



IRRIGATION

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2024



A PROUD HISTORY AND BRIGHT FUTURE

Peter Rietkerk
General Manager

SSJID works for you. That starts with delivering water, but does not end there! The District supplies the region's farms, homes and businesses through senior water rights on the Stanislaus River.

Our water rights are a cornerstone of the agricultural economy and support local community housing and development goals. We will continue working to protect these rights at every level to ensure water security, abundant supply, and a vibrant local economy.

Since 1909, the District has been committed to southern San Joaquin County. **This year, SSJID is celebrating 115 years of responsible and reliable service to the community.** Water is the foundation for food and life, and we've been providing this precious resource to local family farms and communities for more than a century. In turn, we help economies thrive and keep food on the table.

It is just as important to plan for future regional needs as it is to look back on our history. That's why SSJID is updating its Strategic Plan in April, with careful attention to the ever-changing needs of the District and its constituents. These updated objectives will align closely with our Water Master Plan and strengthen the foundation of the District.

Our efforts to provide safe, accountable and local electric service to the region are paying off. SSJID is preparing for a pivotal eminent domain trial, establishing the District's right to purchase and operate the local electric distribution system. It is one of the final steps toward becoming the electric provider for the homes, schools, businesses and city governments in south San Joaquin County. The people of this region are at the heart of our efforts.

SSJID CELEBRATES 115 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE

Since May 24, 1909, SSJID has been committed to being a responsible and reliable resource to our community. Whether it is irrigating farmland that feeds the nation or providing high-quality, clean drinking water, we are thankful to our customers for entrusting us with such stewardship.



We are proud to celebrate our 115th anniversary with a new look and video series.



The videos provide a broad overview of SSJID's history, values and services. The series includes a video dedicated to each topic:

- History
- Powered by Purpose
- Who is SSJID?
- Conservation
- Value
- Water Quality & Service



Beginning May 1, you can view the videos at youtube.com/@SSJIDofficial/videos

Join us as we commemorate 115 years of dependable irrigation, water operations and energy production, paving the way for locally-controlled utilities. We look forward to 115 more years.



SSJID takes pride in being your irrigation supplier, and remains committed to providing you with reliable service, as we have for 115 years.

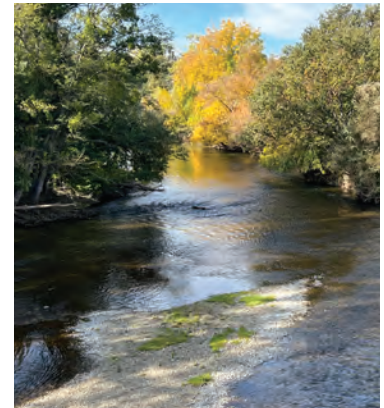


WHO IS MY GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY, AND WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR ME LATELY?

Brandon Nakagawa, Water Resources Coordinator

Your local South San Joaquin Groundwater Sustainability Agency or GSA is a partnership between the Cities of Escalon, Ripon and SSJID. The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (or SGMA) became law almost a decade ago and empowered GSAs to organize locally and manage groundwater.

Our GSA is fortunate to be able to conjunctively manage our water supplies by continuing to deliver Stanislaus River water to our agricultural and urban customers alleviating the need to over-pump the underlying basin. When you think about how much surface water is delivered for irrigation and urban uses plus how much water is recharged from our canals and reservoirs compared to actual amount of groundwater pumped in South San Joaquin County, we are very fortunately and closer to sustainability than many other GSAs who do not have pre-1914 water rights.



The South San Joaquin GSA continues to serve as your representative among the 16 GSAs who have collectively formed a separate legal entity called the Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater Authority or GWA.

The GWA, spanning three counties, 5 cities, and numerous communities throughout the Eastern San Joaquin Subbasin, was formed in 2017 and has since served as the collaborative and cooperative forum for GSAs implementing the requirements of SGMA.

The GWA was successful in developing the initial Groundwater Sustainability plan (GSP) which was adopted by all 16 GSAs and delivered on-time to DWR in January 2020. By electing to go the route of a well-coordinated and efficient single-GSP for the entire subbasin, the Eastern San Joaquin Subbasin was one of only a handful of critically over-drafted basins in the San Joaquin Valley to receive the Department of Water Resources (DWR) adequacy determination.

