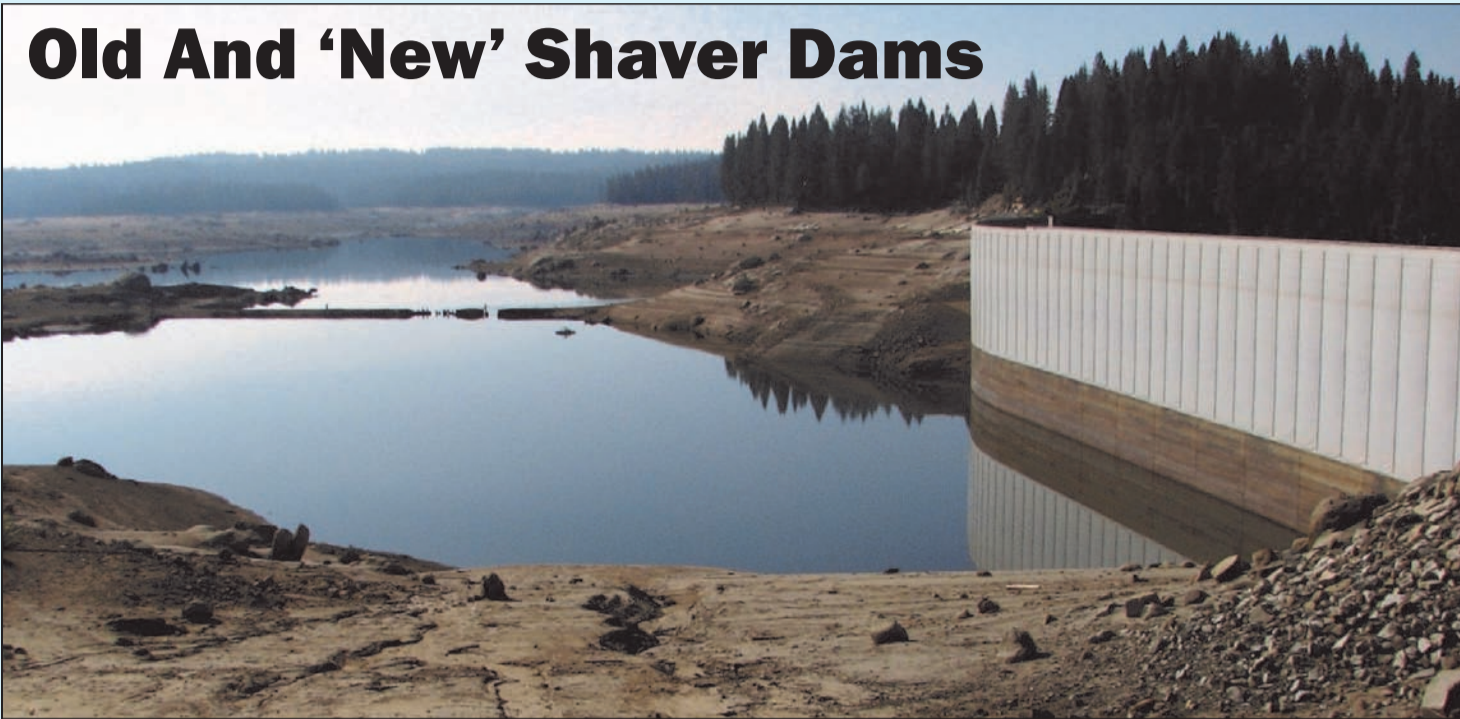


**Old And 'New' Shaver Dams**



J Randall McFarland / Friant Water Authority

Where San Joaquin River watershed surface storage began: The old Shaver Lake millpond dam emerges from its watery grave (left of center) as the modern lake is emptied to permit continuation and completion of a major maintenance project on the "new" dam (right) that was completed in 1927. The work will finish installation of a sealer liner on the dam's upstream face that began last winter.

