

eWATERLINE

MAY 2023

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Jason Phillips
Chief Executive Officer

Earlier this month, FWA spent a few very busy days on Capitol Hill, meeting with Members of Congress and their staff, as well as with key Committee staff members. We focused on pressing the issues that are critical to the Friant Division, as well as throughout the state. We were able to cover a lot of ground and met the primary objectives we had aimed for. We met with Senator Alex Padilla and his staff, who have always been gracious with their time, as well as John Watts, Senior Counselor to U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein. On the House side of the Capitol, we met with the Office of Speaker Kevin McCarthy, Reps. Costa, Duarte, Garamendi, McClintock, and Valadao, as well as the Majority and Minority staff directors on the House Committee on Natural Resources. We reiterated our thoughts and positions on the Voluntary Agreements, Water Operations (particularly, the impact that water operations have on water supply reliability and the implementation of the SJR Settlement), the impact and funding needed to deal with recent flood events, and the Friant-Kern Canal Middle Reach Capacity Correction Project. Everyone we met with was extremely attentive and sympathetic to our concerns. But water has become such a political football that reaching consensus and implementing viable long-term solutions are not easy tasks. Legislative trips such as this one play a vital role in the work that we do. The FWA team that took to the Hill included Tom Barcellos, Skye Grass, Eric Quinley, Austin Ewell, Johnny Amaral, and me. If you see them, please thank them for taking time out of their schedules for this important work.

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MILLERTON LAKE CAN DRAIN, FILL SIX TIMES OVER WITH REGISTERED SNOWPACK, OFFICIALS SAY

Reprinted from FOX26 News (KMPH.com) | Fri, May 26th 2023

FRESNO COUNTY, Calif. – Fresno County Supervisor Nathan Magsig took to social media to put into perspective how much water is being released from the Friant Dam to try and stay afloat of what is expected to come due to the melting snowpack.

According to the Bureau of Reclamation, the dam is releasing 10,000 CFS (cubic feet per second) into the San Joaquin River. On the other hand, Millerton Lake is receiving more than 15,000 CFS, so essentially there is more water coming in than going out. They expect the reservoir to reach full capacity in July, to its stress level elevation.



This brings the possibility of spilling over the top. The last time this happened was in 1997, water spilled over the top of Millerton Dam, destroying homes and communities. Experts say this event changed the geography of the riverbed.

Based on the 300% snowpack that was registered in April, officials say Millerton Lake by the end of the year can fully drain and fill six times over. This can happen with the 3 million-acre feet of snowpack for a 500,000-acre-foot lake.

Again, law enforcement, emergency services, and county officials all stress the importance of staying out of local rivers. The San Joaquin and Kings Rivers remain closed, and those caught inside the dangerous waterways can face serious fines.

[Click here for original article](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

JUN 12

FWA Executive Committee Meeting
Lindsay, CA

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JUN 19

FWA Finance Committee Meeting
Lindsay, CA

[CLICK FOR INFO](#)

JUN 22

FWA Board of Directors Meeting
Visalia, CA

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JUL 17

FWA Executive Committee Meeting
Lindsay, CA

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Water Operations

Spring melt is ramping up and we will again see our flood control systems strained. Friant Dam releases increased to ~14,000 cfs last week. Increases in Friant diversions (currently ~3,700 cfs between the Friant-Kern Canal/ Madera Canal) are critical to alleviating flood control releases and taking advantage of available wet year water. Unfortunately, deliveries on the Friant-Kern Canal below the Deer Creek Check are likely to experience prorate soon, and we are coordinating weekly with contractors to manage this. Current forecasts show uncontrolled season ending in mid to late July, but under drier scenarios it could end sooner. FWA will be tracking this closely to make sure priority of water is maintained. We are still projecting a likely 20-25% reduction in Class 2 allocation after uncontrolled season ends.

