

Snowless Sierra



Barren granite rather than any snow cover shines along the crest of the Sierra in the Graveyard Peak-Mono Pass country above Edison Lake under bright, warm winter sunshine and clear skies on December 30.

Photography by David L. Woolley

Dry Winter Weather Conditions Gripping Region

Day after dry day through most of the fall months and early winter weeks is spelling bad news for 2012 water supply prospects. Carryover water from last year's big storms and snowpack has storage in Millerton Lake and many other reservoirs above average, which would help. Still, concern is mounting in the valley where fields have been frequently frosty and increasingly dusty, but not wet.

The real story is in the Sierra Nevada where conditions

are anything but white. Snow has mostly been a no-show. Widely scattered patches of snow left over from early fall storms have melted and refrozen into ice patches above 6,500 feet. What there is of the mountain snowpack is limited to the highest elevations, although with bare spots abounding, especially on southerly facing ridges.

GLOOMY SNOW SURVEY

Results of the season's first San Joaquin River snow survey, conducted December 26-28 by Southern Califor-

nia Edison Company, are limited but depressing and ominous.

Six courses were measured and their snowpack water content averaged only 9% of the normal for April 1, when the snowpack is presumed to peak, and just 24% of the January 1 average.

The California Cooperative Snow Survey, using reports from 30 automated snow water content sensing de-

Please see **Dry Winter**, back page

EFFICIENCY STUDY **Water Diversion Changes Need Understanding**

California State University, Fresno's new and comprehensive agricultural water efficiency study has been under the gun from some environmentalists but one of the report's authors stands by its data and key findings.

Dr. David Zoldoske, Director of the Center for Irrigation Technology (CIT) at CSUF, told Friant Water Authority

Please see **Zoldoske**, Page 3



Friant Water Authority
Dr. David Zoldoske (right) and Friant Water Authority Chairman Harvey Bailey listen to a Friant board question.

Friant Gets Delta Plan Update From Resources Deputy

Jerry Meral, Governor Brown's State Resources Agency Deputy Director, calls the ongoing Bay-Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) process "the attempt to solve the problem we have been dealing with 30 years or more."

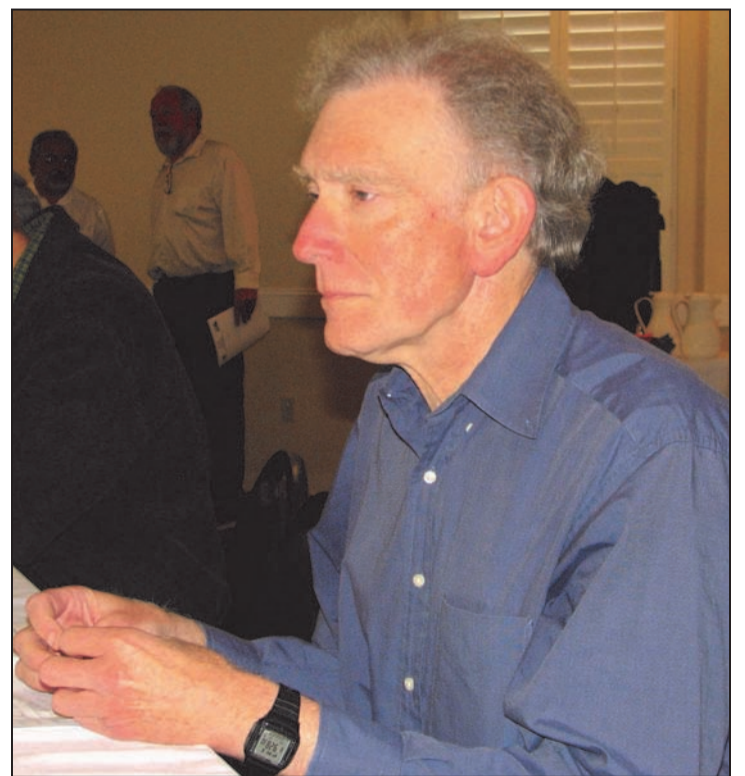
Meral made his second Friant Division visit of 2011 to address Friant Water Authority board members and managers at a December 9 meeting in Visalia. He visited here last March as well.

'ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PROJECTS'

He told FWA Directors that the BDCP "is one of the governor's most important projects." The Brown administration, he said, "really wants it to happen" although he acknowledged that the process and progress "has been happening sort of gradually. The work going on has been much more substantial but not real visible."

The BDCP states, "When complete, the BDCP will provide the basis for the issuance of endangered species permits for the

Please see **Meral**, back page



Friant Water Authority / J. Randall McFarland

Deputy Resources Director Jerry Meral listens at board meeting.

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FRIANT Waterline

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Page 2

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| Lower Tule River Irrigation District | Tulare Irrigation District |

Shaver's Historic Show



Both photos contributed

Shaver Lake's past continues to be displayed with the lake drained completely for dam work. As the water fell, the original Shaver dam's gatehouse (above) was exposed, not only intact but fully functional, passing Stevenson Creek water. Below the fully visible old dam (built in 1892) are remains and ruins of the original Shaver sawmill. The lake will be re-filled this spring.



FRIANT WATER AUTHORITY

Friant Board Re-Elects Authority Officers

Familiar figures are in charge of the Friant Water Authority and its Board of Directors. Board members on December 9 re-elected Harvey Bailey as FWA Chairman.

Bailey, who lives northeast of Reedley, is President of both the Orange Cove Irrigation District and Central Valley Project Water Association, as well as a Director of the Family Farm Alliance.

Re-elected as Vice President was Nick Canata, a member of the Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District

Board of Directors. Named to continue as Secretary-Treasurer was Tom Runyon, a Stone Corral Irrigation District Director.

Ronald D. Jacobsma, FWA General Manager, continues as Assistant Secretary-Treasurer.

FRIANT WATER AUTHORITY Tour Hosted For Senator

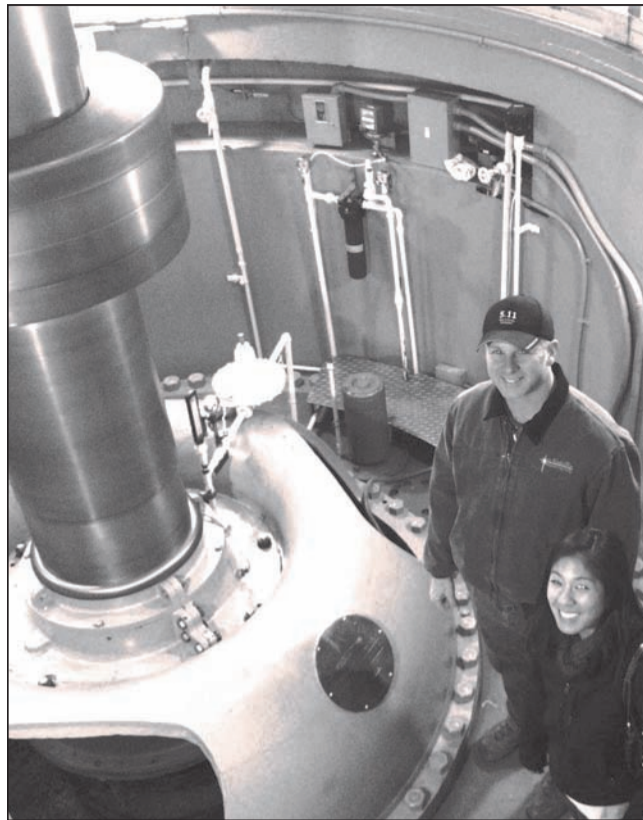
State Senator Anthony Cannella, who represents portions of the Madera Irrigation District and Chowchilla Water District, has had an opportunity to view some of the Central Valley Project and learn first-hand about water issues affecting CVP users.