**Pioneer Shaver Lake Dam Making Rare Appearance**

**Old Millpond Barrier Is Where San Joaquin Water Storage Began**

**I**t hadn't been seen in decades and its location is a few miles away from the San Joaquin's channel but the old Shaver Lake Dam that reappeared during October as the modern lake emptied is where the river system's now-extensive water storage and harnessing began.

Southern California Edison Company's need to drain Shaver Lake to complete a major maintenance and rehabilitation project on the concrete gravity dam finished in 1927 to form the enlarged reservoir for hydroelectric generation has resulted in the old rock-fill and timber dam — built in 1892 — emerging into the Sierra Nevada sunlight for the first time in decades.

**DEVELOPED FOR LOGGING**

When it was built for water storage, the old dam's purpose was for neither power nor irrigation purposes. Logging was then the name of the game.

The existing "old dam" isn't even the original. An earth-fill structure was constructed by the Pine Ridge Flume and Lumber Company in the late 1880s at the same location in what was then known as Stevenson Meadows. It was built to pool a water supply from Stevenson Creek, a San Joaquin River tributary, intended to be used in a flume to transport cut lumber to the valley. That flume was U-shaped and leaked so badly that it could not be used.

A project that did function, and amazingly well for its day, was conceived and constructed in 1892 by Charles B. Shaver and Lewis P. Swift, both of whom had been Michigan lumbermen.

Please see **Old Shaver Dam**, back page

**Storage Need Is Presented**

**FWA Manager Makes Case To Commission**

A second California Water Commission workshop on surface water and groundwater storage attracted considerable attention to the proposed Temperance Flat Reservoir.

The storage workshops dealt with issues and potential projects related for the water bond scheduled to be voted upon by Californians during the November 2012 general election.

**TEMPERANCE FLAT**

During a 10-minute presentation in Sacramento on the Temperance Flat proposal, Friant Water Authority General Manager Ronald D. Jacobsma explained that cost estimates have decreased.

"The numbers are looking better," Jacobsma said. He noted that water yields "are still somewhat dependent on fixing the Delta's problems."

Water planners involved with Temperance Flat view the project — which would be located in the upper end of Millerton Lake and the San Joaquin River canyon upstream to existing Kerckhoff Lake north of Auberry — as having maximum benefits by being integrated with other projects. Those would include more reliable Delta water conveyance, particularly in wet years, to facilitate water supply exchanges and improved water quality.

Delta issues are vitally important to Friant water users.

Please see **Storage**, Page 3

**CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUE RAISED BY WATER USERS**

**Supreme Court Won't Hear Delta Smelt ESA Case**

U.S. Supreme Court justices have declined to hear a case that focused on Constitutional authority of the United States to protect the Delta smelt under the Endangered Species Act.

Three growers had challenged protection of the 2½-inch Delta smelt but the Supreme Court on October 31 left in place a decision made last March by the Ninth


Circuit Court of Appeals upholding the ESA as a valid use of the authority of Congress to regulate interstate commerce.

The challenge, taken up by the Pacific Legal Foundation (PLF) on behalf of the plaintiffs, had backing of a number of agricultural and water interests as well as property-rights advocates. In the end, however, the Su-

preme Court turned back a major legal question on the ESA for the sixth time.

PLF attorneys said they were disappointed but determined to continue fighting what they contend are unjustified federal restrictions on water deliveries for Central and Southern California — and to keep litigating against

Please see **Delta Smelt**, Page 3



**Friant Loses 52-Year Leader**  
Quentin Luallen, a Lindmore Irrigation District director and member of Friant boards for more than a half century, has died.  
[Obituary on Page 3](#)

**FRIANT WATER AUTHORITY**  
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# FRIANT Waterline

October 2011  
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Fresno Irrigation District	Porterville Irrigation District
Ivanhoe Irrigation District	Saucelito Irrigation District
Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District	Shafter-Wasco Irrigation District
Kern-Tulare Water District	Stone Corral Irrigation District
Lindmore Irrigation District	Tea Pot Dome Water District
Lindsay-Strathmore Irrigation District	Terra Bella Irrigation District
Lower Tule River Irrigation District	Tulare Irrigation District

## TULARE IRRIGATION DISTRICT

### New Martin Basin Getting First Use

A new Tulare Irrigation District groundwater recharge and water regulation basin complex adjacent to TID's new headquarters west of Tulare has been completed.

