Water Supply Fact Sheet

History

Western Canal Water District (WCWD) was formed by a vote of landowners on December 18, 1984 as a California Water District, and currently encompasses a land area of approximately 67,500 acres, of which 58,520 acres are irrigable. The District purchased the "Western Canal" water system from Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), who had acquired it from the Great Western Power Company. The canal was originally developed by the Western Canal Company, which began operations in 1911.

The District's original diversion was located at the Western Canal Company's dam on the Feather River. The Oroville Reservoir Complex displaced the diversion facilities and upstream portion of the Western Canal. The supply is now provided by two outlet structures located on the northwestern edge of the Thermalito Afterbay.

Water Supply and Drought

The pre-1914 surface water rights of the District: 295,000 AF March - October

- 150,000 AF of natural flow - subject to reduction during drought
- 145,000 AF stored water - **not** subject to reduction

Diversion Agreement Reduction Provisions

Subject to up to 50% reduction of 'Natural Flow' (or 75,000 AF) in any one year or 100% reduction (150,000 AF) in any series of *seven* consecutive years.

- 1991 & 1992 WCWD 50% reduction, totaling 100%
- No reduction allowed the five years following
- 1998 would have been next year subject to a reduction

Units
AF= acre feet
MAF = million acre feet

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Provisions for Deficiencies

- Forecasted April – July unimpaired runoff to Lake Oroville for the current water year is equal to or less than 600,000 AF (avg 1.75 MAF)

- Total accumulated actual deficiencies of unimpaired runoff to Lake Oroville below 2.5 MAF in the immediately prior water year or series of consecutive prior water years each of which had runoff of less than 2.5 MAF, together with the predicted deficiency below 2.5 MAF for the current year, exceed 400,000 AF

  Example - Last contract deficiency*

  1989 – 3.687 MAF unimpaired runoff
  1990 – 2.171 MAF unimpaired runoff (deficit 329 KAF)
  1991 – **2.056 MAF** unimpaired runoff **(deficit 443 KAF)****
  1992 – **1.897 MAF** unimpaired runoff **(deficit 602 KAF)****
  1993 – 5.713 MAF unimpaired runoff
  1994 – 1.891 MAF unimpaired runoff (deficit 608 KAF)
  1995 – 9.279 MAF unimpaired runoff

**Note: 7 year time frame*
*** Cut 50% of natural flow in '91 & '92*

WCWD Operations in Drought

If a contract deficiency is declared, WCWD allocates water on a pro-rated basis.

Grower Considerations

- Idling
- Tailwater Recovery Pumps
- Groundwater: approximately 140 landowner deep wells, WCWD doesn't own any wells
- Increase need for communication with WCWD on water delivery needs

The groundwater basin underlying WCWD's service area has been in stable condition due to the continuous surface water deliveries replenishing the basin through deep percolation. There has been no sale of groundwater outside Butte County following the passage of Measure G in 1996.