The Senate district is to expand in 2013 to include much of western Fresno County, including a major portion of the Fresno Irrigation District.

Fresno, Madera and Chowchilla are all contractors of CVP-Friant Division water.

Arranging the December 29 tour were the Friant Water Authority and its Assistant General Manager, Mario Santoyo.

The tour included portions of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, the CVP's Jones Pumping Plant northwest of Tracy, the Delta-Mendota Canal, and Mendota Dam and Pool.



Friant Water Authority / Mario Santoyo

State Senator Anthony Cannella (*R-Ceres*) and his water aide, Jessica Teng, look over the Central Valley Project's Jones Pumping Plant northwest of Tracy as part of a Friant-organized tour.

Meetings were held at Mendota City Hall and in the Madera Irrigation District's office with area leaders, including water officials and growers.

Friant Water Authority General Manager Ronald D. Jacobsma and Santoyo discussed San Joaquin River and Friant issues with the Senator.

Dan Nelson, San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority General Manager, explained the Delta's issues and problems.

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE Bond Measure Being Debated

California's Legislature returned to work just after New Year's with the state's continuing budget crisis squarely on its plate and its previously-approved water bond measure voting back in the crosshairs of some state leaders.

There is interest in the Brown administration and among some lawmakers to trim the proposed bond or even defer it from the November 2012 ballot, possibly to November 2014.

Lawmakers sense that voters may frown on a bond that would eventually add to the state's debt burden.

On the other hand, others are equally adamant that the need to resolve California's water infrastructure and supply problems, and key elements of the Delta's problems, is not going to go away.

A coalition known as Clean Water and Jobs for California has been formed to help educate and inform Californians about the need to invest in water projects, including new surface water storage facilities that could include the proposed Temperance Flat Reservoir on the San Joaquin River above Friant Dam.

The current bond measure would provide \$11.1 billion for a number of long-awaited water projects.

That such a broad water infrastructure bond is even scheduled to go before voters is a political miracle by California standards.

It came together on a bipartisan basis in 2009 under former Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

The entire package,

which includes several policy bills that were enacted separately, combines priorities of environmental, agricultural, urban and water district policy.

Such factions normally battle over water issues in the state's notoriously fractious Legislature.

Any new water bond action, including deferment, would require a two-thirds vote of the Legislature.

TULE RIVER Fire-Damaged Flume Restored

A flume above Springville heavily damaged by 2009 forest fires has been restored to put a 15-mile water conveyance system back in service.

More than 3,000 feet of flume was damaged. The flume carries water between a Pacific Gas and Electric Company powerhouse and a plant operated by Southern California Edison Company.

Springville, east of Porterville, is also supplied from the system.

The flume was built in 1908 by the Mount Whitney Power Company.

Its reconstruction has resulted in a transformation into a piped siphon in some reaches.

The Springville Public Utility District has had to pump water out of the Tule River for its municipal supply.

LOS VAQUEROS RESERVOIR Enlarged Lake Is Now Filling

New water storage facilities are extraordinarily rare in California but Los Vaqueros Reservoir in Contra Costa County is an exception.

The off-stream reservoir's dam has been raised to increase maximum storage elevation by 65 feet, making it the Bay Area's biggest public lake.

Officials expect the enlarged reservoir to be filled by spring.

The remote lake is nestled in rolling foothills northeast of Livermore and south of Brentwood.

SAN JOAQUIN RIVER AND RESERVOIR WATER CONDITIONS

WATERSHED PRECIPITATION

Inches	2011-12 Including Jan. 4	2010-2011 Including Jan. 5	Season Avg. Through January
Huntington Lake.....	6.13	37.92	22.43
Bass Lake.....	3.73	28.27	20.70
Friant.....	2.38	14.68	7.40

SEASONAL RUNOFF

Acre-Feet	In 2011-12 Jan. (4 th)	Predicted April-July period	Prev. Year Water Year
Jan. (4 th).....	1,761		35,392
April-July period...		2,243,065	
Water Year.....	96,884		372,992

