

# Finance Department Customer Service

The members of the Finance Department are as follows:

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Our department will be available between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM to assist customers, via the phone or at the front desk.

A DROP BOX IS AVAILABLE IN THE SID PARKING LOT LOCATED AT 810 VACA VALLEY PARKWAY, VACAVILLE.



Solano Irrigation District  
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## Contact Us

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# SOLANO IRRIGATION DISTRICT

SID QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Winter 2022

## Drought or No Drought

By Cary Keaten, General Manager

On December 1, 2021, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) announced a zero initial State Water Project (SWP) allocation for 2022. The State is preparing for a third dry year with reservoirs at or near historic lows. The one storm up to that point dumped a lot of rain on California but, didn't fill up reservoirs much. Believe it or not, most of the 6 to 12 inches of rain from the late October storm soaked into the ground. For example, Lake Berryessa's water shed only generated about 39,000 acre-feet (AF) of storage.

Then came December. Heavy storms during December contributed to a record snowfall, with the Central Sierra snow lab observing 193.7 inches of snow. The previous record was set in 1970 with 179 inches of snow during the month.

The combined rainfall in late 2021 contributed to an increase in storage in Lake Berryessa by over 120,000 AF. And the good news is the water levels continue rise. As of January 1, 2022 the water surface elevation has risen over 10 feet. It could rise over 30 more feet before it spills.

The SWP's Lake Oroville reached its historic low on October 1 at just under 628 feet. Nearly two months later, it has now bounced back up to 710 feet. It's a long way from 900 feet but, it's only January 1<sup>st</sup>. Also, State water officials announced Thursday California's mountain snow holds 160% of the water it normally does this time of year. However, they said it's too early to determine whether California will see enough rain and snow in the months to come to put a dent in the drought.

Early winter storms this month provided a strong start to the water season and some drought relief, but California officially remains in a drought.

The State's annual Water Survey measures the amount of water contained in the snowpack and is a key component of State's water supply forecast. "We could not have asked for a better December in terms of Sierra snow and rain," said State Department of Water Resources (DWR) Director Karla Nemeth. "But Californians need to be aware that even these big storms may not refill our major reservoirs during the next few months. We need more storms and average temperatures this winter and spring, and we can't be sure it's coming. So, it's important that we continue to do our part to keep conserving – we will need that water this summer."

Californians only need to look to last winter and the state's disappointing snowpack runoff due to high temperatures, dry soil and evaporation as a reminder that changes to our climate mean it will take more than an average year to recover from drought.

"California continues to experience evidence of climate change with bigger swings between wet and dry years and even extreme variability within a season. A wet start to the year doesn't mean this year will end up above average once it's all said and done," said Sean de Guzman, Manager of DWR's Snow Surveys and Water Supply Forecasting Unit.

Going back to the SWP allocations, each year, DWR provides the initial allocation on December 1<sup>st</sup> based on available water storage and projected water supply demands. Allocations are updated monthly as snowpack and runoff information is assessed, with a final allocation typically determined in May or June.

The lowest initial allocations were 5 percent in 2010 and 2014. Last year, the initial SWP allocation was 10 percent, however due to increasing dry conditions, the final allocation was lowered to 5 percent. It's likely that the State will increase this year's initial zero percent allocation but, we'll have to wait for the water year to develop to see.





## SID's Water Supply and 2022 Water Season

By Matthew Hobbs, Water & Power Operations Manager

Every year Solano Irrigation District delivers irrigation water to over 36,700 acres of agriculture within Solano County. Between the months of March and October, SID distributes, on average, 116,000 Acre-Feet (AF)\* of water to our customer's orchards, farms, vineyards, etc. The volume delivered hinges on multiple factors, such as weather, precipitation, crops planted, and length of the season.

