Strong winter storms continue to hit California producing significant rainfall in the San Joaquin Valley and snow pack in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. These favorable weather conditions have created an opportunity for the Madera Irrigation District (MID or District) to not only make surface water available to satisfy crop demands, but also recharge water to our local aquifer for future use by District growers.

Rainfall in the San Joaquin Valley is currently close to 120 percent of normal and snowpack in the Central Sierra is at approximately 155 percent of normal. These numbers are continuing to grow as we move toward the spring months. The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers has already forced a release from Hensley Lake to preserve approximately 155 percent of normal and snowpack in the Central Sierra is at approximately 155 percent of normal. These numbers are continuing to grow as we move toward the spring months. The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers has already forced a release from Hensley Lake to preserve storage space in the reservoir for flood control purposes and based on recent and expected precipitation, flood management operations at Friant Dam are a possibility before the end of February or early March.

The District has begun initiating water deliveries to alleviate the flood potential, provide delivery to District landowners, and begin groundwater recharge efforts. The Board of Directors, at the District’s February 6, 2019 Special Board Meeting, made the decision to allow water deliveries to begin, marking this the second earliest season of deliveries since 1983. In addition, the Board of Directors decided to provide this water at no charge to District growers for a period of time, benefiting District growers while augmenting the groundwater aquifer. These activities will be revisited at the District’s future Board Meetings.

Additionally, the District has been a leader in promoting On-Farm Recharge (OFR) through a partnership with Sustainable Conservation, a non-profit organization. OFR consists of utilizing wet year surface water supplies by applying it to actively farmed lands for the purpose of recharging the groundwater aquifer. Sustainable Conservation has studied the effects of these type of activities and has developed guidance materials for growers, which are available at https://suscon.org/technical-resources/. The District, in partnership with Sustainable Conservation, will also be hosting a workshop in Madera to provide growers information on the benefits related to recharging on their property.

For more information on participation in MID’s OFR efforts or to order water, please contact the District’s Operations Department at 559-673-3514. Also, be sure to sign-up for the District’s email distribution list to receive information on this and other District activities by emailing asandoval@madera-id.org or by calling 559-673-3514.
MID Completes Lateral 24.2-17.0 Pipeline Project

In January 2016, Madera Irrigation District (MID) received a United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) WaterSMART grant for the “Lateral 24.2-17.0 Pipeline Improvement Project”. This project underground approximately 6,500 feet of the existing Lateral 24.2-17.0 canal into a 36” pipeline and constructed a small basin at the end of the pipeline to capture spills, reducing losses and improving efficiency. MID received $583,000 in grant funding to complete the project. MID staff started the project in February 2018, removing existing structures and the Road 18 pipe crossing. Over the next several months MID completed excavation on a new basin, Road 18 pipe crossing, 200 feet of pipe installation, and installation of a check structure. At the end of the 2018 water season, construction resumed and MID’s maintenance staff installed the remainder of the 36” High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) pipe, averaging approximately 250 feet a day. MID has installed 6,500 feet of HDPE pipe, built two check structures, and reconnected six meter boxes in time for the 2019 Water Season.

MID Acquires Property as Groundwater Recharge Facility

Madera Irrigation District (MID or District) just acquired a property commonly known as the Allende Basin located near Avenue 9 and Hwy 99. This property will be utilized as a groundwater recharge facility for the benefit of MID. The acquisition of the approximately 20 acre property increases the number of MID-owned basins throughout the District to seven (7). In addition, MID has recently partnered with the City of Madera (City) and Madera County (County) on City and County owned basins for the purpose of groundwater recharge.

Since 2015, the District has been actively rehabilitating and utilizing recharge basins to capture surface water when available, benefiting District landowners and the Madera Sub-basin.

For a Second Time, Madera Irrigation District is Recognized as a District of Distinction

The Madera Irrigation District (District or MID) has earned the “District of Distinction” accreditation by California’s Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF) for a second time. The District was recognized in 2018 for its achievements in the areas of governance, transparency, finances, and board conduct. The District was previously named a District of Distinction in 2016 (a two year award).

“Madera Irrigation District is honored to receive this award for a second time. This award symbolizes MID’s commitment to sound practices and governance” stated Thomas Greci, General Manager.

The District of Distinction accreditation is among California’s highest government honors. MID is one of only thirty-four (34) special districts, out of almost 2,100 special district in the State of California, to receive this distinction. To receive the accreditation, a special district must demonstrate the completion of essential government transparency requirements including conducting ethics and harassment training for all board members, properly conducting open public meetings, and filing financial transactions and compensation reports to the State Controller in a timely manner. The District received the prerequisite Transparency Certificate from SDLF in 2015 and 2018.

SDLF is an independent, non-profit organization formed to promote good governance and best practices among California’s special districts through certification, accreditation, and other recognition programs.