

Laguna Irrigation District Newsletter

October 16, 2024

In an effort to keep our Landowners up to date on what is happening in the District, we are again sending out the occasional newsletter that you may remember from the past. We have been posting news and information on the website (www.lagunaid.com) in recent years, but because not everyone uses the website or has access to the internet, we are hopeful restarting this program may make the information you need from us more accessible.

Since the office often receives inquiries about subjects involving the District, in the first newsletter we thought it appropriate to gather those queries and prepare an FAQ to share our answers to those questions.

Frequently Asked Questions

SGMA

Question

What is the District doing to demonstrate its exceptional groundwater conditions with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act?

Answer

- The District has nearly 30 years of groundwater data from monitoring wells within and around our boundaries. We are currently measuring about 160 wells twice each year for water level data. (Most of our neighbors in the local GSA have little or no historic data.)
- The District has hired Montgomery and Associates, an engineering firm specializing in groundwater analysis, to verify the groundwater conditions within our District.

Some of those conditions are:

- Multiple aquifers above the Corcoran Clay that are unique to Laguna.
- Aquifers that recover in wet years.
- Soils that are more porous, allowing better recharge.
- Proximity to the river.

RECHARGE

Question

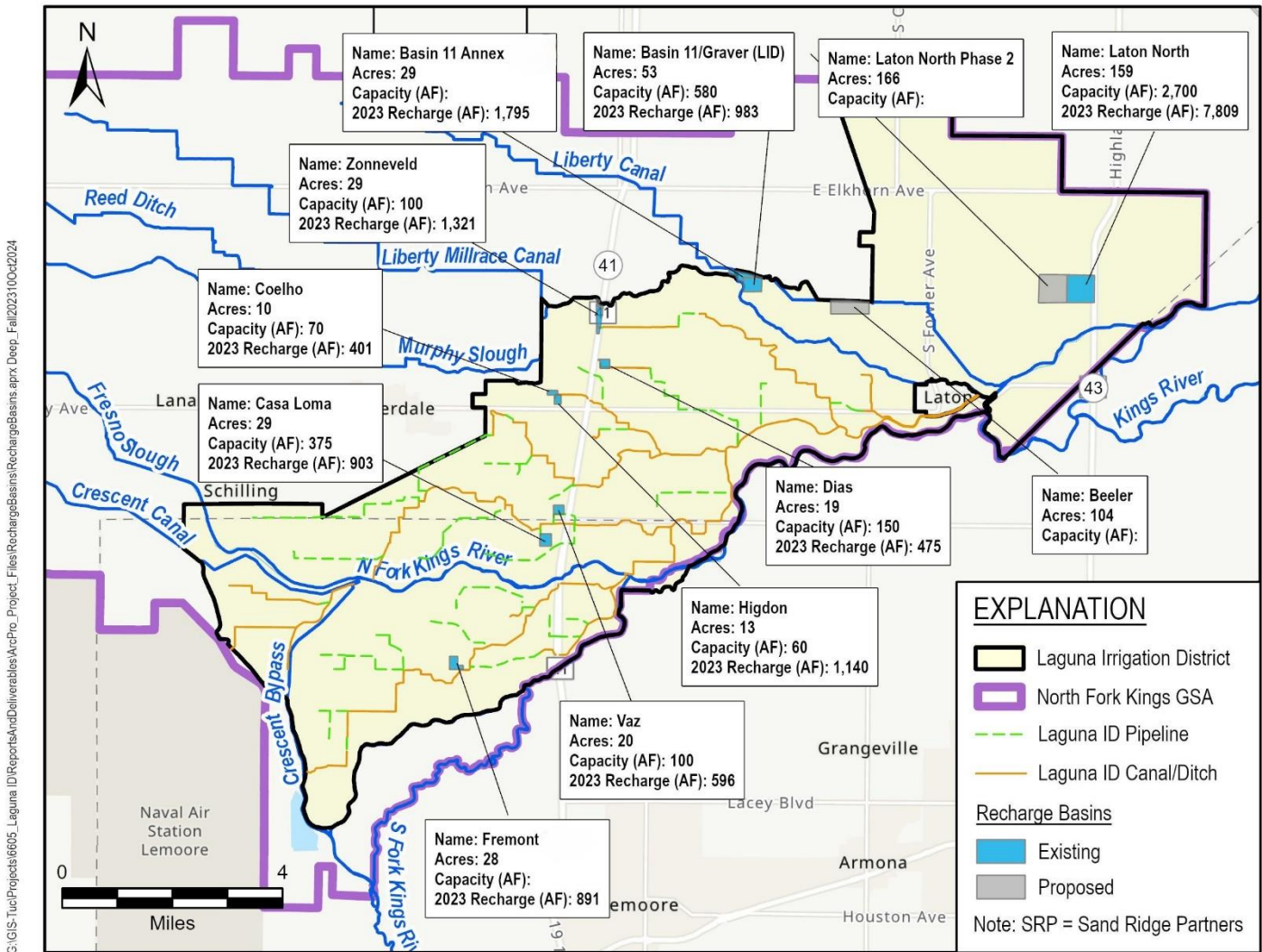
Is Laguna building any recharge basins?