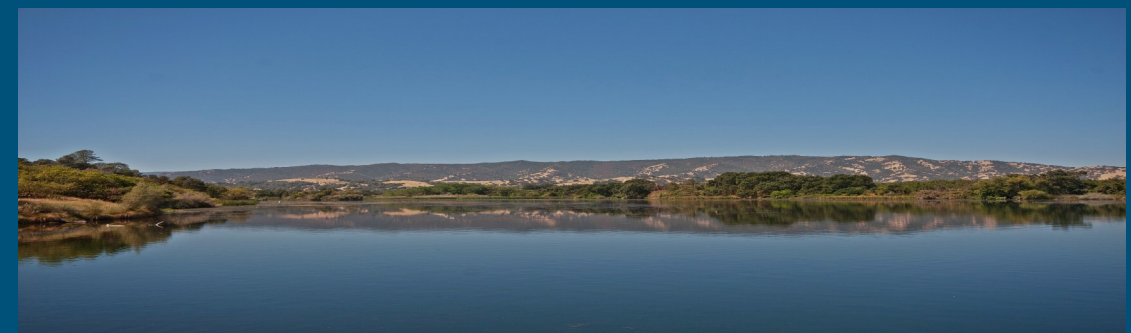
Depending on customer demand in a given season, the District may not deliver the entirety of its allocated water and that unused amount becomes "carryover" for use in the next year's water season, thus increasing the total supply for the next year. Since the amount of carryover water varies from year-to-year, our water supply can also vary. Typically, when we have better than average rainfall, demand for irrigation water is lower and we have the potential for more water carryover in the following season. Conversely, we have less carryover in seasons with lower rainfall totals. There also exists a third scenario, in years with excessive rainfall, where Lake Berryessa fills enough to spill down the world-famous Morning Glory spillway, and we can effectively "lose" our carryover. While rare, this type of event did happen in 2017 (first time in ten-years), and again in 2019.

In 2020 we had over 25,000 acre-feet of carryover, and in this past irrigation year (2021) we had over 17,000 acre-feet of carryover added to our supply. However, going into the 2022 season we expect to have only around 2,200 acre-feet. This, coupled with a very dry 2020/21 weather season where Lake Berryessa saw only 9.49 inches of rainfall (well below the 25.96-inch average). The 2022 water season, however, is starting on better footing.

SID's surface water supply comes from surface water stored behind the Monticello Dam at Lake Berryessa. SID's annual allocation is 140,000 AF (116,000 AF reserved for Ag). Our water supply doesn't increase if we get a lot of rainfall. It is static unless we get a reduction in our allocation due to an extended drought. This happened one time in 1992 but, overall, our supply is reliable.

At times SID can add to a "carryover" account to be used in future years. In 2019, for example, the State had significant rainfall late into the spring. The wet ground resulted in SID starting the irrigation season officially mid-April, but water orders didn't pick up until late May. This late start meant that SID was able to save about 30,000 AF of its 140,000 AF allocation for use in 2020 and 2021. We did end, however, the 2021 water season with almost zero water in our carryover account. What this means is no matter how wet this winter is, SID will only start the 2022 water season with its 140,000 AF total allocation.

In addition to surface water, a smaller portion of our water supply, up to 10,000 acre-feet, comes from groundwa-



### SID MISSION STATEMENT

Solano Irrigation District's mission is to provide safe and reliable water to our farms, families and businesses.

ter sources across the District. In estimating an initial Ag watersupply allocation for our customers for the 2022 water season, we would add carryover of 2,200 AF to our groundwater of 10,000 AF to our surface water of 116,000 AF for a total of 128,200 AF. Spreading this across the 36,700 acres of irrigated land, equates to 3.5 acre-feet/acre of allocation to our customers. As it happens, not all our customers use their full allocation. For this reason, if conditions exist, Staff typically recommends an initial adjustment at the beginning of a water season, usually around 4.0 acre-feet/acre. Additionally, and per policy, Staff comes back to the Board mid-season (July) and if the water supply is sufficient, Staff may recommend to the Board an additional increase to the allocation, perhaps another 0.5 acre-feet/acre.

In summary, the late 2021 rainfall increased Lake Berryessa's water surface elevation increased over 10 feet and its volume by about 120,000 Acre Feet (AF). Further, watershed rainfall could increase the volume even further by the beginning of our water season. However, this will not increase our 2022 water supplies because our supplies are governed by; first, how much we had in carryover at the end of the 2021 water season, second, our annual set allocation, and third, our groundwater pumping. With our 2021 carryover being 2,200 AF, our maximum Ag water supply entering the 2022 season is 128,200 AF. The only factor impacting this analysis is a wet spring. If we have a wet spring and water orders don't pick up until late May, then we will likely increase our carryover by the end of 2022 because our customers had all the water they needed. Some from SID and some from Mother Nature.

\*Note: one acre-foot of water equals approximately 326,000 gallons, or enough to cover an acre of land one foot deep

Happy  
New Year!