



ON TAP

Community Partnerships

Tuolumne Utilities District strives to partner with local agencies when possible and is proud to be working with two Tuolumne County based agencies on two different projects.

In November 2018, the District contracted with the Tuolumne Rancheria Me-Wuk Fire Department on the Lyons-South Fork Watershed Resiliency Project. The Rancheria Fire Department (Rancheria) Tribal Fuels Crews started hand thinning work in November along the Tuolumne Main Canal to increase forest health and protect adjacent communities. The Rancheria project work area is located near South Fork Road in Twain Harte along the Tuolumne Main Canal. The work is currently suspended due to the recent winter conditions, with work anticipated to resume in the Spring.

“The Tribe has made a commitment to ensuring that the Rancheria and surrounding communities are protected from fire. It is a true honor to commit our Tribal Fuels Crew to this project”, states Jon Otterson, Executive Director of the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians.

The goal of the Lyons-South Fork Watershed Forest Resiliency Project (LSFWFR) is to help protect the Pacific Gas and Electric Company’s (PG&E) Tuolumne Main Canal (TMC) a historic feature consisting of a series of wooden flumes and connected canals. It is the primary drinking water conveyance system for TUD and 90% of the residents of Tuolumne County. The LSFWFR Project which started in June of 2017, includes the following collaborative partners; the USDA-Stanislaus National Forest, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI), Highway 108 FireSafe Council, California Conservation Corps, Tuolumne Rancheria Me-Wuk Fire Department and Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD).



Hand thinning, fuel reduction near the Tuolumne Main Canal

...continued on next page.

“Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.” – Henry Ford

MARCH – APRIL 2019

IN THIS ISSUE

Community Partnerships

Visit TUD at the
Home & Garden Show

Seeds in the Wind

General Manager’s Corner
by Edwin Pattison

Continued... Community Partnerships

in grant funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) to implement a critical fuel break along the Tuolumne Main Canal which conveys water from Lyons Reservoir.

The Greater Valley Conservation Corps (GVCC), located on Camage Avenue in Sonora, began working with TUD in



Conservation crew member clearing vegetation near a sewer lift station facility.

January 2019 to help clear vegetation around TUD's wastewater collection facilities. GVCC crews are performing vegetation management activities at various facilities including weed eating, brushing, tree trimming, chipping and hauling. The GVCC corps members are doing an outstanding job and TUD appreciates the hard work.

The Greater Valley Conservation Corps is a San Joaquin County Office of Education program that helps youth 18 to 25 years old with academic instruction, employment opportunities, green job training, and life skills. For more information go to their website at <http://www.greatervalleycc.org/>

Visit TUD at the Home and Garden Show in April

Mark your calendar! Stop by and visit the TUD staff and Board members at the 38th Annual Home and Garden Show located at the Mother Lode Fairgrounds in Sonora on Saturday, April 13th and Sunday, April 14th.

At the TUD booth you will have the opportunity to view the colorful third grade water conservation artwork from our local schools, find information about TUD's latest projects, learn more about water conservation, and how you can save money by changing out your toilet or showerhead. We look forward to visiting with you at the Home and Garden Show.



2018 Grand Prize Poster Contest Winner: Esai Vasquez, from Mother Lode Christian School with his family.

Seeds in the Wind

By Julie Silva

Julie Silva is a University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardener of Tuolumne County.

Most people accept forsythia's yellow blooms as the first sign of spring. Here is another more prevalent sign: meadow grass, or *Poa annua*.

The *Poa annua* has bright green blades of grass that will be in lawns, gardens, and open spaces.



When *Poa annua* is arriving on scene it is a good sign that the time has come for you to be starting your seeds indoors. Growing your own plants from seed gives you a wider choice of varieties, strong plants, control over planting dates and less money out of pocket.

The chosen seeds should create plants that thrive in your area. Always start with clean materials. Soil from your garden is filled with problem pests like bacteria, molds, and fungus. Pots should be washed in a 10% bleach and water solution. Seeds do have a shelf life, especially if they are not stored in a cool place.

As with many things there is a rule of thumb for planting seeds. The rule is not to plant any deeper than three times the width of the seed. Your best advice comes from the back of the seed packet. The seed packet will give clear instructions on planting times, locations, seed depth, and spacing.

How do you get started? To be successful you will need a starting soil, containers and a way to keep the temperature constant during germination, moisture, and light. Depending on the type of seed, the requirements will vary. There are soils just for seed starting, or use a clean, new potting soil. Pre-moisten the soil and fill your containers. The containers may be trays or growing trays with individual cells. You do not want the containers to be too large, it is better to move your plants up as the roots develop and fill the pot. Your plants will prefer a soil mixture that has 50% soil, 25% air space for oxygen, and 25% moisture. The soil should drain but maintain moisture.