Voluntary Agreements and San Luis Operations Agreement

We have reached a critical decision point on the Voluntary Agreements. DWR, Reclamation, and other public water agencies are anticipating approving the submission of a complete draft VA package to the State Board on June 2. Due to the lack of progress in agreeing to a San Luis Operations Agreement that reduces calls on Friant water supplies and the overall lack of progress in addressing the inequities in how Reclamation meets the Exchange Contract through its CVP operations, the FWA Board of Directors recently took action to remove Friant flow measures from the draft VA but directed staff to continue participating in discussions on funding. This was not a decision that was made in haste or easily. FWA's message has been consistent with all parties involved for more than a year-that our concerns are real and need to be addressed before we can comfortably move forward.

Middle Reach Capacity Correction Project

There have been a lot of good conversations with our project partners at the Bureau of Reclamation regarding the update to the Middle Reach Capacity Correction Project Spending Plan. The update was needed to provide a path forward that allows for more time to resolve the pending cash gap while keeping the construction for the project moving forward. On a related note, I also received a letter from the State, advising that they will be releasing the customary construction funds "hold back" later this year, which is more great news.

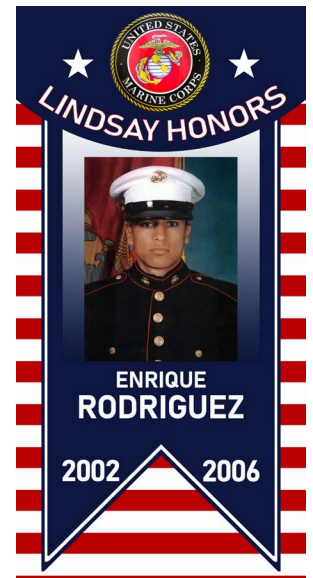
OM&R Cost Recovery Policy

After months of hard work by all of the Friant Division General Managers and staff at FWA, we have hammered out an update to FWA's OM&R Cost Recovery Policy that has broad support by all. As cost allocation is a zero-sum game, any revisions have implications, big and small, for all the FKC Districts and it's good to see that we have an update that navigates all of those considerations. In addition, this update will raise our conveyance rates for non-long term Contractors that make use of the FKC, aligning the rates with the costs we are experiencing lately (both routine and extraordinary), therefore offsetting, in part, costs to the long-term FKC Contractors.

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BANNER HONORING FWA EMPLOYEE'S MILITARY SERVICE TO FLY IN CITY OF LINDSAY

Beginning in 2022, the City of Lindsay implemented a new banner campaign to adorn their street lamp posts that honor U.S. Armed Service Members. This year, FWA proudly sponsored one of these banners to honor FWA Canal Systems Operator Enrique Rodriguez who served in the Marine Corps from 2002-2006. The banners fly annually from Memorial Day, May 29th through Veteran's Day, November 11th.



THE SUN

FWA COO JOHNNY AMARAL FEATURED ON THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY SUN'S "SUNRISE FM" PODCAST

As California spent much of the winter battered by storm after storm, water officials faced new challenges unlike recent years: an overabundance over water. Friant Water Authority Chief Operating Officer Johnny Amaral joins Sunrise FM to talk about the ever-changing battle over control of California's water resources, the difficulties in securing water supplies, and how water agencies are preparing for the "Big Melt" of incredible Sierra snowpack.

 [CLICK HERE TO LISTEN ON APPLE PODCAST!](#) 

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Water Education Foundation WATER Tour

With COVID restrictions continuing to ease up, the Foundation hosted their very important and popular 3-day tour on April 26-28 for approximately 60 participants. Agency representatives from Friant, Westlands, Exchange Contractors, Reclamation, and many others were there to speak and present to the group which included stops at pump stations, Friant Dam, etc. We were fortunate to have Austin Ewell speak on our behalf due to scheduling conflicts that both Johnny and I unfortunately had. I certainly hope to participate in the next scheduled tour.

On May 4, I served as a speaker at the Third Annual California Water Alliance Forum, along with Rep. Duarte, Westlands Water District, and farmer Cannon Michael. We tackled the difficult topic of how best to approach the SJV's long and short-term water needs. San Joaquin Valley Sun's Alex Tavlian did an excellent [summarizing the discussion](#).

