December 14, 2020

Dear Grassland Landowners:

As all of you are aware, this fall has been extremely dry and warm, not only locally but especially in Northern California where the District’s water supply comes from. Current conditions in Northern California are critically dry and without significant improvement it is very possible that next water year could be declared a “Shasta Critical Year” which would mean reduced Level 2 water allocations, such as those initial allocations made in 2014 and 2015. In those two years the District had to allocate water to the clubs based on their assessed acreage.

Although it is early in the rain season, it is not too early to start planning for next year’s water supply scenarios and take active measures to conserve and stretch the current year’s water supply. Due to the lack of rain and the warm days water use is currently greater than average for this time of year. While the District should have adequate water supplies to maintain wetland ponds through the end of waterfowl season it is very important to conserve water with the goal of being able to carry over the conserved water to the next water year. Water conservation is of the utmost importance and must be front and center in the mind of the folks managing their club’s water. Please inspect all of your levees and water control structures and make the repairs needed to minimize spill and loss of water. Double boarding and tarping weirs are great ways to conserve and stretch the District’s supply. Carefully monitoring your pond water depths and setting boards appropriately, to retain any operational spill or precipitation, will also position you to better manage your habitat.

While many clubs like to lower pond water levels this time of year to attract teal it should be noted that there may not be adequate water to refill all the ponds before the end of the water year. This could mean clubs may not be able to hold water in their ponds until the optimal germination period, especially in dry and warm early spring conditions, such as those experienced last year.

Maximizing use of our limited water supplies to optimally manage the habitat so critical to the species that are dependent on the Grasslands area requires a partnership between the District and it’s landowners. While it is too early to sound the alarm the District needs the landowners’ continued cooperation. The District has excellent staff operating the water conveyance and
delivery system but they need your continued support and cooperation. Stay in close contact with your local water tender and don’t hesitate to call them or me should you have any questions or see any issues that need immediate attention.

Sincerely,

Ken Swanson, PE  
District Engineer/Watermaster  
Mobile 559-287-0326

South Water Tender:..........................Derrick Iudice (209) 704-5184  
North Water Tender:..........................Mike Boffa (209) 704-5187  
Water Department Supervisor:..........Rob Kocher (209) 704-5191