2010-2011 Total (October 1-September 30) — 3,300,750

FLOWS

San Joaquin River

Cubic Feet Per Second	Jan. 4	Jan. 5, 2011
Calculated Natural Flow (Friant).....	367	3,369
Actual Millerton Lake Inflow.....	461	2,674
Actual Flow At Friant.....	101	4,600
Flow at Gravelly Ford.....	5	
Flow below Mendota Dam.....	0	
Flow at Vernalis (San Joaquin County).....	1,774	
Total Delta inflow.....	13,547	
Delta outflow index.....	5,818	

Diversions at Friant Dam

Friant-Kern Canal.....	417	0
Madera Canal.....	101	0

RESERVOIR STORAGE

Acre-Feet	Jan. 4	Last Year	Capacity
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation			
Millerton Lake.....	331,724	439,062	520,500
Southern California Edison Company			
Edison Lake.....	98,888	80,471	125,000
Florence Lake.....	37,023	41,074	64,400
Huntington Lake.....	50,246	55,275	89,000
Shaver Lake.....	0	15,416	135,300
Mammoth Pool.....	46,568	94,196	122,000
Redinger Lake.....	23,253	23,875	26,120
Pacific Gas and Electric Company			
Bass Lake.....	17,163	25,762	35,000*
Kerckhoff Lake.....	3,493	3,569	4,200
*—Temporary capacity pending Crane Valley Dam seismic retrofit			
Upstream Total.....	276,634	339,638	611,400
OVERALL.....	608,358	778,700	1,131,900

OTHER SOUTH VALLEY DAMS AND RESERVOIRS

Acre-Feet	Jan. 4	Capacity
Chowchilla River / Buchanan.....		
100,442		150,000
Fresno River / Hidden.....		
29,530		90,000
Merced River / New Exchequer.....		
657,654		1,024,600
Kings River / Pine Flat.....		
558,343		1,000,000
Wishon, Courtright total.....		
131,776		251,900
Kaweah River / Terminus.....		
14,810		185,600
Tule River / Success.....		
13,692		40,000*
*—Capacity for emergency flood control, 82,314 acre-feet		
Kern River / Isabella.....		
167,084		360,000*
*—Capacity for emergency flood control, 570,000 acre-feet		
San Luis Reservoir / CVP.....		
972,049		980,000
State Water Project portion.....		
963,518		1,060,000
San Luis Reservoir total.....	1,935,567	2,040,000



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service fisheries biologist holds a Delta smelt.

Delta Smelt, Salmon Numbers Up In 2011

Just concluded 2011 may have been a lousy year in a number of respects but two of California's most spotlighted fish species aren't complaining.

Year-end reports say the Delta smelt population hit its highest level in a decade while fall run Chinook salmon returned through the Golden Gate and Delta in numbers that were double those in 2010.

The Delta smelt index, 343, was more than 10 times greater than last year's 29. The previous Delta smelt index high was calculated in

2001 at 603. An index based upon sampling at the same locations monitored each fall since 1967 is used because of the impossibility of making an actual census of the three-inch-long fish protected under the Endangered Species Act.

Since the 2010-11 water year was much above average in the amount of runoff it generated, the environmental community was quick to credit increased Delta outflows for the rebound.

"There are lots of factors that we'll be ex-

amining in the coming months to evaluate what happened, but flow always helps," Carl Wilcox, Bay-Delta regional director for the California Department of Fish and Game, said.

Officials noted that water quality was considerably better, with less discharge from Sacramento's wastewater treatment plant, a major ammonia contributor to the Delta. There was much more food available as well as better ocean conditions plus less predation from clams.

Please see **Dry Winter**, back page

THE FRESNO STATE AG AND WATER STUDIES

Ag Retains Big Role In State's Economy, Study Finds

How important is agriculture – and the irrigation that makes much of it possible – to the valley and state economies?

