

# THE GROWER



**WATER & POWER**  
Serving Central California since 1887



SEPTEMBER 2024

## Farmer Shares His Experience with Groundwater Recharge

Representatives from Turlock Irrigation District, Sustainable Conservation, UC Santa Cruz and the California Almond Alliance met with growers in late June at the property of Tim Sanders to observe and discuss the opportunity of Idle Land Groundwater Recharge.

In January 2024, the TID Board approved multiple recharge project concepts in West & East Turlock GSPs, depending on water availability from the Tuolumne as well as local storm water that enters our system. During the winter, TID worked with growers to complete FloodMar and private basin recharge projects, and was excited for the opportunity to test Idle Lands Recharge on Mr. Sander's 14 acre parcel. The land was formerly planted with almonds and farmed as pumpkins the last two years.

Idle lands that have existing connections to our canals are encouraged to flood irrigate to improve groundwater conditions. An example of an idle land would be an orchard that was removed for replanting in the future. Instead of

letting the land sit unused, growers can make arrangements to flood irrigate free of charge.

In addition to improving local groundwater conditions, Mr. Sanders is using the recharge opportunity to reap additional benefits like helping with rodent control and the process of whole orchard recycling.

TID Growers, Eric Harcksen and Erich Gemperle, also answered questions on their recharge experiences. There are other recharge opportunities in addition to Idle Lands. If you are interested in or have questions about participating in groundwater recharge programs, please email [gwrecharge@tid.org](mailto:gwrecharge@tid.org).

## Defining Recharge

- **On-Farm Direct** – Applying water directly to existing farm land or on-farm basins. On-farm direct recharge uses existing District and private facilities, allowing the water to percolate to the aquifer below. The Idle Lands Recharge Project is an example of on-farm direct recharge.
- **In-Lieu** – using surface water instead of groundwater. Growers that have access to our canal system are strongly encouraged to use surface

water in-lieu of groundwater whenever possible during winter and summer months.

- **Dedicated Recharge** – applying water to a recharge basin, storm basin, subsurface recharge system or any other type of facility built specifically for groundwater recharge operations.
- **Off-Season Private Recharge** – using grower owned micro-drip basins that have existing connections to TID canals for direct and in lieu recharge. Water may percolate into the aquifer or be used prior to the start of the irrigation season for frost protection or irrigation.
- **FloodMar** – Flood Managed Aquifer Recharge is a recharge activity that utilizes flood and storm flows by applying them on lands or farmer owned basins in an effort to mitigate flood risk on the river system while recharging the aquifer at the same time.

# Revised Groundwater Plan Submitted to the State

On July 11, 2024, the Turlock Subbasin adopted its final Revised Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) following a lengthy revision period. The Revised GSP was developed after the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) provided comments on Turlock Subbasin's GSP in January 2024, determining the plan was incomplete.

The East Turlock Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GS) and West Turlock GSA, of which TID is a member, had 180 days to revise and resubmit the GSP. The revised GSP addressed the noted deficiencies of analyzing and mitigating initial groundwater level decline, development of a Well Mitigation Plan, and providing more details on projects outlined in the plan.

The East and West Turlock GSAs are confident that the revised plan will be approved by DWR, and look forward to beginning the programs identified to work toward groundwater sustainability. However, if the plan is again found incomplete the GSAs will enter a probationary period in which oversight of groundwater measures will be transferred from local control to that of the State Water Resources Control Board. It is anticipated that DWR will complete their review of the revised GSP by the end of the year. For more information, visit: [TID.org/Groundwater](https://tid.org/groundwater)

## Considering Micros or Drip Irrigation

If you are considering converting your irrigation to drip, micro, or sprinklers, (i.e. land conversion), you must first verify that a non-standard head of water can be delivered to your property. Systems installed without prior approval may be denied water if the configuration is not compatible with the District's infrastructure and operations. TID has a program to assist in these types of conversions.

The TID On-Farm Flow Efficiency Recommendation (O.F.F.E.R.) program will send members of our Civil Engineering and Water Distribution departments to your property to assess your specific irrigation situation and help you identify potential opportunities to increase your overall efficiency. Simply email [offerprogram@tid.org](mailto:offerprogram@tid.org) and a TID staff member will begin your contact-free evaluation.

Please keep in mind that this type of conversion may negatively impact groundwater recharge in your area.

## Important Dates

Last Day to Order Water:  
**Oct. 26**

Last Day of Irrigation Season:  
**Oct. 30**

2nd Installment Fixed Water Charge:  
**Dec. 20**

Water Use Statement Due:  
**Dec. 31**

For more on updates to the GSP, check out the TID Water & Power Podcast, *Episode 40: Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Update*



Go to:  
[TID.org/podcast](https://tid.org/podcast)  
or wherever you get your podcasts.



Get regular updates on Hydrology Conditions, News & Announcements, and important date reminders by signing up for TID emails.

Go to:  
[TID.org/groweremail](https://tid.org/groweremail)



**WATER & POWER**  
Serving Central California since 1887

## WATER CALL CENTER

Open 7 days a week during irrigation season from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
(209) 883-8456

## CONTACT US

**Water Distribution**  
(209) 883.8356