Answer

- The answer is YES!
- Since 2016, over 200 acres of District owned recharge basins have been added, bringing the total to over 320 acres, with one ongoing now and more projects planned for the future (see map).
- The District has a project list that is reviewed and updated regularly to obtain the best results for our Landowners.

- Through our Landowner Recharge Policy, nearly 130 acres of Landowner Owned Ponds have also been built in recent years.
- Until recently, Laguna was the only Agency in the local GSA that has historically built and operated groundwater recharge facilities and is recognized as a leader in the Kings River service area for doing so.

DISTRICT RECHARGE BASINS – EXISTING & FUTURE



Question

How and when is recharge done, and why don't the ponds completely fill?

Answers

- Generally, recharge in the ponding basins is done only during flood release periods. During flood events, we use as much water as possible to fill the ponds, but we need to keep some room available for balancing the canals. This is called regulation. Room is also needed for

emergencies when the flood releases unexpectedly increase, and water needs to be taken off the river to save life and property.

- When flood release is **not** in effect, all water is used for irrigation purposes. During normal irrigation runs, the ponds are used as “regulation ponds” to maintain the water levels in the canals and prevent overflows.
- One thing to note, when the river begins a flood release, the water is often heavy-laden with debris and silt. Silt particles can plug up the recharge ponds and greatly reduce their ability to percolate water. This is often a factor in filling ponds, because we are waiting for the water to clear up before adding water in large amounts to keep them operating optimally for the long run.

Question

Does filling the ponds to their maximum increase how much they recharge?

Answer

- According to our engineers, filling the ponds to their maximum does not increase the rate of recharge. The increase in rate of recharge after 3 feet of water depth is minimal.

Question

Do the canals add to the recharge for the District?

Answer

- Yes. Laguna is blessed with canals that seep water into the underground. Until recently, canal seepage was generally considered a loss of usable water. However, the District considers it a plus! Whenever water runs in the canal, groundwater recharge is happening. Generally, the canal recharge ranges between 30% and 40% of the water added to the canals at the river.

Question

How much water has Laguna recharged in recent years?

Answer

- Laguna Irrigation District has actively increased groundwater recharge within the District over the last 20 years.
- In 2023, a very wet year where river water ran over a period of about 9 months with a long flood release, the District recharged over 70,000-acre feet of water for the benefit of all its Landowners.
- In 2024, the District delivered water for 95 days including two short flood releases totaling 17 days. In that time the District recharged about 21,000-acre feet of surface water into our aquifers.
- The recharge within the District does not include the water within the river that seeps into the underground. We believe that we should receive credit for District water from Pine Flat Dam to our headgates on the river. But that is an issue to be worked out in the near future.