While achieving this milestone was a great achievement, every five years thereafter, GSAs are required to update and resubmit a revised GSP. The South San Joaquin GSA and its GSA partners have until January 2025 to get the Revised GSP finished and adopted by all 16 GSAs. DWR has continuously messaged that they will set the bar much higher in their review of 2025 GSPs which has resulted in a more rigorous and costly effort than anticipated. 2024 has and will continue to be a challenging year for the GWA.

As Sacramento grows more impatient with each passing year, SSJID continues to oppose legislation that seeks to pile on GSAs with more requirements and to accelerate pumping restrictions. DWR has referred six critically over-drafted subbasins to the State Water Resources Board for probationary status due to inadequacy of their GSPs submitted in 2020. DWR has also telegraphed that their initial adequacy determinations are “provisional”, and change based on a higher standard of review for GSP annual reports and revised 2025 GSPs.

SSJID and other local water agencies have alerted our local State legislators that DWR deliberately moving the goalpost is discouraging to many GSAs because it creates more paperwork and moves dollars away from implementing groundwater recharge projects. **SSJID is committed to continue working collaboratively with its GSAs partners to ensure compliance with SGMA.** What is at stake is our ability to locally manage groundwater versus putting the water beneath our feet in the hands of the State.





TUNNELLING TO THE FUTURE

AN UPDATE ON THE CANYON TUNNEL PROJECT

Forrest Killingsworth, Engineering Manager

The Joint Supply Canal (JSC) is a shared facility owned by both SSJID (72%) and Oakdale Irrigation District (OID) (28%), and is one of the most important facilities that SSJID maintains. Over the last several decades, the district has routinely spent between \$500,000 and \$1M annually to stabilize the slope and protect the canal. In 2005, SSJID began to evaluate solutions to reduce the districts vulnerability to catastrophic failures that could result in economic impacts on the local community, agricultural production, available drinking water, and the livelihood of thousands of residents in the southern portion of San Joaquin County.

THE CHALLENGE

Several miles of the JSC currently lies within the Stanislaus River Canyon, parallel to the river, and below several hundred vertical feet of extremely steep and unstable sloped hillside. This particular reach of canal is susceptible to catastrophic rockfall and slope failures that could easily destroy or damage the canal. If such an event were to take place, all of SSJID's customers and 40% of OID customers could be without service until the canal is repaired.

In certain cases, repair efforts could take years and would cost millions of dollars.

THE SOLUTION

The Canyon Tunnel Project, currently anticipated to cost between \$60 – 70 million, would bypass the upper two miles of the existing JSC (the most hazardous section) with a large diameter underground tunnel. The bypassed section of the JSC would be abandoned and the annual expense to maintain slope stability would be avoided.

The tunnel will be 18-20 feet in diameter and will be approximately 12,000 feet long, with the upstream portal (i.e. connection point) located immediately upstream of Goodwin Dam (a short distance below Tulloch Dam). Construction of the tunnel is currently nearing 90% completion of project design with construction scheduled to begin in late 2025, early 2026.

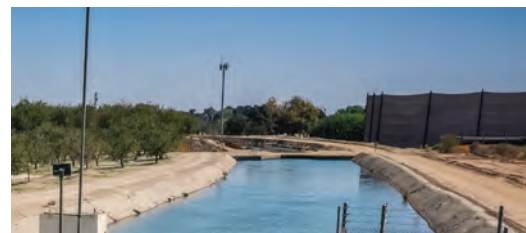
For SSJID, water delivered through the JSC is used for:



Agricultural irrigation to over 50,000 acres of irrigated land in Ripon, Escalon, and Manteca



Potable drinking water to approximately 215,000 residents in Manteca, Lathrop, and Tracy



Canyon Tunnel Project Benefits:

- Increased Water Supply Reliability
- Reduced Rockfall Hazard
- Increased Safety





MAINTENANCE SEASON: A SUCCESSFUL WINTER

Frank Avila, Irrigation Operations Manager

Despite a season of inclement weather, SSJID accomplished a series of high-quality improvements to support reliable service during the maintenance season. The District surpassed the seasonal average for improvements, including progress on the pipeline rehabilitation project and rebuilding eight valves.



PIPELINE REHABILITATION

SSJID staff re-lined 6,600 linear feet this season, which included work on the Wc, D, and Ka lines.



CANAL REPAIRS

Crews made necessary repairs to the V-ditch by restoring banks, applying gunite to walls, and by replacing the floor.