A new study from California State University, Fresno's Center for Agricultural Business has found that industry's contributions to employment and the economy continue to be immense and most of it is made possible by irrigation.

The report, issued last month by CSUF, is a companion to the Center for Irrigation Technology's recent study on agricultural water use efficiency. (Please see related story, front page.)

STATEWIDE EMPLOYMENT

Statewide in 2009, agricultural production and processing accounted directly for 591,812 jobs with a total effect – direct, indirect and induced employment – of 1,356,998 jobs, according to the study.

Agricultural production alone accounts for 3.6% of state employment while overall job creation as a result of ag production and processing, with a multiplier effect added, amounts to 6.8% of California's 20 million jobs, about 6% of state labor income. The report notes, "Agriculture support activities comprise over 130 activities closely related to agricultural production." That includes fertilizer, pesticide and

ag chemical industries.

Farming directly accounted for 1.3% – \$40.9 billion – of the state's economic output (and more than 460,000 jobs), with fruit leading the way at \$12 billion, 0.4% of the state's output.

VALLEY AG EFFECTS

In the San Joaquin Valley in 2009, the report states, "Agriculture in this region ac-

counted for over 37% of the value of agricultural production and processing in California. The direct value added for the San Joaquin Valley from agricultural production and processing is estimated to be \$16 billion, 13.4% of the value added in the regional economy.

"In terms of direct effects, farming accounted for 8.5% of

regional output, 5% of regional employment and 6.4% of regional value added," the report adds. Fruit production alone accounted for more than 3% of regional output, 1.5% of employment and 2.8% of value added.

"The total direct, indirect and induced effects of agricultural production and processing industries in the San Joaquin Valley

accounted for 34.7% of regional employment, almost 31% of regional labor income and 31% of regional total value added."

Valley agricultural production alone was found to support 369,000 jobs (22.5% of the region's employment).

This report is available on line. Please go to <http://www.californiawater.org/docs/>

Effects Of High-Water-Use Crop Shifts

Among the most common suggestions heard by agriculture for conserving water is to shift production away from water intensive crops to crops using less water.

Rather than being a win-win scenario, California State University, Fresno's new Center for Agricultural Business study on water use characteristics cautions that such shifts would likely be accompanied by economic changes that could be negative.

"Water is an essential input required for agricultural production," the report states. "However, to evaluate the potential returns for the economy from changes in water use patterns, water use needs to be considered in the context of other factors, including ... production, cross commodity linkages, and domestic and global market characteristics."

ALFALFA VS. FRESH TOMATOES

The report uses an example of a 5% shift in acreage planted to alfalfa – a high-water-use crop – to fresh tomatoes. Tomatoes use much less water.

There are positive effects listed by the report:



Contributed
A San Joaquin Valley alfalfa field.

- The reallocation would create a savings of 131,810 acre-feet of water (based on average alfalfa water usage and the 980,000 acres of alfalfa harvested in 2009).
- Such a shift would result in a total of 85,000 acres of fresh tomatoes (an increase of 136%).
- Added fresh tomato production values

would increase by \$494,500,000 from a base value of \$363,300,000, creating an overall benefit.

Negative impacts:

- Alfalfa production would decline \$37,900,000 from a base value of \$758,400,000.
- Changes in other resources use would occur, affecting most industries in agriculture. Reduced alfalfa production would negatively affect several industries, including fertilizer, pesticide and other agricultural chemical manufacturers, cattle ranching, dairying and other livestock.
- Market effects could lead to a big increase (perhaps 45%) in alfalfa prices, benefiting remaining alfalfa growers but increasing production costs for the livestock and dairy industries, resulting in net return declines.
- Such a big increase in fresh tomato production could lead to a radical price decline (as high as 544%), dropping net returns for producers.

Zoldoske: Diversion Changes Need All Impacts Analyzed, He Says

Continued from front page
board members December 9 the report and its evidence show clearly that change in water supply diversions demands thorough understanding of all impacts.