The temperature for germination is 70 to 75 degrees. Check your seed packet for complete information. If you are using florescent lights close to the soil, they will warm the soil enough for germination. Usually 3 to 4 inches away from the soil is best to start. Seeds need moisture to germinate. Humidity and moisture must be controlled; too much water will rot the seed, too little water, the seed will refuse to germinate. The soil must be kept evenly moist but not soaking wet.

Light is equally as important as all the other variables. Knowing what the requirements are for your individual type of seed will create a successful germination. After the seeds have germinated, they need sufficient light to grow strong. Florescent lights are best for the demands of seedlings. Plants do need time with the lights off to rest. After germination occurs your lights should be on 12 to 14 hours a day. As the plants mature you will continue to move the lights upward.

The last process before transplanting your seedlings into the garden is to harden them off by giving them time outdoors. Hardening off takes the baby plant and introduces it to the outside elements by acclimating it to temperatures, sunlight, and wind. Start slowly in the shade or light morning sun and gradually add more sunlight. Starting plants from seeds will give gardens a wider variety of plants and genetics. Just as with any relationship with Mother Nature, patience is the first rule, followed by optimism.

UCCE Master Gardeners of Tuolumne County can answer your home gardening questions. Call 209-533-5912 or check out their website at: https://ucanr.edu/sites/Tuolumne_County_Master_Gardeners/ or find them on Facebook.

General Manager's Corner by Edwin R. Pattison, email: EPattison@tudwater.com

It's that time of year when the Tuolumne Utilities District performs a comprehensive development of its next fiscal year budget. Much like your home budget, the utility's annual budget is the most important policy document of the year as it prescribes policy direction on the expenditure of resources to meet the overall mission of the organization, to be a high-performing organization that provides great water and wastewater services to its customers in a socially, financially, and environmentally responsible manner. The TUD works hard to keep rates affordable by meeting these multiple objectives!

The first step in developing next year's budget is underway with a comprehensive update of the District's Strategic Plan.

In this multi-step process, the TUD Board, staff, partnering agencies, and the community are reviewing the history of TUD, what makes TUD unique, issues and concerns, strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats (SWOT) that will lay the groundwork for updating the District's goals and objectives. TUD staff is holding a series of informal Board workshops and meetings to initiate a narrative to lead discussion toward measurable goals and objectives to monitor performance. These meetings are public and are being held during the months of February and March with the goal of completing the Strategic Plan Update by late March.

A companion to the Strategic Plan is the Capital Improvement Plan, or CIP. A CIP is a comprehensive review of District-wide facilities, such as water storage tanks, pump stations, pipelines, treatment plants, etc., that are necessary for conveying, treating, and delivering water to your household, and then on the downstream side, collecting, treating, and recycling treated wastewater, to develop a priority schedule for repairs, upgrades, and the purchase of equipment to ensure the best possible service possible given state law and available resources. The short story is that there is always more necessary work than available resources, which requires a careful analysis to weigh all options given a set of agreed on criteria, such as health and safety, regulatory mandates, efficiency, and so on to establish priorities for the next five-years.

As you may be aware, TUD performed a detailed five-year rate plan in 2015 that closely examined CIP needs and the rates necessary to meet District priorities, such as the criteria summarized above. What came out of the previous five-year CIP were \$20-million dollars in necessary facility upgrades, a subset of the \$70+ million that requires additional funding. This \$20-million worth of CIP work is nearly 3/5ths complete with the remaining 2/5ths to be complete by the end of 2020, which represents significant progress in upgrading water and wastewater facilities around Tuolumne County. This comprehensive CIP update is examining the current state of these projects, as well as future needs as new information becomes available. In fact, TUD's Treated Water System Optimization Plan calls for consolidation of eight of its current eleven water treatment plants scattered across Tuolumne County. By consolidating the fragmented, aging eight water treatment plants down to two regional water treatment plants, TUD will better be able to provide safe, reliable, high-quality of water to Tuolumne County and provide a high quality of life for the region to prosper.

As with all expensive capital projects, money is a significant issue. TUD recognizes the need to keep rates affordable. As a result, TUD staff works very hard to partner wherever it can by leveraging dollars and seeking state and federal grant funding. Achieving these goals will help keep water and wastewater rates down for TUD customers.

Ed-