Martin Basin received its first water September 4, the district announced. The property was acquired by TID in 2007. Five acres were devoted to development

#### Additional Friant Division News

- Please see Pages 3 and 4

of the district's administrative and operation and maintenance facilities. Ten acres of a diary (on what had been known as the "Martin place") were sold. The rest of the property was devoted to basin use.

The Martin Basin project – which includes two water storage cells – received a \$300,000 grant from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Design and construction by TID took about a year. Telemetry control equipment is also to be installed.

There are now 13 basins within TID, including the district's new Swall and Martin projects. These projects have added about 180 acres and some 1,100 acre-feet of storage space to help manage canal flows and expand groundwater recharge opportunities, accelerating capture of wet-year water supplies.

—TID Tidings

## AROUND FRIANT AND CALIFORNIA

### FRESNO IRRIGATION DISTRICT

## Bond-Financed Improvements Mostly Completed

Revenue bonds approved by voters five years ago with millions of dollars invested in infrastructure have resulted in dozens of major Fresno Irrigation District improvement projects put in place over the past four years.

"FID's Maintenance and Facility Upgrade Plan has largely accomplished what the District's voters told us to do, allowing us to rehabilitate major infrastructure deficiencies and meet other needs," said Gary Serrato, FID General Manager.

Only a handful of the many projects planned remain to be completed.

"We have focused on deferred maintenance projects and capital improvements that have already resulted in tremendous efficiencies and savings in the facilities we use and the water FID delivers to its growers," he added.

The past winter's work included development of groundwater recharge facilities, pipelines, new control structures, improved communications and other projects.

Since the upgrade plan was launched, capital improvements made by FID have included retrofitting existing weir structures with long crested weirs and automated gates; installation of a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition System (SCADA) and telemetry improvements; improved measurement at lateral headings and some grower turn-outs; and construction of regulation and recharge basins.

The worst of many leaky pipelines have been replaced and sections of canals that have caused problems have been lined with concrete. Numerous automated trash racks have been installed and FID rights-of-way have been improved.

During the program, FID has constructed improvements valued at \$15.6 million, with \$10.3 million coming from bonds and the



Fresno Irrigation District

New control gates are installed in a control structure along a newly-lined section of canal, one of the past year's Fresno Irrigation District projects carried out under the District's Maintenance and Facility Upgrade Plan that was largely funded through revenue bonds approved by FID voters five years ago.

remaining funds coming from outside funding sources. Those have included federal and state grants, local agencies, and utilizing District construction labor and equipment.

— FID Waterways

### KERN COUNTY

## Water Group Given A Revival

The Water Association of Kern County (WAKC), established in 1955, has been given an infusion of new life with which to inform and educate the public and water community about water issues in Kern County.

The organization was originally designed to educate the citizens of Kern County about the need for the construction of the State Water Project.

Over the years, the WAKC evolved to include outreach and activities that provided information about federal, state and local water projects, water quality, legislation and regulations, historical water agreements, water supply, endangered species, the Kern River, water banking, conservation, water development and many other water-related topics.

Steve Dalke, Kern-Tulare Water District Manager, is President. Serving on the board is Shafter-Wasco Irrigation District Manager Jerry Ezell. Both agencies are Friant Water

Authority members. Also on the board is Ernest Conant, a Bakersfield water attorney who represents a number of Friant Division Central Valley Project water contractors.

