

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Jason Phillips
Chief Executive Officer
California's Permanent Drought

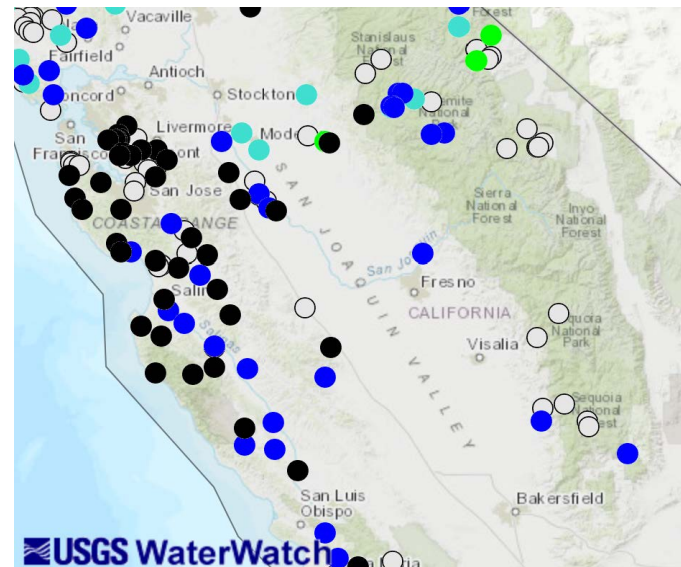
Everyone knows that January 2023 was extremely wet in California, many areas experienced massive and, in some cases, devastating flooding, reservoirs across the state are filling, and an entire year's worth of snow is already in many parts of the mountain range. After several critically dry years requiring severe cutbacks, many people across the nation are asking the obvious question, "does this mean the California drought is over?" The answer of course is "no." Ironically, California's drought is not due to hydrology, we have always known that our hydrology is volatile, probably more so than anywhere else in the nation, with several dry years followed by extreme wet years and flooding. California's water management system was designed specifically to manage this volatile hydrology to store wet year water to be used in dry years. But currently, even our system of magnificent dams and canals cannot meet the state's water needs. This is because decades after they were built, the government will no longer allow our water infrastructure to operate the way it was intended. Starting in the early 1990's, as a result of state and federal laws, regulations, lawsuits, and decisions, (both by elected and unelected officials), reservoirs are not allowed to convey the water stored for the intended purposes, and instead a large percentage of water must now be sent to the ocean. Each year this problem is getting worse, and unelected government officials are allowed to divert more water away from homes, communities, and farms. Is it worth diverting all this water away from people? Frankly, I'm not the right person to ask whether this diversion of the public's precious resource is worth it. But I also don't think the right person to ask is the unelected

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HIGH RUNOFF MONTH PRESENTS OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR FRIANT

With the blockbuster storms throughout January, public attention has again turned to how best to capitalize on all that extra water. It proved to be a challenging series of storms to take full advantage of and many inquiries were coming in regarding why the Friant-Kern Canal wasn't very full and instead water stored at Millerton Lake is being released into the San Joaquin River. Although flows in the Friant-Kern Canal started picking up in the last week of January, flows for most of the month were very low or virtually non-existent. There are two primary reasons for this: (1) The Friant-Kern Canal's service is interrupted at some locations due to the Middle Reach Capacity Correction Project, and (2) when the entire region is this wet, demand for water deliveries decreases except for districts and communities who are operating recharge projects.

Several months ago, FWA scheduled Friant-Kern Canal service interruptions during the months of December and January for some the portions of canal where construction is occurring. After several years of drought and



Explanation - Percentile classes							
Low	<10	10-24	25-75	76-90	>90	High	Not-ranked
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○
Much below normal	Below normal	Normal	Above normal	Much above normal			

Map of 28-day average streamflow compared to historical streamflow on gaged creeks in the southern San Joaquin Valley for the month of January.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

FEB 13
FWA Executive Committee Meeting
Lindsay, CA
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FEB 22-23
Family Farm Alliance Annual Conference
Reno, NV
[CLICK FOR INFO ►](#)

FEB 28
FWA Finance Committee Meeting
Lindsay, CA
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MAR 3
FWA Board of Directors Meeting
Visalia, CA
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government employee that has no accountability to the public. People that are elected to represent us need to be the ones held accountable for decisions about how our most basic resources are managed and allocated. The laws need to be updated to rightly put the accountability for creating man-made droughts back on elected officials in an open and transparent fashion. Stay tuned.