The East Kaweah Groundwater Sustainability Agency, Provost & Pritchard, and several others are working together to host a "grower event" on July 12 in Tulare, where I will serve as a panelist/speaker. I plan to focus on the Central Valley Project and FWA's role as it pertains to the grower's world. The purpose of the grower event is to assist growers with gaining knowledge and understanding of key water issues and how those affect all of us. I think events like this are very valuable and I look forward to the event.

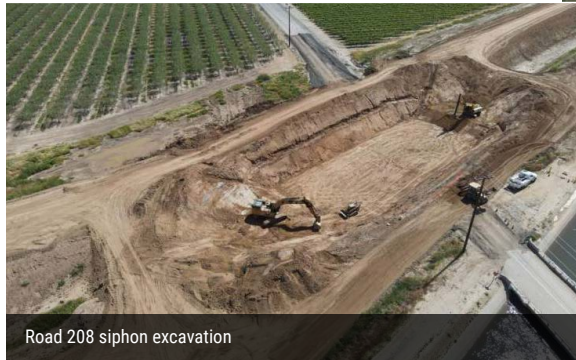
Until next month, please stay safe and cool.

FRIANT-KERN CANAL MIDDLE REACH CAPACITY CORRECTION CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS UPDATE

Due to severe storms from March, the cleanup efforts continue. At the Deer Creek area, there was re-establishment of the creek crossing, and part of the temporary diversion berm was replaced. Next, canal embankment was placed between Avenue 128 and worked up towards Avenue 112; there was additional canal embankment between Road 192 and Avenue 64 using borrowed material from the nearby property. Specifically, on Road 192, there was work to reinforce rebar placement, installing formwork, and placing structural concrete in several deck and wall sections. At Terra Bella Avenue, the siphon foundation was completed in terms of formwork, water stops, and bulkheads. Other avenues have also completed formwork as evacuation continued. Work has continued at Casa Blanca, Teapot Dome, DCTRA, SID-S2, SID-S3, SID-S4, TBID, and DEID-68 turnouts. More efforts have been made to inspect equipment and make any needed repairs.



Ave. 88 siphon



Road 208 siphon excavation



Ave. 128 siphon - invert slab placement



Canal trimming and lining equipment being setup adjacent to TBID borrow area



Deer Creek check / siphon cleanup and 60-inch bypass pipe install in progress

"FKC Middle Reach Capacity Correction Construction Progress Update" Continued



Terra Bella turnout and Ave. 95 siphon concrete slab placement in progress



Road 192 siphon - south transition wall complete

MORE WORK ON THE FKC

Due to several factors, FWA staff observed and immediately began repairing a number of collapsed concrete panels just south of the Tule River. Temporary repairs should be completed before the end of next week. Permanent repairs will be made during the system wide routine de-watering starting in late November 2023.



Collapsed panel - BEFORE



Collapsed panel - AFTER

IN THE NEWS

"Whiplash Again! – Learning from Wet (and Dry) Years," California WaterBlog, May 21.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

"California's snowpack is double the average for May, survey finds," CapRadio, May 2.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

"California triggers rarely used relief valve on Kern River, diverting flow to state aqueduct," Los Angeles Times, May 20.

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"California flipped from dry to wet. The Kings Subbasin is capitalizing, recharging the aquifer to recover from drought period losses identified in the latest Annual Report," North Kings Groundwater Sustainability Agency, May 26.

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"What's the dam problem with deadbeat dams?," California Water Blog, May 28.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)

"Valadao: Newsom politicizing, sitting on hands amid Valley flooding," SJV Sun, May 18.

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"Budget Outlook: With Worsening State Deficit, Newsom Continues Funding Cuts for Popular Climate Smart Agriculture Programs While Backing Climate Resilience Bond," CalCAN, May 17.

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"McCarthy's PR strategy on debt ceiling gets results," The Hill, May 22.

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