### FARM WATER COALITION

## PBS Show Looks At Technology

How California can use the latest technology to solve its water supply crisis is the focus of a new Public Broadcast System television program co-sponsored by the California Farm Water Coalition.

As of press time, it was scheduled to make its San Joaquin Valley debut on November 3.

"This is really a celebration of the creativity and leadership that everyone from family farmers in the Central Valley to the public water agencies that serve our largest cities have implemented in addressing one of California's biggest challenges for the future," said Mike Wade, California Farm Water Coalition Executive Director.

The program, "Stretching Our Water Supplies," is produced by Huell Howser as part of his long-running series on life in California.

The program has three segments and is co-sponsored by the California

Farm Water Coalition and the Family Farm Alliance.

### SWP AND CVP

## Joint Operation Workshop Set

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and California Department of Water Resources will hold a public workshop to present a Delta science program review.

It is to focus on this year's Operations Criteria and Plan (OCAP) Reasonable and Prudent Alternative (RPA) implementation during coordinated Central Valley Project and State Water Project operations.

The two-day session will be in Sacramento at 650 Capitol Mall from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. November 8 and 2-5 p.m. November 9.

### CORPS OF ENGINEERS

## Levee Tree Ban Policy Retained

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officials are not backing down from their controversial policy that bans trees on levees.

The Corps held to the policy even as it released a study that, based upon field research in the Sacramento Valley and elsewhere, concludes that trees at the base of levees can improve levee safety by binding soil together with roots.

The study also determined there is little risk of such trees creating a path for water to tunnel through or underneath levees. Trees on top of levees are a bigger risk, the study indicated.

"Our current standard is the best way to address the uncertainties that trees may introduce to a levee system," Tammy Conforti, Corps Levee Safety Program Manager.

Since Hurricane Katrina, the Corps began mandating that only grass be permitted to grow on levees.

In California, however, trees atop levees have been encouraged for decades and are viewed as an essential part of riparian and fishery habitat.

## SAN JOAQUIN RIVER AND RESERVOIR WATER CONDITIONS

### WATERSHED PRECIPITATION

Inches	2011-12 Including Nov. 2	2010-2011 Including Nov. 3	Season Avg. Through November
Huntington Lake.....	4.13	7.16	8.14
Bass Lake.....	2.48	5.83	6.39
Friant.....	1.31	1.64	2.46

### SEASONAL RUNOFF

Acre-Feet	In 2011-12 Nov. (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	Predicted April-July period...	Prev. Year Water Year.....
	734	15,000	3,267
	48,326	2,243,065	

2009-2010 Total (October 1-September 30) — 3,300,750

### FLOWS

#### San Joaquin River

Cubic Feet Per Second	Nov. 2	Nov. 3, '10
Calculated Natural Flow (Friant).....	370	945
Actual Millerton Lake Inflow.....	1,494	1,913
Actual Flow At Friant.....	351	350
Flow at Gravelly Ford.....	234	180
Flow below Mendota Dam.....	250	270

Flow at Vernalis (San Joaquin County).....	4,367	3,231
Total Delta Inflow.....	17,495	17,704
Delta outflow index.....	6,911	11,203
Delta conditions.....	Excess	

#### Diversions at Friant Dam

Friant-Kern Canal.....	1,465	1,070
Madera Canal.....	0	0

### RESERVOIR STORAGE

Acre-Feet	Nov. 2 U.S. Bureau of Reclamation	Last Year	Capacity
Millerton Lake.....	278,851	211,758	520,500
Southern California Edison Company			
Edison Lake.....	105,553	93,159	125,000
Florence Lake.....	51,590	39,229	64,400
Huntington Lake.....	82,036	81,594	89,000
Shaver Lake.....	4,487	73,408	135,300
Mammoth Pool.....	77,953	42,819	122,000
Redinger Lake.....	12,467	13,992	26,120

