



March 15, 2016

MID to discuss water availability during March 29 special meeting

The Merced Irrigation District will hold a special board meeting on March 29 to discuss water availability for the coming irrigation season. As of now, the District expects to provide at least 175,000 acre feet of surface water from Lake McClure.

The announcement was made today during a meeting of the MID Board of Directors. Although no action was taken, an update was provided on the most recent snow conditions and water levels in Lake McClure.

Lake McClure has fallen to record-lows with four consecutive years of drought. Last year, MID had informed its growers that no surface water from Lake McClure would be available. However, faced with dire conditions, the MID Board later took the only action available and directed staff to divert the mere 10,000 acre feet of stored water it had available. In a more typical year, MID would divert up to 500,000 acre feet for irrigation.

The reservoir and watershed have benefitted from storms in March and earlier in the year. However, February saw little precipitation.

Lake McClure is typically about 50 percent full this time of year. This year the reservoir is currently about 27 percent full at 275, 870 acre feet. At this time last year, the reservoir was at 9 percent of its capacity, after it reached a historic low in February of just 6.2 percent.

The California Department of Water Resources has projected local summer runoff of about 420,000 acre feet – which is just 66 percent of the average of 636,000 acre feet.

The special meeting will be held at 10 a.m. on March 29 at the Merced Civic Center, 678 W. 18th St.

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