

# eWATERLINE

FEBRUARY 2024

## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



**Jason Phillips**  
Chief Executive Officer

As is typical for this time of year, water districts and water users from all across the state anxiously await the announcement from the US Bureau of Reclamation about how much of their contracted water supply can be expected to be made available for the year. And while the initial allocation announcement is just that (generally the allocation amount will get updated as more storms develop), the first announcement provides some insight into the level of confidence the Bureau has for the months ahead.

The initial allocations for the Friant Division are more reflective of a very dry year as opposed to what we see developing. On February 21, the Bureau set our Class 1 supply at only 60% and set our Class 2 at zero, largely based on the drier conditions that existed in early February. Friant Division supplies relies heavily on the snowpack year to year due to the small amount of surface storage relative to the watershed. Because of this, the Bureau can't rely on the previous wet year for water this year. With the recent strong storms hitting the Sierras, I expect the snow pack and runoff to exceed average heading into Spring and for the allocations to increase and Friant Water Authority will continue to work closely with the Bureau to increase the allocations as quickly as possible.

For those dependent on water that moves through the Delta into the San Joaquin Valley and Southern California, the initial allocation announcement is not a formality. Unfortunately, it comes with a great deal of speculation and handwringing, especially by

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## RECLAMATION SETS INITIAL WATER ALLOCATION

Reprinted from [The Sun](#) by Daniel Gligich, February 21, 2024



After receiving 100 percent of their contracted water supplies last year, Central Valley water contractors will only receive 15 percent of their contract total. The Bureau of Reclamation announced the water supply allocations for Central Valley Project contractors on Wednesday, leading Valley contractors to hope for more storms as winter leads into spring.

The big picture: While agriculture districts south-of-Delta are receiving 15 percent of their contracts, municipal and irrigation water services will be allocated 65 percent of their historical use, or public health and safety needs – whichever is greater. San Joaquin River Settlement Contractors and San Joaquin Exchange Contractors will receive 100 percent of their supply. Central Valley Project contractors south-of-Delta have also been approved to reschedule around 184,000 acre-feet of unused allocated water from 2023 for 2024.

For Friant Division contractors – whose water supply is delivered from Millerton Reservoir, the first 800,000 acre-feet of available water supply is considered Class 1, while Class 2 is considered the next amount up to 1.4 million acre-feet. The Friant Division water supply allocation is 60 percent of Class 1 and zero percent of Class 2. The Bureau of Reclamation is also reserving around 83,000 acre-feet currently in San Luis Reservoir to continue to a drought reserve pool and is not considered available for water supply allocations.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**MAR 11**

FWA Executive Committee Meeting  
Lindsay, CA

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**MAR 25**

FWA Finance Committee Meeting  
Lindsay, CA

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**MAR 28**

FWA Board of Directors Meeting  
Visalia, CA

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**APR 15**

FWA Executive Committee Meeting  
Lindsay, CA

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those whose drinking water and livelihoods are on the line. The anxiety and apprehension that surrounds these very important announcements are fueled by a broken water project that has been over-regulated, over-legislated, over-litigated, and overwhelmed. Even after what was, by every measure, a historic water year in 2023, the water system in California, which was designed almost 100 years ago to withstand 5 consecutive years of drought, is limping along, with not even enough water left over for a full supply after such a wet year. Until those pressures and headwinds change for the better, praying for heavy rain and lots of cold snow up high in the Sierra Nevada has become the only real strategy to get a reliable water supply from year to year. In 2023, we spent months fighting floods and watching enough clean water flow to the ocean to supply our state for decades. Now, in 2024, with close to average precipitation, the initial allocation this year for those water users relying on pumping through the Delta (which by the way is two-thirds of the state population), is a meager 15% of their contract supply. This is happening while the number of low-income community drinking water wells in the San Joaquin Valley are continuing to dry up and farms are eliminating production by tens of thousands of acres every year. This is a trajectory we need to find a way to turn from before it's too late.



Recently, FWA Directors Rick Borges (Tulare ID) and Arlen Miller (Orange Cove ID), Aaron Fukuda (Tulare ID General Manager), Jason Phillips (FWA CEO), Johnny Amaral (FWA COO/CEA), and Austin Ewell (FWA advocate) traveled to DC for two full days of meetings with Members of Congress and the Biden Administration to advocate for sensible water policy and infrastructure funding.