Pacific Gas and Electric Company			
Bass Lake.....	20,316	23,398	35,000*
Kerckhoff Lake.....	4,147	3,527	4,200

\*Temporary capacity pending Crane Valley Dam seismic retrofit

Upstream Total.....	358,549	371,739	611,400
OVERALL.....	637,400	583,497	1,131,900

### OTHER SOUTH VALLEY DAMS AND RESERVOIRS

Acre-Feet	Nov. 2	Capacity
Chowchilla River / Buchanan.....	114,679	150,000
Fresno River / Hidden.....	27,558	90,000
Merced River / New Exchequer.....	686,581	1,024,600
Kings River / Pine Flat.....	552,977	1,000,000
Wishon, Courtright total.....	157,725	251,900
Kaweah River / Terminus.....	22,203	185,600
Tule River / Success.....	7,106	40,000*
*Capacity for emergency flood control, 82,314 acre-feet.		
Kern River / Isabella.....	168,152	360,000*
*Capacity for emergency flood control, 570,000 acre-feet.		
San Luis Reservoir / CVP.....	758,366	980,000
State Water Project portion.....	968,989	1,060,000
San Luis Reservoir total.....	1,727,355	2,040,000

# Bureau Keeping Close Eye On Storage

Aside from a brief but potent storm in early October, the new water year is off to a dry start but the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is closely monitoring storage conditions in the San Joaquin River's Millerton Lake. A number of factors are adding up to the possibility that Millerton Lake, where available storage is frequently in short supply, may gain enough water by later this fall to become encroached into space reserved for flood control and possible flood management operations.

That is largely the result of significant carryover storage by some of Friant's Central Valley Project contractors as a result of the last water year's much-above-average precipitation and runoff.

Bureau operations staff member Ed Salazar told Friant Water Authority members at their October 27 meeting in Visalia that a dry November would probably take off some of the pressure.

## STORAGE ABOVE AVERAGE

However, he said, upstream storage in power com-

pany reservoirs is fairly high for this time of year, despite the draining of Shaver Lake for dam maintenance (please see related story, front page).

That's also true with Millerton Lake itself. The reservoir behind Friant Dam as of November 1 contained 279,536 acre-feet, 53% of its capacity of 520,500 acre-feet.

Normally in mid to late fall, Millerton storage tends to be drawn down much closer to the lake's "dead storage" of 135,000 acre-feet, below which releases into the Friant-Kern and Madera canals cannot be made.

Plus, November marks the beginning of what normally is the region's peak period for precipitation, including the highest statistical potential for a tropically-spawned rainflood event.

Long-term weather forecasts are still fairly inconclusive. Those predictions indicate "equal chances" of above- and below-average precipitation over the San Joaquin Valley and southern Sierra Nevada during the win-

ter, dropping to below average during the February-April period, according to the National Weather Service.

## EARLY OCTOBER STORM

The early October storm produced significant amounts of rain over much of the valley and surprisingly heavy snow above 7,000 feet in the mountains. One to two feet of snow fell in some areas.

Most of that has melted although the calculated natural flow in the San Joaquin River – as it would have occurred at Friant if there were no dams – is much greater than usual for November 1 at 530 cubic feet per second.

The actual release to Millerton Lake from upstream power reservoirs on November 1 was 1,474 c.f.s.

Water demand was still 1,448 c.f.s. in the Friant-Kern Canal, much of it for ongoing groundwater recharge and banking, but diversions into the Madera Canal have ended. The San Joaquin River release at Friant was 350 c.f.s.

## OBITUARY

# Half-Century Friant Leader Luallen Dies

Quinten A. Luallen, who served as a director of the Lindmore Irrigation District and on Friant water boards for 52 years, died October 13. He was 92.

Mr. Luallen, a Lindsay farmer for more than 60 years, was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Lindmore board in 1959 and became a director of the predecessor Friant Water Users Association one month later. Several years later, Mr. Luallen was elected as Lindmore's board President, a position he held for the next 44 years.