'HOLISTIC APPROACH'

"If you're going to make changes in diversions, you must understand the need to take a holistic approach, not just single out agriculture," Zoldoske said. "There is a need to be informed about all the impacts. It's real clear we've got to think this all the way through."

He told FWA leaders a companion report on California agriculture's major role in the economy and water use has been issued by the CSUF Center for Agricultural Business. (Please see related stories, this page.)

CIT's water efficiency study, issued in November, belies claims often made by environmental advocates that farm water conservation could generate enough

"new" water to solve the problems of water management or at least provide the volumes of water desired by all users.

Zoldoske said the efficiency study relies on data gathered by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and California Department of Water Resources. It shows potential new supplies for different users are limited when conservation is implemented and practiced on farms.

"Probably 0.5% of the water supply in the state is available through conservation, or 1.3% of water used in agriculture," Zoldoske said. "You can't throw a switch and have all the water in Millerton Lake just show up at your doorstep."

EFFECTS ON OTHERS

"We documented that long-term change in irrigation practices does impact third parties," Zoldoske said.

The report stresses that water employed in irrigating a crop but not used by

the plant usually percolates into the ground. "The physics of the basin are such that water goes down to the aquifer and is reused," he said.

Groundwater supplies benefit from such recharging. Groundwater is used in pumping for farms, homes and businesses. Such residual uses and users are affected adversely if surface irrigation supplies are reduced.

"That's not to say we should not promote on-farm irrigation efficiency," Zoldoske said. "I've been promoting that for 35 years. This is not meant to be an apology for ag or letting them off the hook."

He said the report calls for better on-farm reporting of water use and also focuses in agricultural water quality, which Zoldoske termed "a huge issue. There is a whole chapter on water quality."

INTEGRATED PLANNING

The report also calls for the modern

trend toward integrated regional water planning to continue.

"We need to speak with one voice," said Zoldoske. "As long as we're fractured and not agreeing, we're not going to get much done."

As for the study, CIT's work has gained a great deal of attention and has generated many comments, not all of which have been favorable.

Zoldoske said he is well aware that some detractors of irrigated agriculture, particularly from environmental bents, were quick to criticize the CIT report.

"Yes, we'll respond, in a time and place we feel is appropriate," Zoldoske said. "We want to say less but be heard more. We'll be measured and professional in our response."

The report is available on line. Go to <http://www.californiawater.org>

Dry Winter: Little Sierra Snowpack

Continued from front page

vices in watersheds from the San Joaquin River through the Kern River, said January 3's snow water content average was down to 2 inches. That is 9% of the average for April 1 and 26% of average to date.

WAY BELOW LAST YEAR

Throughout the Sierra Nevada, snow readings are more than 95% below the

Snow Course Measurements				
December 26-28, 2011				
COURSE	ELEVATION	SNOW DEPTH	WATER CONTENT	PCT. OF APRIL 1 AVG.
Pioneer Basin	10,400	10.9"	2.8"	8%
Heart Lake	10,100	10.2"	2.3"	8%
Rose Marie	10,000	10.5"	2.6"	9%
Dutch Lake	9,100	11.2"	3.1"	11%
Kaiser Pass	9,100	12.0"	3.5"	9%
Huntington Lake	7,000	4.1"	1.1"	6%
Basin Average Percent of April 1 Normal				9%

average a year ago when several well-timed big storms resulted in an excellent 2010-11 water supply year. The outlook is not encouraging.

The National Weather Service's extended forecast for the January through April period calls for below average precipitation in Central and Southern California. "The rest of the year is looking not too exciting," said George Cline, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Sacramento. "It certainly isn't a great beginning."

LA NIÑA PATTERN

The culprit is a classic *La Niña* pattern, spawned by cooler than normal sea surface temperatures in the tropical Pacific. It typically results in wet conditions in the Pacific Northwest but drought in much of California. A *La Niña* event took

place a year ago as well but about a half dozen extremely potent storms and several lesser storms drenched Central California.

