

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Jason Phillips
Chief Executive Officer

It would've been difficult not to notice the fact that the Friant-Kern Canal (FKC) was empty for much of the past few months. It's an unusual sight that doesn't happen every year, and FWA staff and directors have received many questions from the public about why the canal is empty. It seems like for the last couple of years, most of the public's questions about the canal focused on the capacity correction project we are undertaking, but for this month's message I'd like to share a bit of information related to one of our other significant maintenance undertakings: the periodic dewatering of the FKC.

Why do we dewater the Friant-Kern Canal?

"Dewatering" is when FWA drains water from the FKC to conduct repairs and maintenance that can't occur when the canal is carrying water. Among other work, this can include replacing concrete liner panels, treating invasive aquatic weed, and cleaning out other debris that has collected in the canal.

How often do we dewater it? Usually, FWA dewateres the canal every three years, but exceptions have occurred. For example, this year's dewatering was deferred from 2019/2020 due to excess water in the upper watershed. This delay gave contractors extra time to move the water in district or to banking facilities.

How long does the dewatering last? It takes about one month to get the water out of the canal. FWA plans for three months (November 1 to January 31) to complete the projects and work that needs to be done, as well as to deal with the inevitable surprises that tend to appear.

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FWA WELCOMES NEW CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

On March 15, Wilson Orvis will join Friant Water Authority (FWA) as its Chief Financial Officer (CFO). For more than 14 years, Wilson has worked for the Bureau of Reclamation, first as a Grants Management Analyst and, more recently, as a Deputy Director in Reclamation's Denver policy office. As CFO, Wilson will oversee FWA's financial and accounting operations.



"We're thrilled to add Wilson to the FWA team. His depth of experience, on financial matters, especially as it relates to contracts and repayment matters related to water infrastructure and operations and maintenance, will be a tremendous benefit as we embark on repairing the Friant-Kern Canal and engage in other initiatives with long-term cost implications for the Friant Division contractors," said Jason Phillips, FWA Chief Executive Officer.

Wilson has a Bachelor of Arts in Natural Resources from Johns Hopkins University.

IN THE NEWS

News Release: "Reclamation Outlines Central Valley Project Initial 2021 Water Allocation," *Bureau of Reclamation (Feb. 23, 2021)*

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"California Republican Delegation urges Biden administration to ensure continued California water supply," *Hanford Sentinel (Feb. 23, 2021)*

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News Release: "Feinstein to Chair Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee," *Office of Senator Dianne Feinstein (Feb. 23, 2021)*

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"How a water war on the Kings River could alter the Valley as we know it," *San Joaquin Valley Sun (Jan. 26, 2021)*

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EVENTS AROUND THE VALLEY

MARCH 15
FWA Executive Committee Meeting
Lindsay, CA
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MARCH 26
FWA Board of Directors Meeting
Visalia, CA
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APRIL 12
FWA Executive Committee Meeting
Lindsay, CA
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APRIL 29
FWA Board of Directors Meeting
Visalia, CA
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How do we make sure that canal operations aren't significantly affected during dewatering and how do people get water when the canal is dewatered?

A great deal of coordination and advance notice is provided, both with farmers and with the municipal users along the canal. As an example, coordination of these critical activities allows for the City of Orange Cove to install a small coffer dam to pool water for later use and fill its storage ponds, and for Lindsay-Strathmore Irrigation District to install small coffer dams to hold water for potable uses by communities within the district's boundaries.

Do we dewater the whole canal at once or is it completed in sections? FWA dewateres the entire canal at once and moves water remaining in the canal south, having districts take water to the extent that they are able.

Does FWA perform the same sort of maintenance activities on it each time the canal is dewatered? There are standard projects that take place virtually every time the canal is dewatered, like repairing concrete panels, refurbishing of radial gates, etc., but specialty projects like the removal of Western Milfoil, which is an invasive weed that FWA is trying to control in the unlined section of the canal occur as well. A great level of detail goes into notes that are taken during the dewatering so the next time the canal is dewatered for maintenance, the FWA team will be informed of historical issues and problems. In addition to that, inspections are ongoing throughout the years while the canal is in service to compile a list that needs to be budgeted for.