WATER

Question

How much water can we expect to receive?

Answer

- There is no set amount of water that we receive each year.
- All Kings River member units (districts and mutual water companies) work off of a schedule that is based on daily calculated inflow into Pine Flat Reservoir. That schedule changes monthly and is unique to each unit.
- The amount of precipitation (rain and snow) received in the mountains above Pine Flat determines the quantity we receive in our storage account. We usually have a good idea in April what our water availability will be at Pine Flat. We then have to factor in the seepage in the river between the dam and our river headgates (that number varies between wet and dry years) to determine how much will be available to divert into the canals and then to our Landowners.

Question

Why is there water in the river and Laguna is not delivering water to its Landowners?

Answer

- Each district or company determines their supply and when it will be most efficient to order out of the reservoir. Some units with more water may start running water earlier and/or could run longer.
- Due to the schedule, not all units are equal.
- The schedule was first created in 1927 and last updated in 1954. At that time, all river units agreed on the methodology of assigning water to the individual member units.

Question

Does Laguna send water out of the District?

Answer

- The simple answer is No. However, there are occasions in dry years that the District makes arrangements to obtain water from other Kings River units so that our Landowners have surface water to irrigate with in that dry year. Most of these agreements require water as repayment to be returned in wetter years.

Question

Has the District developed other sources of water for its Landowners?

Answer

- Yes. Besides obtaining water from other Kings River units, the District has ongoing arrangements to bring “new” water into the area. In recent years we have been able to access Friant Water.

Question

Do Board Members get special or preferential treatment when it comes to getting their canal water?

Answer

- No.
- Board Members receive their water in the order of when the request is made, just like any other Landowner.

FINANACES

Question

Are the Board Members compensated for their duties?

Answer

- Yes. Board Members receive a stipend for meetings attended, plus mileage.
- This information can be found on the District website under Agendas and Reports, Board and Staff Compensation.
- The Board of Directors receive no other compensation for their duties.

Question

What about District Finances?

Answer

- The District's Finances are Audited each year by an independent accountant who examines all transactions for the year. Besides the Audit, a report is filed with the State Controller's Office annually.
- The link to the State Controller's Report can be found on the District website under Agendas and Reports, Financial Transaction Report.

BOARD MEETINGS

Question

When and Where are the Board meetings?

Answer

- The Board of Directors meet monthly, generally on the first Tuesday after the first day of each month.
- The meeting time is 9:30am.
- The Board Meetings are held at the District Office, 5065 19-1/2 Avenue, Riverdale. This location is near the southwest corner of Highway 41 and Excelsior Avenue in what was formerly called the community of Hub.

Question

Where can I find the meeting schedules and Agendas?

Answer

- Agendas and meeting schedules can be found on the District Website (www.lagunaid.com).
- Agendas are posted at the District Office normally on Thursday prior to a meeting.

Question

Can I attend and speak at the Board Meetings?

Answer

- Yes. You can speak to the Board during the Public Comment portion of the meeting. Public Comments are scheduled at the start of the meetings.

BOARD MEMBERS

Question

How many Board Members are there, how often do they come up for election, what are the qualifications, and how are the officers selected?

Answer

- There are five Board Members, each representing a division within the District.
- They serve four-year terms with alternating schedules on even numbered years. For example, two Board Members terms end in 2024 and are currently up for election and three Board Members terms end in 2026.
- The qualifications are that they must be a voter and a landowner and reside in the division that they wish to represent. They must also be willing to commit to attending regular meetings.
- The Board Officers (President, Vice President, and Secretary-Treasurer) are selected by the sitting Board at the December meeting of the year in which a general District election is held.

If you have any questions, or if you have any suggestions for topics we should consider including in future newsletters, please contact the District through the website (www.lagunaid.com) or you can call us.

Website www.lagunaid.com

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