

El Dorado County Water Agency Meeting Recap – May 13 Board Meeting
Submitted by Director Wadlé, El Dorado County Agency Representative for GDPUD, El Dorado
Irrigation District (EID) and Grizzly Flats CSD.

As the District's representative on the El Dorado County Water Agency Board, I am providing this recap of the Agency's May meeting.

1) Fairgrounds Drainage Improvements Feasibility

The Agency, with assistance from Stantec Consulting, will prepare a feasibility study to identify opportunities to capture, store and reuse stormwater runoff at the El Dorado County Fairgrounds site. Assessing how stormwater can be utilized is a component of the Agency's Water Resources Development and Management Plan (previously presented to the GDPUD Board) and well as the Agency's overall policy goals

The study is being done in partnership with the County, who will contribute half of the study's \$94,000 cost.

The item was approved unanimously.

2) Irrigation Management Services

Per policy, the Agency provides irrigation management services to help conserve water on the western slope of El Dorado County in areas not served by EID. The program helps demonstrate the County's efficient use of agricultural water supplies and meet state water quality regulations. The program has an added importance in dry years to assist growers that rely on wells as it ensures water is being used as efficiently as possible.

The program's services include: installation and maintenance of soil moisture monitoring station and well as regular monitoring and reporting to the growers.

The growers participating in the program contribute a "grower share" to cover some of the costs. The cost share is normally \$400/site.

In March, the Agency Board approved a budget of \$85,000 and authorized the General Manager to enter into contracts with qualified consultants to provide the services.

Since March, a number of growers have expressed that they may not be able to make their grower cost share payment due to adverse market conditions. Basically, they are having difficulty selling their crops. As such, the Agency Board agreed to increase the cost share from \$400/site to \$500/site for this year. The overall \$85,000 budget was not changed.

This item was approved unanimously.

3) Upper American River Basin Regional Drought Contingency Plan

The Board unanimously approved the Agency approve a Task Order with Stantec to prepare the Upper American River Basin Regional Drought Contingency Plan. The total cost is \$296,600. The Agency and EID submitted a grant application to Bureau of Reclamation to develop this plan and the application was approved with a matching fund grant in 2019.

The Contingency Plan will include GDPUD's territory, as this was a question/concern of mine.

4) Water Agency Rebrand and Logo Development

For the last two meetings, the Board has been discussing a rebrand and new logo for the Water Agency. This rebrand and logo is designed to distinguish the Agency from El Dorado County (as it is a separate entity from the County). Other County Water Agency's have gone through a similar process. At this point, the Board is working on a logo that clearly captures El Dorado's geography

and agricultural industry (examples: mountains in the east and vineyards/orchards in the west). The Board debated various logo options and provided direction to the consultant to bring back at a future meeting.

5) Presentation for Agency Fiscal Framework

The Agency is working on a framework to enhance its financial planning and management. The framework was included in the recent Strategic Plan update. Over the summer, an advisory group will discuss ways to update the framework. I will sit on this advisory group along with the representatives from South Tahoe PUD, the Resource Conservation Districts, and the County.

6) Approval of Agency's 2020-2021 Budget.

The last item was the approval of the 2020-2021 budget. The Agency receives approximately \$2.4 million from property taxes. The other primary funding source are carry-over funds from previous years, which amount to \$4.5 million.

The Agency's primary expense is the costs associated with a County-wide water rights Securing an additional 40,000 acre-feet from SMUD has been a County priority for decades. Operational expenses make up a significant part of the budget.

Finally, the budget includes various cost-shares for local districts. The Agency's enabling act authorizes the County to enter into contracts with local agencies on planning and design for projects. I am pleased that approximately \$535,000 in cost-shares are included in this budget. Specifically, there is \$50,000 allocated to GDPUD. I have been in conversations with the Agency's General Manager and our manager, Jeff Nelson, on ways to utilize this cost share in our 20/21 budget. The Board approved the budget and the public hearing is set for the Agency's June meeting.

Fazio Water Clarification:

Finally, I want to provide clarification on the so-called "Fazio Water" in response to questions at the last Board meeting. The County Water Agency signed an agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation for 15,000 acre feet of water in 2019 (Vic Fazio was the federal legislator who carried legislation that authorized this opportunity).

The agreement is for the County Water Agency to allocate annually to the designated areas under the contract. Approximately 7,500 acre feet of this water is designated for GDPUD. Per the County Agency General Manager, this water must be scheduled the year prior to intended uses. No Fazio water is scheduled for use this year.

As explained by GDPUD's legal counsel (and later confirmed by the County Water Agency General Manager) at our last regular meeting, the Fazio water cannot be directly transferred. If the water is not used for beneficial uses for the intended areas, the water remains with the Bureau for use in the federal Central Valley Project.

The water source is Folsom Reservoir or on the American River upstream of Folsom (such as the Confluence). GDPUD does not have the infrastructure to access this water. Pumping equipment and conveyance facilities would have to be installed to access the water.

In summary, while it is great there is a contract between the Agency and the Bureau for additional water that we should have access to, the reality is we don't have the infrastructure in place to actually put it to beneficial use on the Divide.

Furthermore, the cost to build the necessary facilities is expensive. From the 2009 Report "[Options to Increase Water Supply](#)" prepared for GDPUD by California Water Consulting, the estimated cost for the North Fork American River Pumping Plant (taking the water from the Confluence) is \$14 million.