



ON TAP

TUD NEWSLETTER

Ditch Outage Scheduled for October - Please Conserve!

The Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) Tuolumne Main Canal that conveys 95% of Tuolumne Utilities District's drinking water supply will be shut down for PG&E's regular maintenance from Sunday, October 18th through Sunday, October 25th, 2020. This year due to the Phoenix Lake Preservation and Restoration Project currently in progress, all of the District's ditches will be turned off during this time period. The District asks that you limit your water use during this timeframe while PG&E undertakes repairs and improvements.

Without water flowing in the

ditches, the only water available is what remains in storage tanks and from limited capacity groundwater wells. Conservation during this period is necessary to ensure adequate water supply for drinking, sanitary usage and fire protection.

Please conserve water by limiting outside watering, avoid washing vehicles, turn off automatic lawn and drip sprinkler timers and repair water leaks. The District requests that all customers continue to conserve one week after the outage in order for water storage supply to recover. For irrigation/agricultural ditch customers, periodic outages will continue from November



Tuolumne Main Canal from Lyons Reservoir (Photo credit: PG&E)

through December for annual maintenance. For complete ditch outage information, visit www.tudwater.com

TUD Approved for Funding Improvements for Sonora Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility



Sonora Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant

At the August TUD Board of Directors meeting, General Manager Ed Pattison announced that the District has secured nearly \$20 million in funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to upgrade the District's 50-year-old Sonora Regional

Wastewater Treatment Plant. The project replaces the existing polishing ponds with a new extended aeration activated sludge treatment facility, including new headworks, aeration basins, clarifiers, tertiary filtration, chlorine contact basins, and solids dewatering facilities. All renovations and new construction will be within the boundary of the existing treatment plant. USDA will provide a \$4.2 million grant and \$15 million loan payable over 40 years at an interest rate of 1.125%, a historically low rate and major opportunity for the District.

"It is an exceptional offer by the USDA for TUD to update a 50-year-old facility that is really struggling with meeting its regulatory permit requirements," stated Pattison at the Board meeting. "It's a huge

opportunity and great news because it really keeps some of the rate dollars as low as possible as we build transformational multimillion-dollar infrastructure upgrades." The upgrade will ensure efficiency, reliability, and quality recycled water for use by agriculture and recreation within Tuolumne County that will exceed state regulatory requirements for the treatment and reuse of Title 22 treated wastewater.

The Sonora Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant was constructed in the 1970's and serves most of Tuolumne County including Columbia, East Sonora, Mono Village, Mono Vista, Rancho Poquitos, Soulsbyville, Twain Harte and Willow Springs. District staff anticipates construction activity to begin in Spring 2021.

Prepare Now for a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS)

While no single factor will drive a Public Safety Power Shutoff, some factors include:



A Red Flag Warning declared by the National Weather Service



Low humidity levels, generally 20 percent and below



Forecasted sustained winds above 25 mph **and wind gusts** in excess of approximately 45 mph



Condition of dry fuel on the ground and live vegetation (e.g., moisture content)



On-the-ground, real-time observations

Given the growing threat of extreme hot and windy weather, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) is alerting customers to prepare for power outages intending to minimize the risk of power lines sparking a fire. If extreme fire danger conditions threaten a portion of the electric system serving our region, PG&E may deem it necessary to turn off electricity in the interest of public safety. This is called a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS).

Tuolumne Utilities District is actively planning for the potential of extended power outages with the goal of minimizing water service

interruption. The challenge is the array of infrastructure and terrain that the District's service area covers. The District has secured and is aggressively pursuing backup power generators to meet the power needs of critical infrastructure. If a PSPS event occurs for an extended amount of time, TUD will request all customers to conserve water and limit outdoor water usage until the power is restored. The District encourages all Tuolumne County residents to be prepared for a PSPS event. For more information on how to prepare for a PSPS event, go online to www.tudwater.com.

General Manager's Corner

A recent newspaper article in the August 12th edition of The Union Democrat, prompted me to offer an inside view of what the newspaper called the "Battle for Pinecrest." TUD doesn't believe differing opinions about finite resources, like water, are "battles." Differing opinions are simply the result when you ask any group how to prioritize the use of a finite resource when need outstrips supply. This isn't a battle; it is simply a collection of different priorities. In situations involving the allocation of scarce resources, such as this one, our system of laws establishes a system of priority in order to achieve the greatest good. California Water Code section 106 states: "It is hereby declared to be the established policy of this State that the use of water for domestic purposes is the highest use of water and that the next highest use is for irrigation." Therefore, the decision issued by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) is consistent with law and the priorities established by our government. This is not to say the use of water for recreation was ignored, because it wasn't. Any recreational impacts felt at the reservoir as a result of this decision will be mitigated by making certain improvements at Pinecrest to enhance visitors' recreational experiences.

The SWRCB decision does not make "more"

water available to TUD; it simply considers the longer period of withdrawals from the reservoir when an early end of spill occurs. The earlier that spill occurs, the longer the period that water is withdrawn from the reservoir for purposes unrelated to TUD demand.

The story also suggests that TUD's ditch systems and its customers "waste" water. While old, TUD's ditches and flumes do not waste water. The areas adjacent to TUD's ditches and flumes create riparian habitat that supply wildlife with water, food and shelter, and for many Tuolumne County residents a trail system that they use for recreation. TUD's customers have reduced water consumption 20% more than required under state law. In light of this effort, additional conservation is unrealistic when for example in 2014, under the prior SWRCB rule, during an early end of spill after snowpack was only one eighth of normal, TUD customers had to reduce water use by another 50%—when Pinecrest was full of water.

We do our best every day to meet multiple, and sometimes conflicting, demands, and do so responsibly, prudently, and professionally. Our employees are keeping things working and your taps delivering water. Whether it's rain, snow, blizzard, drought, power shutoff, or any emergency we face, we handle it—for you.

Edwin R. Pattison
General Manager



TUD MISSION:

"PROVIDE RESPONSIBLE WATER AND WASTEWATER SERVICES FOR OUR CUSTOMERS WITH GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE IN A SOCIALLY, FINANCIALLY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIVE MANNER AT A FAIR VALUE."

On Tap is published to keep Tuolumne Utilities District customers informed about issues and upcoming events.

If you have any story ideas or suggestions, please mail them to Lisa Westbrook, at 18885 Nugget Blvd., Sonoma, CA 95370 or email at lwesbrook@tudwater.com.

For more information about TUD, go to www.tudwater.com