



Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District January 7, 2020

By Don A. Wright

The **Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District** held its board of directors meeting on Tuesday, January 7, 2020 at its Farmersville headquarters. It was a cold and foggy morning outside, but in the boardroom folks seemed to be in a pretty good mood. That's the beauty of a new year; fresh starts. Also, the snowpack and reservoir conditions are in good shape and farmers are like ducks and frogs; they love the rain.

Chairman **Don Mills** called the meeting to order at 9:00 am and Director **Chris Tantau** introduced Friant Water Authority's **Doug DeFlicht** and **Johnny Amaral** as visitors. General Manager **Mark Larsen** announced that JG Boswell's **Walter Bricker** has retired. The consent calendar was passed. Larsen told the board Director **Stan Gomes** is moving and he's moving out of his director area. Gomes has served the **KDWCD** and his community for decades. The board was asked to approve a resolution honoring Gomes and to also appoint a new director. The board was happy to pass the resolution.



Mills said it is a shame one has to move away or die to get off these boards and Director **Jeff Ritchie** took the half full view and said at least Gomes didn't die. Grower **Jimi Valov** was appointed as a replacement. The board also appointed Mills to represent its interests on the Longs Canal Company board.

Water Master **Vic Hernandez** gave his report saying the goal is to take water now to prevent flood release flows in the near term. He said there should be a resolution with the dam operators by this Friday on release schedules. Hernandez also said there has been a shocking development in the DWR. The new DWR chief **Karla Nemeth** was made aware of the abysmal lack of attention in snow surveys. Five new technicians have been added to the program and although it is a little late in the year to get started there are plans to install new hardware including avalanche wedges to protect the sensors from avalanches. There was some talk of KDCWD doing the surveys but this is a much better approach. There are safety issues and all manner of considerations a professionally trained snow reporter would be best.

Engineer **Dennis Keller** gave a CVP water report saying everything is pretty normal. Larsen said FWA has developed a report on the Friant Kern Canal subsidence repair also known as the capacity correction project. There is an idea to use Part III money for repairs. This money is usually used for water conservation projects. Larsen said although KDCWD uses that money and needs it there is also a system wide need. Keller pointed out some of the other districts are very dependent on Part III money and might have to go out for a 218 election if those funds are allocated elsewhere. Tantau, President of FWA, said the FWA board sent an unanimous request to use that Part III money for canal repair but since FWA doesn't contract water it was symbolic. Amaral said FWA is looking under every rock for funding to keep the ambitious construction schedule humming along. He said there is a meeting this week with Senator **Melissa Hurtado** to reintroduce legislation to get some state funds. He

said there was a rare budget agreement last month in Washington DC and should lightning strike Friant is poised to ride it as far as can be. DeFlitch said debt financing will take into account FWA O&M considerations and taking title to the FKC when it comes to bonding. He said Keller is one of many looking into what a title transfer will entail. DeFlitch said he doesn't see any deal killers at this time but there is a diligent effort to avoid a train wreck.

Amaral said Dr. **David Sunding's** economic report for the San Joaquin Valley Water Blueprint has had an internal draft released and if SGMA isn't mitigated the unintended consequences of the law will be devastating to the Valley. Amaral also thanked everyone for showing up to yesterday's Visalia meeting with the US Bureau of Reclamation about a CVPIA true up. Director **Ron Clark** attended the meeting and said he saw most of the comments were about where the money has gone and has it done any good. He and Amaral said the Bureau folks there did the best they could. Amaral said in the real world when things don't pan out financially after five years or more people put their money elsewhere. Not so in the CVPIA world. Keller didn't have much to say about the Temperance Flat situation. Stantec Engineering has some more info soon.

Larsen said Southern California Edison is requesting an easement on the Hannah Ranch North property. He said the Rocky Hill Farming Corporation has some reservations and they have been good neighbors. He'd like to hold off the matter until more conversations can take place. Larsen did say So Cal Ed's proposal is basically sound. In another development Four Creeks Engineering wants to flood irrigate some land in the Oak Preserve with a pump to see where the water will flow. This is of course much better than building recharge cells and there will be KDWCD and Four Creeks staff to monitor this and prevent any undesired result. Of course the ground squirrels are protesting and they might get PETA involved. One hopes the rodents can find a NGO to help them relocate to a drier area.

KDWCD Engineer **Larry Dotson** said he'd like to develop a bid proposal for the Perigean Basin project for some automated gates that will increase efficiency. Larsen updated the board on power projects. He said there has been snags with the wireless communication between the Army Corps of Engineers and KDWCD. There are other issues with the sale of the power plant but it appears things are heading in a positive direction. Farmer and Delta View Water Association wheel boss **Johnny Gaily** commented there will be a big opportunity to use these facilities for the dark time when solar power won't do diddly squat. Larsen said that is a part of the negotiations.