## FRIANT HONORS

His long service was honored in 2009 by directors of the Friant Water Authority (FWA) and the Friant Water Users Authority (FWUA) who unanimously adopted a resolution expressing "their sincere appreciation of the outstanding service" provided by Mr. Luallen to the valley's East Side water users.

FWA directors observed a moment of silence for Mr. Luallen during their October 27 meeting in Visalia.

## CHARTER MEMBER

Mr. Luallen was a charter member of both the FWUA board (in 1985) and FWA board (in 2004). He was also a founding director of the Friant Power Authority and chaired the FPA board for more than 20 years.

"I started on the old Friant Water Us-

ers Association board in November 1959 at the old Johnson Hotel in downtown Visalia," Luallen said in a 2009 *Waterline* interview.

He was long active in the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) and a predecessor water organization, the Irrigation Districts Association.

"My hope and prayer is that my service to Lindmore, the water associations and the water users of the East Side has been helpful," he told his Friant board colleagues at the time the 2009 resolution was presented. "The good Lord has been good to me."

## ILLINOIS NATIVE

Mr. Luallen was born in Illinois. He moved to Lindsay with his parents in 1928 as a boy and grew into the farming business. He served in the Army Air Corps during World War II and returned home to Lindsay to grow oranges and olives. For 25 years, he was also in the commercial spray business.

His interest in water as the crucial ingredient in farming in the water-deficient Lindsay area came about from watching U.S. Bureau of Reclamation contractors carve and construct the Friant-Kern Canal during a desperately dry era.

"Everybody was out of water," Mr. Luallen said in the 2009 interview. "On my home place, my well was 262 feet



J Randall McFarland / Friant Water Authority

Lindmore Irrigation District board President Quinten Luallen (center) in 2009 when he marked his 50<sup>th</sup> year of service as member of Friant's boards. A resolution was presented by Marvin Hughes (left), then Friant Water Users Authority Chairman, and Harvey Bailey, Friant Water Authority Chairman.

deep, with a submersible pump set at 261 feet." Ditches were dug to move water to citrus groves from the new canal.

"The Friant-Kern Canal made a big difference in everything, including the outlook for our communities," Mr. Luallen said in the interview. "It was a blessing. It doesn't seem like a lot of people realize in this day and age what a blessing it was."

# Storage: Need Discussed By Water Commission

Continued from front page

Friant's Central Valley Project water supply from the San Joaquin River depends upon the ability of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to make full delivery of a substitute supply of water pumped from the Delta to the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors, the river's historic water rights holders. Many California water agencies, including Friant, believe new surface water and groundwater storage facilities must be developed if California is to meet its future water supply needs.

Even though numerous reservoirs exist on the San Joaquin River, most are operated for hydroelectric generation. The CVP's Millerton Lake behind Friant Dam has a capacity of only 520,500 acre-feet and an active available capacity of just 385,000 acre feet to control runoff from a river that on average generates 1.7 million acre-feet of water annually. Millerton's size hampers flood management and limits the Friant Division's ability to capture and store surplus water in big runoff years for the slow process of groundwater recharge.

River restoration is another challenge. Jacobsma pointed out to Water Commission members that \$1 billion is likely to be

spent on river restoration. Temperance Flat Reservoir, which could hold up to 1.3 million acre-feet of water, would be an investment in helping make river restoration work by enhancing cold water releases for salmon restoration, he said.

The San Joaquin River litigation Settlement and subsequent implementing legislation did not address any new surface storage development as a part of the restoration program or the Water Management Goal that is to minimize or eliminate water supply losses to Friant users as a result of restoration.

## GROUNDWATER

Jacobsma told Friant Water Authority directors during their October 27 meeting in Visalia that Water Commissioners also heard "a lot of talk about groundwater use, recharge and banking. It is being seen more as a public benefit."