"Everyone is concerned but the key is going to be future weather," said Ronald D. Jacobsma, Friant Water Authority General Manager. "About 60% of the primary snow accumulation period remains so there is still time for conditions to get better but over the past two months the San Joaquin River watershed has had a bare minimum of precipitation and none at all during December."

Friant water users, whose water is diverted from the San Joaquin River at Friant Dam and delivered through the Friant-Kern and Madera canals, are used to radical swings in water supplies that are typical of western Sierra streams, making reservoirs such as Millerton Lake a crucial water management tool.

STORAGE NEED

"Unfortunately, the small size of Millerton Lake provides only limited opportunity to carry over water supplies from one year to the next," Jacobsma said. "Even though we just came out of a nearly twice-average water supply year, only a very limited amount of water could be saved and stored from last spring's big runoff for this coming year." Fortunately, last year's abundant and late runoff did allow for a significant amount of groundwater recharge that may be called upon this coming year if it remains dry.

San Joaquin River flood releases in 2011 amounted to more than 1,300,000 acre-feet, nearly 2½ times the capacity of



Edison Lake and the Fresno County mountains are always a spectacular backdrop to Vermillion Valley but after a snowless month they have nearly the look of summer on a clear, dry winter day on December 30. Dry, fair weather has been the rule. No snow or rain fell in December. The only snow visible is atop 10,500-foot Volcanic Knob (right).

Photography by David L. Woolley

Millerton Lake. Millerton's storage as of January 4 was 331,724 acre-feet, 64% of capacity.

"This combination of a wet year ending and a dry year apparently starting is a perfect illustration of why the proposed Temperance Flat Reservoir above Millerton Lake would be so important a tool in capturing high flows for later use to benefit the environment, groundwater storage and supplies over a large part of California," said Jacobsma.

STATEWIDE CARRYOVER

Maury Roos, Department of Water Resources Chief Hydrologist, said the state-

wide water storage outlook is fairly bright. "Normally we start to gain storage during the month of December," Roos said.

"This year at least so far we're losing storage" but he said January would begin with "a good carryover situation that will help out if we have a less than average water year."

Smelt And Salmon

Continued from Page 3

Biologists said the index was well below the historic high of 1,673 in 1973 and said despite better numbers the smelt are not abundant. They are, however, no longer at the brink of extinction, biologists said.

Meanwhile, the fall-run salmon rebounded from a decline believed to have resulted from a combination of drought and poor ocean conditions. The Sacramento *Bee* reported half the spawning fish at three large hatcheries were 2 year olds this year, an unusually large percentage.

Invasive Spongeplant Looms As Newest Delta Threat

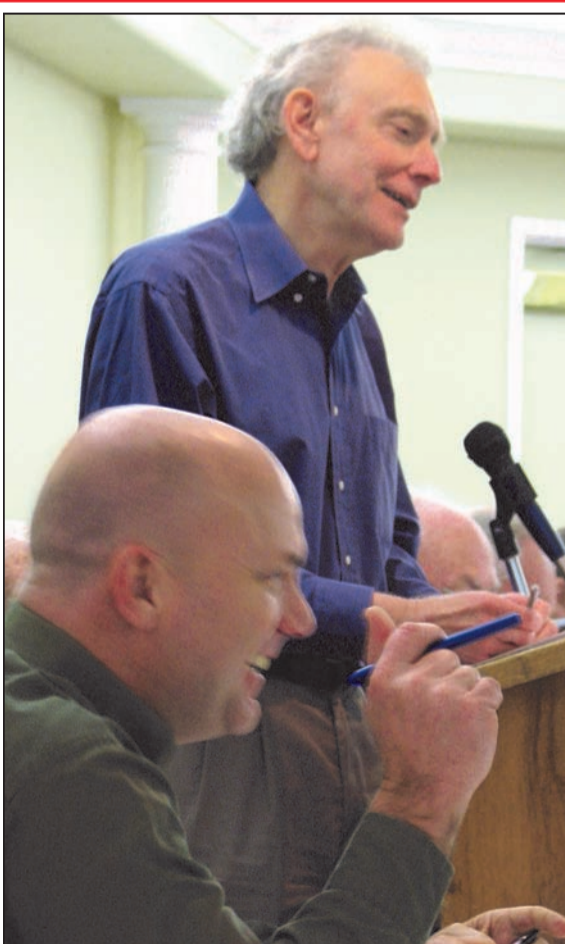
California's Delta seldom seems to lack problems and now it is facing a culprit that has potential to place the estuary, and many more California waterways, in a chokehold.

