75 acre feet (AF) has been recharged and will continue as conditions allow.

Madera Irrigation District’s Turf Replacement Project Completed

The Madera Irrigation District (District) was awarded a Prop 1 Department of Water Resources (DWR) and California Conservation Corps (CCC) Institutional Turf Program grant. The District received $20,000 in materials and supplies, plus eight weeks of 10-12 CCC crew members to perform the labor associated with the turf removal and re-landscaping project.

The overall project objective was to reduce the consumption of landscape irrigation water at the District office and act as a demonstration site for the public. By removing turf around the District office, modifying the irrigation system with high efficiency components, planting drought resistant and California native plants, and installing other water efficient landscape materials (i.e. bark mulch, rock, and decomposed granite), the District will save close to three acre feet per year or enough water to serve three households annually.

Pumping from Canals and Streams

To avoid costly repairs to both growers and the District, all growers are encouraged to understand the District’s Rules and Regulations for Distribution of Water and Maintenance of Ditches and Pipelines.

Section 12: Pumping from Canals and Streams states:

12.02 The District will not be held responsible for any debris which may accumulate in stream or canal flow which may tend to decrease the full operative capacity of or cause damage to pumps, filter systems, irrigation systems, or pipelines.

12.03 Pumps from canals or streams should have automatic shutoff to protect the pump if there are low flows in the canal or stream. The District is not liable for damage to pumps due to low flows, trash, or other foreign objects in the canal or stream. Pumps from canals must also have automatic restart controls to ensure the pumps restart following any power outage.

Growers are encouraged to pick up a free copy of the Rules and Regulations at the District office in order to better understand the daily operation of the District. A digital copy is available on the District website: http://www.madera-id.org/index.php/water-season