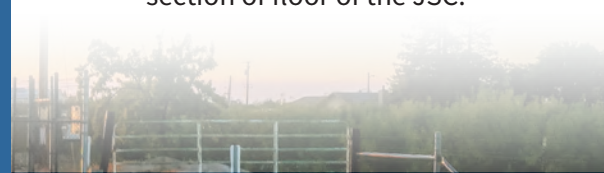
JOINT SUPPLY CANAL (JSC) WORK

The first project of the season was to remove a wind-blown pine tree that was lodged into the JSC.

The team also had to remove another tree to gain access to the canal for additional work, including repairs to a section of floor of the JSC.



This year, we encouraged our administrative staff to tour District-managed assets, offering them the opportunity to take a peek behind the scenes of our operations.



HONORING FRANK AVILA:

A PILLAR OF EXCELLENCE IN IRRIGATION OPERATIONS



We are delighted to take a moment to celebrate the remarkable career of Frank Avila, our esteemed Irrigation Operations Manager at SSJID who retired on March 29, 2024. Frank's wealth of knowledge and unwavering commitment to excellence has been instrumental in the modernization and success of the District. Frank has consistently displayed a rare combination of expertise and passion that has earned him the respect and admiration of colleagues and customers alike.

Beyond his professional achievements, Frank's genuine care for the well-being of our community has been evident in every aspect of his work. Whether troubleshooting irrigation systems, collaborating with local stakeholders, or volunteering in our community, Frank has always placed the needs of our customers at the forefront. His efforts ensured reliable and efficient service for nearly 37 years. As Frank embarks on a well-deserved retirement, we extend our deepest gratitude for his decades of service and dedication.



SWEEP BLOCK GRANT FUNDS AVAILABLE

FOR LOCAL CONSERVATION FARMING PROJECTS

Local growers with on-farm improvement projects can take advantage of grant funds received by SSJID and other local water agencies. To apply for the funds, the projects must meet some of the following criteria:



Conserve and use water more efficiently



Increase the production of renewable energy



Mitigate climate change impacts



Conserve energy



Accomplish other benefits that contribute to sustainability

SSJID is part of a group of local water agencies that received grant funding from the State Water Efficiency & Enhancement Project Block Grant (SWEEP Block Grant). **To learn more, go to www.sewd.net/state-water-energy-efficiency-block-grant-program or call SSJID at (209) 249-4600.**



RATES FOR RELIABLE IRRIGATION

Each year, the SSJID Board of Directors votes on the five-year schedule of changes to irrigation rates initially adopted on July 25, 2023. This year, the Board will meet in July to vote. This does not change the way customers pay their irrigation bills. Customers will

continue to pay the flat acreage rate on their property tax bills issued by San Joaquin County, and their volumetric bills via online payment or at the District's Office at 11011 E. Highway 120, Manteca, CA 95336.

Under the proposed changes, rates and fees would increase as outlined in the table below:

RATE CATEGORY	Current	2025	2026	2027	2028
Flat – per acre	\$38.00	\$52.00	\$60.00	\$65.00	\$70.00
Volumetric – Tier 1 (<= 48") – per acre-feet	\$5.00	\$7.50	\$10.00	\$10.75	\$11.75
Volumetric – Tier 2 (> 48") – per acre-feet	\$12.50	\$15.00	\$17.50	\$18.25	\$20.00
Minimum Charge – Flat Rate	\$50.00	\$52.00	\$60.00	\$65.00	\$70.00
Blended Charge per acre	\$50.17	\$70.13	\$84.17	\$90.98	\$98.40



To learn more, scan the QR code or go to www.ssjid.gov/rates. For questions regarding the rate changes, please call the District office at (209) 249-4600.

SSJID IN THE COMMUNITY

#SSJIDCARES!

SSJID Hosts Fifth Annual Art Contest

SSJID was amazed by the creativity of budding young local artists thanks to our fifth Annual Art Contest! All the submissions showcased colorful responses to the theme, “Watering the Roots of our Community.” The winning piece, by Aubrey B., will be transformed into a tailgate wrap so our trucks can spread the importance of water and community everywhere we go.



SSJID SERVES AS GRAND MARSHAL FOR 62ND ANNUAL ALMOND BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

SSJID was honored to be selected as the Grand Marshall for the 62nd Annual Almond Blossom Festival, Ripon's largest community event of the year. We've served our customers and the public for 115 years and will continue for generations to come.

