



Lower Tule River Irrigation District Pixley Irrigation District

Lower Tule Board

October 2, 2018

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By now, you all should have heard plenty about the 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Per the requirements of SGMA, the Districts must have a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) submitted to the Department of Water Resources and implemented by January 2020. The GSP will be the District's plan on how to reach groundwater sustainability by 2040. January 2020 will be here before we know it.

The Districts each have formed Groundwater Planning Commissions who have been meeting for almost two years, on a monthly basis and working through the many issues that will have to be considered and become part of the Plan. Issues like; sustainable yield and allowable pumping levels, water measurement and metering, groundwater banking at a landowner level and water accounting and water transfers.

It is very important for you, as landowners and water users, to understand SGMA and how it will affect your business. If you go to the District website, there is a page dedicated to SGMA. It is located at www.ltrid.org/sgma. On the website, you can see a calendar of events, get informational and educational information about SGMA, links to the California Department of Water Resources and other organizations that contain information on SGMA, and the policy issue Chapters that our Groundwater Planning Commissions have drafted.

The goal of the Groundwater Planning Commissions is to have draft plans ready for Board of Director adoption by spring 2019. An important piece of drafting, approving and implementing a successful plan will be engagement and feedback from the landowners and water users. Besides providing information and outreach through our website, the Districts will be scheduling landowner meetings in December and January, so be on the lookout for those dates, you will be notified of those meetings by email and mailings.

In wet years it is very important to recharge as much water as possible, at both the District and landowner level. In order to provide the landowners a tool to potentially build up groundwater pumping credits ahead of 2020, in 2017, both the Lower Tule and Pixley Boards adopted an Interim Landowner Recharge Policy to be in place through the end of 2019.

The caveat to this policy the landowner must be aware of is outlined in section 5 of the policy. While the planning commission, under GSP Chapter 2 has outlined landowner water banking as a feature of the plan, the Districts at this time cannot guarantee the credits will be available once January 2020 hits because of several factors; the GSP has to be finalized by the Planning Commissions and approved by the Boards, the Districts plans have to be coordinated with the other Groundwater Sustainability Agencies in the Tule Basin and, the Plan has to be approved by DWR.

Sincerely,

Eric Limas

General Manager