Mark Larsen, Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District General Manager, asked "Do people realize that it takes surface storage to make groundwater work?"

"More people are starting to realize it takes time and adequate conveyance to put water in the ground," Jacobsma said, "except those who oppose surface storage."

# Delta Smelt

Continued from front page

federal abuses of power in violation of the Constitution's Commerce Clause.

Water supply reductions mandated by a lower court and the government resulted in draconian cutbacks to water deliveries for the agricultural San Joaquin Valley and for Southern California during 2009, a drought year, leading to massive unemployment and crop losses on the valley's West Side.

PLF's lawsuit asserted the federal government lacked authority to issue regulations relating to the smelt, because the fish exists only in one state — California — and is not bought or sold in commerce.

## 'PHONY SCIENCE'

PLF staff attorney Brandon M. Middleton said, "PLF is active in other litigation over the federal biological opinions for the Delta smelt and other species. Those federal edicts were based on phony science, but their effect has been all too real. They've caused devastating water cutoffs that put businesses, farms, and communities on the endangered list."

The Supreme Court routinely rejects many more cases than it accepts to hear and decide. Review was declined without comment.

## Friant Board Honors Retiring Exeter, Ivanhoe Manager Dale Sally

**D**ale Sally Jr. of Exeter, who retired earlier this fall after 26 years of service as a district director and manager, has been honored by the Friant Water Authority Board of Directors. A resolution was passed unanimously and was presented to Sally on October 27 in Visalia, a few weeks after he retired as General Manager of the Exeter and Ivanhoe irrigation districts.

Sally said the honor was “deeply appreciated. I look back on last 25 years and it’s been a pleasure.”

### ‘ROCKY ROADS’

He noted that there have been “a lot of rocky roads in this business for the last 25 years. We hope that road will straighten out a little bit in next 25 years but I rather doubt that.”

Sally joined the Exeter Irrigation District board in 1985 and became EID’s Manager in 1997. In 2003, he was named to the dual position of Ivanhoe Irrigation District Manager. For most of that time, Sally represented Exeter on boards of the Friant Water Authority and the predecessor Friant Water Users Authority.

The FWA resolution said Sally “has served as an effective and efficient representative ... in seeking solutions to numerous issues and challenges of great importance and complexity, including the San Joaquin River litigation, Settlement and Restoration Program; negotiation of long-term Central Valley Project-Friant Division renewal contracts; implementation of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act; negotiation of Bay/Delta San Joaquin River water quality and flow standards; operation and maintenance of the Friant-Kern Canal; service on numerous Friant committees; and a variety of other activities on behalf of Friant water users.” The latter included consolidation of the Friant Water Users Authority into the Friant Water Authority earlier this year.

He thanked the Friant Authority staff by saying, “These guys do a terrific job,” and also saluted other Friant Division managers. “They’re intelligent, they’re quick, and they’re protective of



Friant Water Authority Dale Sally (left), who recently retired as manager of the Exeter and Ivanhoe irrigation districts, accepts a congratulatory resolution from Friant Water Authority Chairman Harvey Bailey.

the needs of their districts. These guys sacrifice a lot” in managing local water resources and district operations, he said. “There are so many arrows coming your way, it’s hard to disassociate yourself from the protection of the district.”

### SERVING ON EXETER COUNCIL

Sally still isn’t far from those “arrows,” particularly the political kind. Last January, Sally was appointed unanimously to fill a vacancy on the Exeter City Council for a term that expires a year from now. At the time, he told the Exeter *Sun* he hoped his experience with public finance would help the city. “I want our city to really look at the financial aspects of this coming fiscal year because we are going to have to tighten our belts and get as much control over our funding as possible,” he said. “It will be a great honor to serve the city I have always called home.”

Sally has long been involved in the Exeter Lions Club and United Methodist Church. He served three years on the Exeter Planning Commission.