Greater Kaweah GSA Executive Director Eric Osterling said there were 14 last minute comments and a total of 340 comments are being addressed on the GSP. Many were duplicates. He said a stakeholder and board meeting yielded satisfactory results and responses to the comments. There will be a plethora of meetings as the drop dead deadline is roaring closer. In addition to the GSP there is a SGMA report due in April that must be written. Provost & Pritchard's **Matt Klinchuch** is working on this. There is also mostly likely a need for a 218 Election. DWR and the State Board is holding a GSP workshop in Clovis this Thursday.

The next meeting will be February 4th at 9am. The meeting then went into closed session.

DISCLAIMER OF RESPONSIBILITY; Waterwrights.net strives to provide his clients with the most complete, up-to-date, and accurate information available. Nevertheless, Waterwrights.net does not serve as a guarantor of the accuracy or completeness of the information provided, and specifically disclaims any and all responsibility for information that is not accurate, up-to-date, or complete. Waterwrights.net's clients therefore rely on the accuracy, completeness and timeliness of information from Waterwrights.net entirely at their own risk. The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and do not represent any advertisers or third parties.



ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. Copyright © 2020 by Don A. Wright

Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District

2975 N. Farmersville Blvd.
Farmersville, California 93223
559/747-5601
[Email: kaweah@kdwcd.com](mailto:kaweah@kdwcd.com)
www.kdwcd.com

Board of Directors

Don Mills – President, Chris Tantau - Vice-President, Ron Clark, Stan Gomes, Jeff Ritchie, Mike Shannon & Brian Watte

Management

Mark Larsen, General Manager - mlarsen@kdwcd.com
Terry Stafford, Facilities Manager - tstafford@kdwcd.com
Dian Rader, Administrative/HR Coordinator - drader@kdwcd.com
Larry Dotson, Senior Engineer - ldotson@kdwcd.com
Shane Smith, Projects/Administrative Manager - ssmith@kdwcd.com

Office and Field Staff

Chemical Applicator/Equipment Operator - Jim Mudford
Equipment Operators - Jesus Sandoval, Chris Bell & Tommy Crosswy
Equipment Operator/Mechanic - Ryon Van Essen
Hydrographer/River Operator - Jose Rivas & Rick Avila
Water Master – Victor Hernandez
Senior Equipment Operator - Tom Dilbeck & Doyle Pettyjohn
Accountant - Shelly Heier
Administrative Assistant - Kim Hollis
Board Coordinator - Anita Wilson
Office Assistant - Kathleen Halvorsen
Engineering Technician - Matthew Jacobus

Primary Consultants

Bruce George - Special Projects Consultant
Dennis Keller - Civil Engineer (Keller/Wegley Consulting Engineers)
Aubrey Mauritson - Attorney (Ruddell, Cochran, Stanton, Smith & Bixler, LLP)
Richard "Dick" Moss - Civil Engineer (Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group)
Shelley Orth - Editor/Wordsmith

From the Kaweah Delta website:

The Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District (KDWCD) was formed in 1927, under the provisions of California state law known as the Water Conservation Act of 1927, for the purpose of conserving and storing waters of the Kaweah River and for conserving and protecting the underground waters of the Kaweah Delta. Later the Water Conservation Act, as well as the purpose of the District, was expanded to include power generation and distribution.

The District is located in the south-central portion of the San Joaquin Valley and lies in portions of both Tulare and Kings Counties. The total area of the District is about 340,000 acres with approximately 255,000 acres located in the western portion of Tulare County and the balance, or 85,000 acres, in the northeastern portion of the Kings County.

The District's lands are primarily agricultural in nature, although the cities of Visalia and Tulare constitute significant areas of urbanization. Farmersville is the other incorporated area. The population of the District is currently estimated to be in excess of 175,000 people with the principle crops being cotton, misc. field crops, deciduous fruit and nut trees as well as alfalfa.

Numerous public and private entities within the District's boundaries divert water from the Kaweah River and its distributaries. Nearly all of the lands served with Kaweah River water also are served irrigation water from groundwater, primarily due to the erratic and relatively undependable nature of flow on the Kaweah River. All municipal and industrial water uses within the District are supplied from groundwater.

KDWCD and Tulare Irrigation District (TID), which lies entirely within the boundaries of the Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District, has a long-term contract with the federal Central Valley Project (CVP) for water from the Friant Division of the CVP. TID has historically received substantial quantities of CVP water surplus to the demands of the District which augment the Kaweah River supply.

The District and the Kaweah River groundwater basin have experienced long-term groundwater overdraft estimated in 2007 to be as much as 40,000 acre-feet per year. The District has performed multiple studies of groundwater data to determine the extent and volume of groundwater overdraft within its boundaries. There are currently over 40 recharge basins within the District covering approximately 5,000 acres. While KDWCD owns and operates many of these groundwater recharge basins, it does not provide water banking services for others.