## MEET THE FRIANT FAMILY

### BILL STRETCH

**General Manager**  
Fresno Irrigation District

Bill Stretch has served as General Manager of the Fresno Irrigation District (FID) since 2019 and is a licensed Professional Civil Engineer in California. His tenure at FID started in 1998 after graduating from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo with a B.S. in Agricultural Engineering. Prior to his role as General Manager, Bill worked his way up from an entry-level engineer to Chief Engineer and Assistant General Manager. He enjoys both the operational and interpersonal complexities of working for a large irrigation district whose mission includes water delivery to agricultural, municipal, industrial, and environmental sectors in the Central Valley. Under Bill's leadership, FID serves customers spanning 250,000 acres inclusive of prime farmland and the cities of Fresno and Clovis. He oversees 85 employees and ensures effective management of 680-miles of canal and 1,300 acres of basins. Bill is especially proud of FID's canal modernization, and the construction and improvements on over 800 acres of recharge basins over the past 25 years. Beyond operations, he is passionate about defending Kings and San Joaquin River water rights as a member of the Kings River Water Association and Friant Water Authority. Bill resides on the family almond ranch in Madera where he enjoys spending time with his wife and three kids, ages 7, 13, and 16, and being involved in their sports, FFA, and 4-H activities.



**BILL STRETCH**

### GEORGE PORTER

**Director**  
Fresno Irrigation District

George Porter serves on the Friant Water Authority Board of Directors representing Fresno Irrigation District. He lives in the Kerman area on his 154-acre grape vineyard where he grows Thompsons, Barbera, and Chardonnay grapes. George is a graduate of Fresno State College where he received his B.S. in Animal Science. He served on the Raisin Bargaining Association board and is now a board member with the Fresno County Farm Bureau.



**GEORGE PORTER**

# FRIANT-KERN CANAL MIDDLE REACH CAPACITY CORRECTION CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS UPDATE

The weather was clear and sunny with several rain days that impacted the canal trimming and paving activities. All segments of embankment are approximately 99% complete. Canal trimming was completed on the right canal on the southern end of the alignment. The canal lining machine was transferred to canal left and progressed north toward Avenue 80 completing the southern end of the alignment on that side. All work was completed during daylight hours, with high production rates. Hand paving lining was placed at various locations along alignment.

**Deer Creek check structure:** gate hoists installed, gate testing by manufacturer, grouted gate seals and stop-log guides, installed check structure grating and handrails, grading completed, and general site clean-up. **All turnouts:** installed slide gates and stop log guides, placed formwork, reinforcing bars and concrete for top decks. **Terra Bella weir:** Gate installation completed, outfall pipe installed and backfilled. **TBID, Casa Blanca, and DCTRA turnouts and Deer Creek:** Electrical and instrumentation work done, and control, power, and signal wires pulled, tested, labeled, and terminated. Manufacturers conducted site visits in order to document proper installation.

Canal outage period completed and the FKC resumed operations by the end of January. Outage work included the completion of the north and south temporary earthen plugs, concrete bifurcations, installing expansion joints and joint sealant in the completed bifurcations, and irrigation district permanent pipe installation and leak testing. Biological construction monitoring continued and found no evidence of the presence of kit foxes or burrowing owls in the site.



North Canal tie-in point joint sealing in progress



Temporary earthen plug at south tie-in point



Trimmer completed southern end of alignment on canal right and moved across Road 192 on canal left



Machine paving on souther end of alignment

"FKC Middle Reach Capacity Correction Construction Progress Update" Continued



Deer Creek check looking northwards showing the radial gates



Deer Creek check and siphon looking in a northeasterly direction



Ave 80 siphon with the irrigation pipe installation in progress



South tie-in after completion of outage work and placing the FKC back in service

## IN THE NEWS

"DWR announces increase to anticipated State Water Project allocation for 2024," California Department of Water Resources, February 21, 2024.

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"Can large dams help feed downstream ecosystems?," California Water Blog, February 18, 2024.

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"Delta Conveyance Project faces stronger headwinds with court ruling rejecting financing scheme and new environmental litigation," Somach Simons & Dunn, February 2, 2024.

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