The South American spongeplant is an invasive weed beginning to become established in the Delta. It has capability of thoroughly clogging not only waterways but pumping plants, diversion points and pipelines. It could rival problems caused by water hyacinth that became established in the Delta several decades ago.

Spongeplant floats on the surface. It can and has clogged channels with impenetrable masses of weeds. A lack of legal

authority to spend money has hampered control efforts.

The Friant Water Authority is unfortunately no stranger to dealing with an invasive aquatic weed, although from another species. For the past several years, FWA operation and maintenance staff members have fought Western water milfoil. The plant became prevalent in a northern section of the Friant-Kern Canal, principally in earth-lined sections near Orange Cove and Orosi. FWA's staff, with some success in what is proving to be an ongoing battle, has used a number of strategies to keep the milfoil from seriously affecting the ability of the Friant-Kern Canal to convey water.



Deputy Resources Director Jerry Meral (top) and Friant Water Authority General Manager Ronald D. Jacobsma share a light moment during Meral's presentation.

Meral: Resources Deputy Provides BDCP Update

Continued from front page

operation of the state and federal water projects. The plan would be implemented over the next 50 years. The heart of the BDCP is a long-term conservation strategy that sets forth actions needed for a healthy Delta."

FRIANT CONCERNS

All of this is of concern to Friant water users because Central Valley Project water from the Sacramento River must be pumped from the Delta and delivered to the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors on the valley's West Side – the San Joaquin's historic water right holders – to permit diversions from the river at Friant Dam into the Friant-Kern and Madera canals.

Cross Valley Canal contractors also rely on supplies dependent directly upon the Delta.

In addition, the ability to recirculate San Joaquin River Restoration Program water made available by Friant Division contractors and return all or most of it to Friant users will also be dependent upon Delta operations under a BDCP.

"We are seeking a long-term 50-

year permit to be able to export water from the Delta and create stability," Meral said.

"We're dealing with the fundamentally unstable way we have to transport water from north to south [through the environmentally troubled Delta, utilizing Delta water export pumps near Tracy]. There is a very high probability of massive failure in Delta. We've really galvanized our thinking on this. It got us moving."

Such a Delta failure would mostly likely be in crucial levees that protect low-lying islands.

DELTA CONVEYANCE

A canal or tunnel to transport north state water around or under the Delta is again being considered.

"We're proposing not only a new supply facility such as Peripheral Canal or tunnel, but other conservation measures to try to get species off the [Endangered Species Act] list," Meral said. "In the end this is a voluntary project. We're not operating under some kind of mandate here."

What Meral termed "an elaborate process" will ultimately result in a pre-

ferred alternative and draft environmental impact reports, perhaps a few months from now, leading to a proposed project.

Meral said public finance would be a "big challenge" with capital cost estimates now in the \$12 billion range. He added, "We're actually going to try to have a viably financed project here." The Delta canal or tunnel would likely be paid for by water-use beneficiaries.

Friant Water Authority General Manager Ronald D. Jacobsma noted, "Friant believes the financing plan should be commensurate with benefits and risks as to how costs are allocated amongst water users."

Meral observed that resistance to water conveyance within the Delta and related concerns continues to be a hurdle.

"The Delta interests would feel a lot better if we would just go away and provide money for levees. We have taken a pretty strong position that we are not going to impact water users upstream on the Sacramento or San Joaquin rivers with this plan."