## Fresno District’s Basin Honors Former Director

A newly-expanded recharge facility has been named the Jeff Boswell Recharge Facility.

The naming by the Fresno Irrigation District Board of Directors in honor of Boswell came after his resignation from the board to undertake a church mission.



Boswell had served as board President.

The facility is southwest of Fresno. It includes a sedimentation channel that brings surface water to two recharge cells.

— FID Waterways

## Silvery Sun For A Fall Friant Evening

Clouds from an approaching autumn storm filter and weaken the setting sun’s glow over the waters of Millerton Lake behind Friant Dam.



Friant Water Authority

# Old Shaver Dam: Historic Structure Was Storage Pioneer

### Continued from front page

After a storm washed out the earth-fill dam, they built a new and solid successor, 50 feet in height, of rock framed with wood boards. Using the previous U-shaped flume where possible for support, a V-shaped flume was constructed by 1894 all the way to Clovis. It was designed by engineer John S. Eastwood who a few years later conceived the Big Creek Hydroelectric Project, initially built a century ago.

A large mill was built on the rock dam’s downstream side. It was soon surrounded by a small community that was destined to become an early-day mountain recreational playland.

### FIRST OF 17 RESERVOIRS

The little lake was the first formed by a dam anywhere in the San Joaquin River watershed. Now, including tiny power forebays and afterbays, there are 17 reservoirs, all of which in some way are associated with hydroelectric power generation and storing water for later beneficial use in the valley. There are 18 power plants, including four at Friant Dam, before water is released for irrigation, municipal and environmental purposes.

They all add up to the San Joaquin River being known as the “hardest working water in the world.”

The millpond behind the dam built by Swift and Shaver soon came to be known as Shaver Lake after its 1892 completion. Its capacity was about 4,000 acre-feet. The mill itself cut more than 450 million board-feet of lumber over the years.



Central Sierra Historical Society Lumberman C.B. Shaver, for whom Shaver Lake is named.

Southern California Edison Company’s predecessor in the Big Creek Hydroelectric Project – Pacific Light and Power Corporation – acquired the original Shaver Lake, the mill and other lands



Shaver Lake Fishing Club

The old Shaver Dam from the millpond side on a long-ago snowy day. The mill and Shaver townsite are just downstream. The main road to the mill, and to Big Creek seven miles distant, passed over the 50-foot high dam.

(including the townsite) beginning in 1919 with plans to build the present dam. The old mill continued limited operations until the new Shaver Dam was completed in 1927. That fall, the mill, townsite and other buildings in the expanding reservoir were intentionally burned. The old dam continued in use until 1927 until submerged by rising waters of the new and greater Shaver Lake. It has reappeared only a few times since then.

Although Shaver Lake is currently closed by Edison to all recreation – including a ban on hiking down to the old dam or its now diminished shores – reappearance of the historic structure has proven to be quite an attraction for valley residents interested in gazing down on the past, even though water still covers the mill’s location and townsite. Parking areas along Highway 168 overlooking the old dam are frequently crowded these days.

Shaver Lake, largest of Edison’s chain of power reservoirs with a capacity of 136,000 acre-feet, has not

quite been emptied. As of November 1, it was 3% full with storage listed at 4,495 acre-feet.

### TO BE EMPTIED SOON

Plans call for the area behind the “new” dam to be emptied soon so that a liner can be fixed to bottom of the dam’s upstream concrete face as a long-term seal.

If possible, it’s hoped the old dam will be able to pool enough water to enable survival of at least some fish. Edison is to restock the lake in the spring, including trophy trout.

Shaver Lake storage will rise quickly next spring once work on the dam is completed. Southern California Edison is holding water in three higher reservoirs – Florence, Edison and Huntington lakes – that will be conveyed to Shaver through project tunnels when the time is right.

Then the San Joaquin River system’s first reservoir will slip back into its watery grave.