What are some unusual or odd things that FWA has discovered in the canal while dewatered? Over the past few dewaterings, FWA staff has removed five stolen cars, sunken boats, car parts, and other miscellaneous items. One year, a cow somehow found its way into the empty canal and was stranded there. FWA staff worked with local animal control authorities to help properly care for the cow while we mobilized to lift it out with one of our cranes. Not surprisingly, the FWA team has also removed a stunning amount of trash: twenty-five dump truck loads of trash was taken out of the canal this year alone.

What happens if weather interferes with dewatering work? If heavy rains occur, we continue to work through the weather. When the reservoirs begin to fill, the Bureau of Reclamation gives us about a week to wrap up dewatering, whether projects are completed or not, so that we can return the canal to service in a safe and reliable manner.

While dealing with the effects of subsidence on the FKC seems to take the majority of the spotlight these days, it's important for the Friant Division community and the San Joaquin Valley to know that our most critical job is to keep the canal running successfully and sustainably, day in and day out.

STATEMENT FROM FRIANT WATER AUTHORITY ON THE BUREAU OF RECLAMATION'S INITIAL 2021 CENTRAL VALLEY PROJECT ALLOCATION FOR THE FRIANT DIVISION

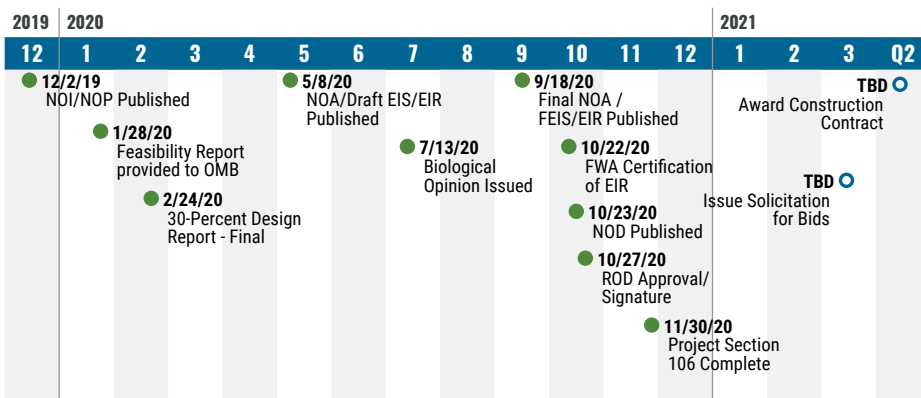
February 23, 2021

Today, the Bureau of Reclamation announced the Central Valley Project's initial 2021 water allocation. The Friant Division Class 1 Contractors were allocated 20% (160 TAF) of their contract supply, and Class 2 Contractors did not receive an allocation, reflecting the very dry hydrology thus far in the water year. The large storms in January and early February helped avoid complete catastrophe for this water year, but still were not enough to overcome two consecutive dry years resulting in below-average water storage throughout the state. Despite the low allocation, we do appreciate Reclamation's work to issue this initial allocation early in the year, as it will help districts and farmers plan their operations for the remainder of 2021.

We anticipate that many growers throughout the south San Joaquin Valley and on the Eastside will need to rely heavily on groundwater supplies, just as they did in 2020. This is likely to further exacerbate the type of regional land elevation subsidence that has so dramatically reduced the capacity of the Friant-Kern Canal and other valley canals. This makes our efforts to increase the availability of surface supplies to the San Joaquin Valley and to fix the Friant-Kern Canal's capacity limitations even more critical and underscores the need for resolving the valley's long-term water imbalance.

UPDATE ON FKC CAPACITY CORRECTION PROJECT

The following is a summary of the design, permitting, and regulatory work completed by the FWA project team in recent months.



The following is a summary of the funding options and benchmarks that the FWA project team are pursuing to piece together a final finance plan.

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	STATUS
Bureau of Reclamation SJR Restoration Program	\$41.8 m	Confirmed/In-hand
Bureau of Reclamation SJR Restoration Program	\$9 m	Requested
WIIN Act FY18 and FY20 Appropriations	\$4.55 m	Awaiting Congressional Action
WIIN Act FY21 Trump Administration funding request	\$206 m	Signed by President Trump
State funding (SB 559 – Hurtado)	<\$308 m	Reintroduced on 2/18
Groundwater Sustainability Agency mitigation funding	\$125 m	Awaiting Finalization
Friant contractor funding	\$50 m	Confirmed/Committed

**COMING SOON
THE FWA PODCAST!**

STAY TUNED!