Article continued from page 1

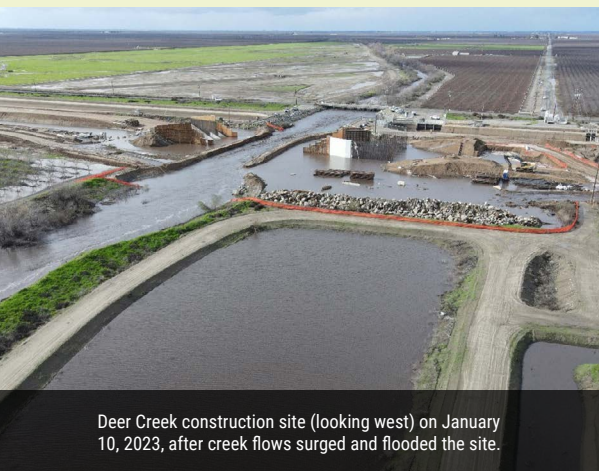
without the benefit of a hydrologic crystal ball, fixing the canal without delay was (and is) our top priority. Fortunately, as portions of the canal come back on line, those deliveries will also increase. As far as the reduced demand for water, the entire San Joaquin Valley has experienced a record amount of rainfall and its creeks and rivers have ballooned with runoff this month. Combine that with the fact that many Friant Contractors also have water rights to local streams and creeks, and the reality is that demand for canal supplies won't likely increase until those flows further recede in the coming weeks.

FLOOD IMPACTS AT DEER CREEK CONSTRUCTION SITE

Mid-month, widespread flooding occurred throughout the San Joaquin Valley as back-to-back storms dropped record levels of precipitation and many creeks and streams that are dry most of the year, such as Deer Creek, began to run very high flows. Overnight from January 9-10, a temporary bypass berm constructed to divert Deer Creek across the Friant-Kern Canal breached and partially washed away, introducing water to the siphon/check area and excavated new canal section south of Deer Creek. Fortunately, there were no injuries nor any damage to the other structures, and the contractor is optimistic that repairs will not extend the overall schedule for completing the Middle Reach Capacity Correction Project.



Deer Creek construction site (looking west) in November 2022.



Deer Creek construction site (looking west) on January 10, 2023, after creek flows surged and flooded the site.

TECHNOLOGY PROMOTED BY THE WATER BLUEPRINT COULD HAVE CAPITALIZED ON HIGH JANUARY FLOWS

On January 23, the Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley sent a letter to Governor Newsom highlighting two of the 10 identified resiliency projects that they believe will advance the administration's water agenda as presented in the 2020 Water Resilience Portfolio. One such recommendation for implementation in the letter, which they call "environmentally friendly water diversions," proposes to change the physical diversion structures in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta). Instead of the existing type of intakes used at the Delta pumping plants for the Central Valley Project and State Water Project, the proposed technology would allow water to be diverted from under the bottom of the water column at very slow rates. This would mean that when Delta outflow was



Turlock Irrigation District installed a subsurface diversion system similar to the Environmentally Friendly Water Diversion proposal from the Water Blueprint. Shown above during construction (before being covered by feet of gravel), this system diverts water from beneath the Tuolumne River without harming salmonids in the river.

high, such as during the atmospheric river storms California experienced this month, the pumping facilities in the Delta wouldn't need to be slowed down to protect fish and State and Federal water managers could capture and store more water for the inevitable dry years to come. The second project is termed the "Southern San Joaquin Water Resiliency Project" – a new bidirectional canal in the Valley that could be capable of transporting high flows safely captured in the Delta to the groundwater basins in the Valley, which are estimated to have up to 50 million AF of storage capacity.

Read the Water Blueprint's letter to Governor Newsom [here](#) and take a look at the Water Blueprint's most recent resiliency project recommendations [here](#).

THE SACRAMENTO BEE

OPINION: CALIFORNIA WAS JUST INUNDATED WITH MUCH-NEEDED WATER. TOO BAD WE DIDN'T SAVE MUCH OF IT

The recent series of atmospheric rivers dumped enough rain and snow on Northern California to give us hope that the end of the drought may be near. California's Department of Water Resources is reporting that the state's snow water equivalent, or how much water the snowpack is expected to melt, is expected to be significantly higher than in previous years.

OPINION

Click here to read Ian LeMay's OpEd in *The Sacramento Bee*.

FRIANT-KERN CANAL MIDDLE REACH CAPACITY CORRECTION CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS UPDATE

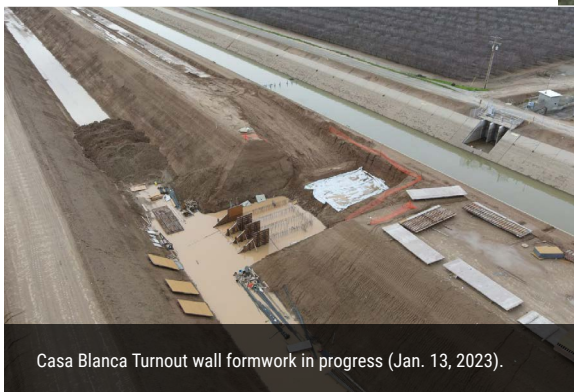
Despite delays due to rain and the flooding at Deer Creek, the Middle Reach Project construction team continued to make steady process this month. Five of the nine canal segments have new embankments that range in completion between 61%-92%. The remaining segments' embankments are between 18%-47% complete.



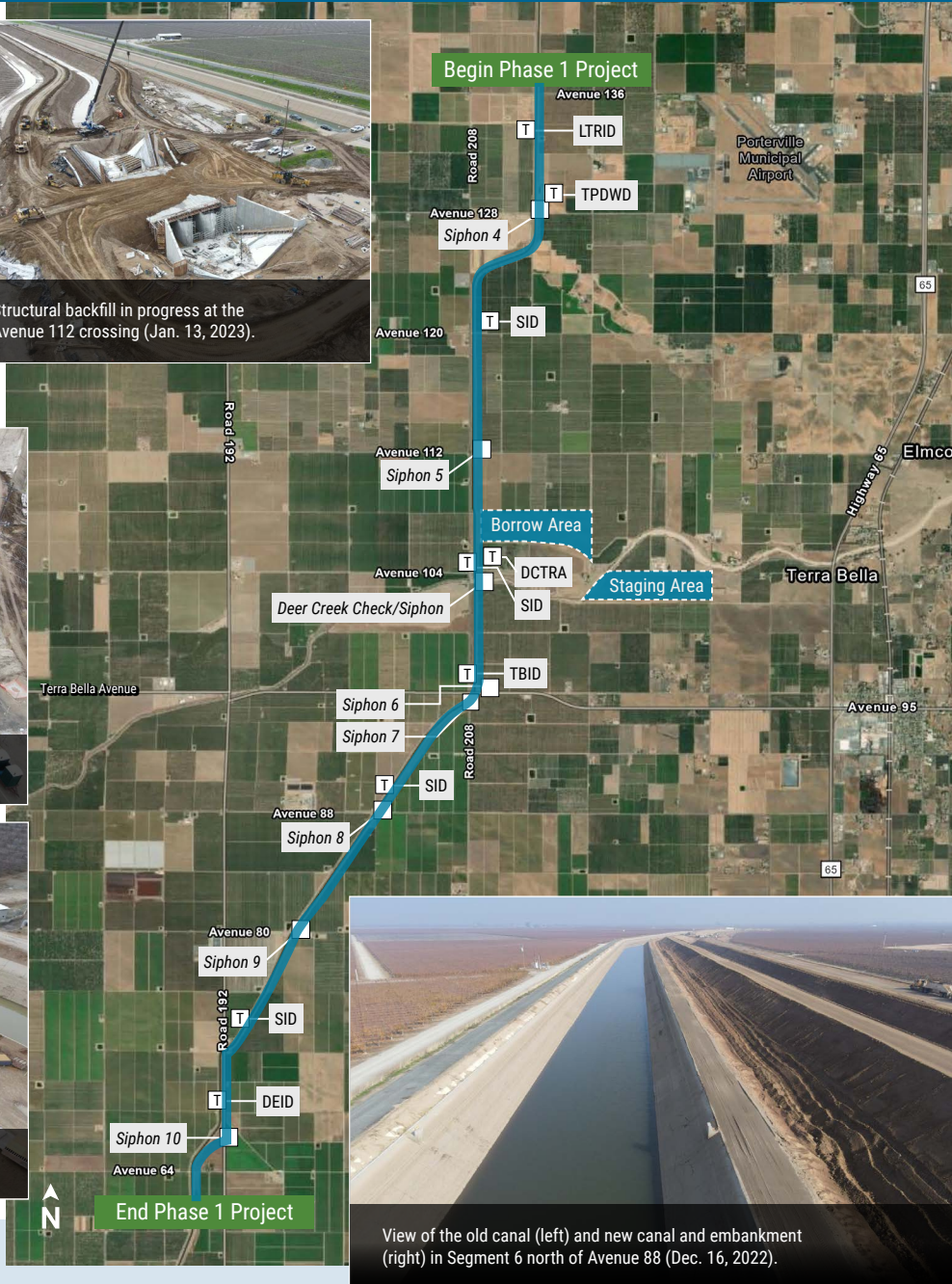
Structural backfill in progress at the Avenue 112 crossing (Jan. 13, 2023).



Siphon wall and slab construction at Road 192 (Jan. 13, 2023).



Casa Blanca Turnout wall formwork in progress (Jan. 13, 2023).



View of the old canal (left) and new canal and embankment (right) in Segment 6 north of Avenue 88 (Dec. 16, 2022).

IN THE NEWS

"Opinion: California was just inundated with much-needed water. Too bad we didn't save much of it," Sacramento Bee, Jan. 24.

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"Is the Drought Over? Reflections on California's Recent Flood-Drought Combo," California Water Blog, Jan. 22

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"How will California's water storage hold up in future dry-wet cycles?" Capital Public Radio, Jan. 19.

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"Have no Prop. 1 water projects been built in California? No, but they are moving slowly," Los Angeles Times, Jan. 19.

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"Environmental rules stoke anger as California lets precious stormwater wash out to sea," Los Angeles Times, Jan. 17.

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"Valadao, GOPers demand answers into Biden's teardown of Valley water boost," SJ Valley Sun, Jan. 17.

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"Editorial: Water Is a Terrible Thing for California to Waste," Wall Street Journal, Jan. 17.

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"Deep Trouble": Water Levels at California's Reservoirs Leaving Towns Dry," Newsweek, Jan. 17.

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